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## Iran, Pakistan Open Border Marketplace, Power Transmission Line

ISLAMABAD (VOA/Agencies): Leaders of Iran and Pakistan jointly inaugurated a marketplace and a power transmission line along their shared border Thursday in a significant move aimed at boosting regional trade and energy cooperation. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressed a ceremony in a live broadcast from the Iranian side of the more than the 900-kilometer border between the two countries. Raisi said the project had set the stage for Tehran and Islamabad to expand their economic and energy exchanges. The transmission line would export 100 megawatts of Iranian electricity to Pakistan's border province of Baluchistan. The impoverished, natural resources-rich region already imports 100 megawatts of low-cost power from Iran. "We are fully prepared to further deepen our relations with our neighboring country Pakistan in the energy sector," the Iranian president said. Islamabad's foreign exchange reserves have rapidly declined as the



country faces a dire economic crisis. The cash-strapped South Asian nation of about 230 million people depends on energy imports to meet domestic needs. The marketplace opened by the two countries Thursday links Iran's southeastern city of Pishin to Pakistan's southwestern city of Mand. It is one of the six border markets the two counties are jointly constructing.

Raisi said the facilities would help create jobs and boost bilateral "retail trade" to help thousands of households on both sides of the remote, poverty-stricken regions.

- BORDER SECURITY: "The message of this project is one of security. ... Today, both countries see the border as an opportunity and not a threat," the Iranian leader stressed, speaking

through an official interpreter. Sharif said that he had held a formal meeting with Raisi on the sidelines of the inauguration and the two discussed ways to strengthen border security cooperation. "We have exchanged proposals to make our joint border security mechanism more coherent and robust," the Pakistani prime minister said. "I will convene an urgent meeting as soon as I return to Pakistan and we will take appropriate, effective steps in the light of your proposals," Sharif told Raisi without elaborating. Insurgent attacks in sparsely populated Baluchistan and deadly violence carried out by Sunni militants in the adjacent Sistan-Baluchistan province of Shi'ite Iran have long been a source of bilateral tensions. Both countries have blamed the other for not doing enough to prevent cross-border militant attacks.

- GAS PIPELINE: Iran and Pakistan signed an agreement in 1990 to construct a nearly 2,700-kilometer gas pipeline to export Iranian gas to the

energy-deficient South Asian neighboring country. But U.S. sanctions on Tehran blocked any progress of the project. Iranian officials maintain they have finished construction of the pipeline on their side of the border and are waiting for Pakistan to complete its part, saying a lack of progress by next year would entitle Tehran to demand financial penalties. Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mumtaz Zahra Baloch reiterated Thursday her country remains committed to the pipeline project. "Pakistan considers the Iran-Pakistan pipeline as an important project that symbolizes the friendship between Pakistan and our neighbor, Iran," Baloch told a news conference in Islamabad when asked to comment on the reported multibillion-dollar penalty facing her country. She said talks with Iranian officials on "some issues" about the pipeline's completion continued, adding that "it is premature for me to comment on anything that could happen several months from now."

### US issues warning to North Korea

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US State Department has said a potential North Korean satellite launch would violate international restrictions placed on the DPRK. The statement came after North Korean media revealed that Kim Jong-un had visited a facility where a spacecraft is being developed. During a press briefing on Wednesday, US State Department deputy spokesman Vedant Patel said the launch would breach "multiple UN Security Council resolutions" on North Korea's ballistic missile program, which also cover rockets used for spacecraft. "We have been very clear that we urge the DPRK to refrain from further threatening activity and call on Pyongyang to engage in serious and sustained diplomacy," Patel said. "In terms of actions, we of course continue to have a number of tools at our disposal to hold the DPRK accountable. You have seen us take those steps and we will continue to do so." The United States currently maintains a raft of sanctions on North Korea and has threatened new penalties in the past over weapons tests. Pyongyang has insisted on its right to develop its military capabilities, arguing that its weapons – including its nuclear arsenal – are for defensive purposes, and has cited what it sees as an aggressive US military posture on its border. On Tuesday, Kim met with scientists, technicians and senior officials as he inspected the country's first military reconnaissance satellite. The North Korean leader approved an unspecified "future action plan" in preparation for the launch, according to the Korean Central News Agency. While unveiling the craft last month, Kim claimed the project was the "most crucial primary task" for the DPRK's armed forces, and said the satellite would be ready to go into orbit sometime in the coming weeks. "The successful launch of a military reconnaissance satellite is an urgent request... and the government's top policy priority to strengthen our national defense capabilities," Kim said after the inspection, adding that North Korea would continue to advance its space program. Tensions between Washington and Pyongyang have soared in recent months, with the DPRK carrying out a flurry of weapons tests in retaliation for several rounds of joint US-South Korean wargames. North Korea has repeatedly condemned such exercises as rehearsal for an invasion, though the United States insists the drills pose no threat to any country.

### Indian Navy uses US-Origin P-8 Poseidon to help Chinese PLA Navy trace sunken vessel

NEW DELHI (Agencies): There are few occasions when the navies of India and China cooperate on the high seas. On 17 May, Indian Navy's US-origin reconnaissance aircraft P8I Poseidon helped in the search and rescue (SAR) of a sunken Chinese fishing vessel in the Southern Indian Ocean Region at the request of the Chinese PLA Navy. "In a swift humanitarian action on 17 May, Indian Navy deployed its Air Maritime Reconnaissance assets in the Southern Indian Ocean Region approximately 900 Nm from India, in response to sinking of a Chinese Fishing Vessel Lu Peng Yuan Yu 028 with 39 crew onboard", said Commander Vivek Madhwal, Spokesperson of the Indian Navy. All 39 crew of the Chinese vessel are reportedly missing since then. P8I aircraft carried out multiple and extensive searches despite adverse weather and located multiple objects possibly belonging to the sunken vessel,

Commander Madhwal added. The crew of the Lu Peng Yuan Yu vessel included nationals from China, Indonesia, and the Philippines. As an immediate response, search & rescue equipment was deployed at the scene by the Indian aircraft (P8I) at the request of PLA (N) ships closing the area, Indian Navy's Spokesperson said. Chinese fishing vessel was about 267 nm from the strategically important Diego Gracia base of the UK and US armed forces in Southern IOR. The accident site of the Chinese vessel was south of the Maldives and about 900nm from the Indian coast. This is for the first time that the navies of India and China have cooperated on the high seas after the Galwan Valley clash of 2020 in Eastern Ladakh. Both Indian and Chinese navies had carried out joint anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden in 2017, but that was a time when relations between the two Asian rivals were not 'abnormal.'

### Russia fields new artillery system



MOSCOW (Agencies): Russia's first-ever wheeled self-propelled howitzer, the 2S43 Malva, has successfully completed trials and will enter service, Director of Uralvagonzavod Aleksandr Potapov said on Wednesday. The weapon has been described by the media as Moscow's answer to French-made Caesar howitzers, some of which were delivered to Ukraine last year. "Yes, the Malva should soon join [the troops]. Everything is fine with it," Potapov told TASS news agency on the sidelines of the MILEX-2023 arms

expo in Minsk, Belarus. Equipped with a 152-mm gun, the Malva (Malow) is designed to fire at a wide range of targets, including enemy artillery batteries and armored convoys. It is more mobile and less expensive to produce than tracked systems. The Russian authorities have ordered an increase in defense production in the wake of Moscow's military operation in Ukraine, launched more than a year ago. Last month, Russia's newest heavy tank T-14 Armata was first deployed to the frontline.

### Italy floods leave 13 dead and force 13,000 from their homes

ROME (Agencies): More than 20 rivers have burst their banks in Italy, leaving 13 people dead and forcing thousands from their homes after six months' rainfall fell in a day and a half. More bodies were found on Thursday after almost every river flooded between Bologna and the north-east coast 115km (70 miles) away. Some

280 landslides have taken place. The mayor of Ravenna, a city badly affected by flooding, told the BBC it was the worst disaster in a century. Michele de Pascale described the damage caused by the floods as catastrophic, costing people in his city and the wider region their homes, possessions and for some, their lives. "It was a very bad

### Lt-Gen Syed Aamer Reza made Corps Commander Lahore



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Lieutenant General Syed Aamer Raza, HI (M) has been posted as new Corps Commander Lahore, defence sources said. The unprecedented incident at the residency of a top military general in Lahore prompted serious action and a comprehensive and critical inquiry was conducted into the May 9 Corps Commander residency incident. Lt Gen Raza is from 22nd OTS Course (Officer Training School). Previously, he was chairman of the HIT who took over the command of Heavy Industry Taxila (HIT) on 28th April in 2020. On 11th Oct 2022, Raza was promoted to the coveted rank of Lt Gen.

### Lebanon secures deals to get more Iraq oil

BEIRUT (Agencies): Lebanon has secured deals for more fuel supplies from Iraq, the two countries said on Tuesday, as Beirut battles to produce more power to help it emerge from years of economic crisis, Reuters reports. According to the report, Baghdad has agreed to increase the volume of heavy fuel oil supplied under an existing deal by 50 per cent to 1.5 million metric tonnes this year, Lebanon's Energy Minister, Walid Fayad,

said in a statement confirmed by the Iraqi Prime Minister's office. "Iraq has also agreed a commercial deal to provide 2 million metric tonnes of crude per year to its neighbour," Fayad said. Since July 2021, Lebanon has procured heavy fuel oil from Iraq to generate electricity for power plants to ensure a consistent daily supply of power lasting approximately four hours, according to an agreement by both parties.

### China adds Russian port as transit hub

BEIJING (Agencies): China has added Russia's Far Eastern port of Vladivostok as a transit hub for domestic trade shipments, the country's customs agency announced on Monday. The move is intended to facilitate cross-border transfers of local goods via Russia's largest port on the Pacific Ocean. It will come into effect in June and will provide China's northeastern provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang with access to the sea port. The new route will help save shipping time and costs to deliver goods to China's southern provinces, as well as promoting domestic trade and revitalizing northeast China's aging industrial base, according to Liang Haiming, the dean of Hainan University's Belt and Road Research Institute. "The

opening of the transit port will also attract more investment and business to northeastern China in the future, which will contribute to the takeoff of the regional economy," Liang said. The inclusion of the Russian port in China's trading system also reflects deepening economic ties between the two countries, which have shown continuous growth in recent years, analysts say. Trade between China and Russia hit a record high in 2022, soaring by nearly a third in the wake of Ukraine-related Western sanctions on Moscow. It has continued to grow in the first quarter of 2023, with both exports and imports surging at double-digit pace, according to data from the General Administration of China.

**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.

## Terrorists kill three under custody accused, one gunned down

PESHAWAR (APP): Three under custody accused were killed when terrorists fired at the vehicle of Counter Terrorism Team near Eidek Pull in North Waziristan last night. The police informed on Thursday that an anti-terrorism team and security forces were shifting three hardcore accused involved in various anti-state crimes from Miran Shah to Bannu when terrorists

hiding near the Eidek Pull, started firing at the vehicle, killing the accused. In retaliatory firing by the security forces, one of the terrorists identified as Naheed alias Batoor, son of Sher Gul, resident of Harms, Mir Ali was killed while other terrorists managed to escape the area. The forces recovered one Kalashnikov, three magazines and 60 cartridges from the scene. The under

custody accused who were killed by the terrorists’ firing included Ghazirullah alias Khurasan, resident of Kaza Madakhel and Jannat Wali alias Zulfiqar alias Torr; resident of Hakeem Khel, Mir Ali. The killed terrorist was wanted by security forces in various cases of attacks on forces, target killing and other serious nature crimes.

## Police directed for security profile, psychological review of personnel

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government had issued directives to Police department for arranging security profile and psychological review of personnel performing duties in public places. The directives have been issued by Home and Tribal Affairs Department in wake of firing incident on a school van in Sangota area of Swat on May 16, ensuing in killing of a minor girl and injuries to several others. In a letter issued to Provincial Police

Officer by Home and Tribal Affairs Department on May 17, it was also directed to undertake such a review urgently and made holding of such tests after every six months as part of SOPs. “Meanwhile, KP government has also constituted a two members inquiry committee for holding probe into firing incident on a school van in Sangota (Swat) by a Police constable on May 16, last. According to a notification issued by Home and Tribal Affairs Department of KP, “Ad-

ditional Secretary Judicial Home and TA department will be convener of the committee with DIG Investigation as its member.””The committee is assigned the task of preparing an overall report of the incident, service profile of constable, Alam Khan, digging out any health issues of the constable, especially physiological illness and to seek details of his contacts with undesirable elements, proscribed organizations and other adverse aspects.

## PFVA fears 20 reduction in mango production during current season

PESHAWAR (APP): All Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Exporters Association (PFVA) has expressed the fear of 20 percent reduction in mango crop production in the country during current year due to adverse effects of climat-

ic changes on agriculture and horticulture sectors. In a press statement issued here on Thursday, Waheed Ahmed, Patron-in-Chief of PFVA said that the production capacity of mangoes in Pakistan is around 1.8 million tons, however due to the effects of climate change, it is feared that the production is expected to decrease by 20% thus be limited to 1.44 million tons. Waheed guessed that due to long winter and delayed arrival of summer, mango production is decreasing and the ability to fight diseases in mango orchards is also diminishing. It merits a mention here that last year early heat wave caused by global warming affected around 50 percent of mango production, slashing the export target of mango from 1,25,000 tones to 90,000 tonnes. Mango crop is directly affected by changing weather patterns, he added and urged that research institutes and provincial agriculture departments shall provide resources and awareness to mango farmers to avert the negative impact of the climate change. He stat-

ed that the target of export of mangoes for this season has been set at 125,000 M.tons and if this is achieved, Pakistan will earn foreign exchange of US\$ 100 million. Export of mangoes will commence from 20th May 2023. Gulf countries, Iran, Central Asian & UK countries are major buyers of Pakistani mangoes. Other important markets include Europe, Canada, USA and Japan. Increase in cost of export due to reduction in production coupled with quality issues linked with climatic effects along with increase in freight, packaging and transport costs is a major challenge for mango exports. Along with this, ongoing deteriorating law and order issues in the country, political instability and disruptions in delivery may also affect exports, Waheed feared. In Pakistan, 70% of mangoes are produced in Punjab, while the share of Sindh in total mango production is 29% & KPK’s share is 1%. Patron in Chief PFVA informed that 50% of mangoes are exported from Pakistan by sea, 35% by land and 15% by air.

## University of Malakand employees protest unjust withdrawal of Disparity Reduction Allowance



LOWER DIR (Staff Report): The employees of the University of Malakand, belonging to BPS 1-19, expressed their strong opposition to the recent decision made by the university syndicate. The decision, which was based on a recommendation by the government, involved the withdrawal of the Disparity Reduction Allowance (DRA) at a rate of 15%. The employees were deeply concerned by the syndicate’s action and questioned the authority of the senate in denying the approved allowance without any legal grounds. The university syndicate, acting in accordance with the KP government notification FD(SO) SR-1) 1-1/2-022 DRA dated 12-04-22, had unanimously adopted the recommendation of the Finance and Planning Committee (F&PC) during their meeting on 21-05-2022. The DRA was granted using the university’s own resources as prescribed by the government. However, to the dismay of the employees, the senate disapproved the decision, causing significant confusion and distress among the university workforce. The employees strongly condemned the senate’s actions, highlighting the fact that the syndicate is the sole authority responsible for granting allowances under section 9-xii P26 of the model statutes. They raised valid concerns about the legality of the senate’s decision, as the approved DRA, granted in accordance with the government’s notification, was arbitrarily withdrawn without any proper authori-

ty. This act is not only unlawful but also appears to be an intentional disruption of the university’s functioning. Furthermore, the employees questioned the rationale behind denying the same allowance to university employees in the province during a period of severe inflation. They emphasized that the DRA had been approved and disbursed based on the government’s directives and utilizing the university’s own resources, as clearly stated in the notification. Despite eight dissenting opinions, the syndicate, in its 50th meeting held on 17th May 2023, approved the withdrawal of the DRA, which had already been disbursed for a year. In response, the employees demand an immediate restoration of the Allowance for the Reduction of Disparity (ARA). They assert that once an allowance is approved and disbursed, it cannot be arbitrarily withdrawn. In a plea to the Governor and Chancellor, the employees of the University of Malakand request a review of the senate and syndicate’s decision and urge the restoration of the DRA. They stress the importance of ensuring justice among employees within the province. Failure to address these concerns may lead to an escalation of protests, which would adversely impact the university’s peaceful working environment. The employees sincerely hope that their voices are heard, and that the university administration, along with the relevant authorities, takes prompt action to rectify this unjust situation.

## Governor assures cooperation to Kumrat people in development of infrastructure



PESHAWAR (APP): A representative delegation of Kumrat people led by Moulana Gul Noor Shah called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali, and informed him about the condition of roads and problems of visitors due to dilapidated infrastructure in their areas. According to a press release issued here Thursday, the delegation apprised the governor about problems of locals and visitors due to the bad condition of roads. They said that Kumrat Valley of Upper Dir is famous for its scenic beauty and attractive locations but the problems of visitors and locals have increased due to the indifferent attitude of previous government to develop the area. They said promises were made by the previous government to develop the area and its infrastructure but unfortunately, all those promises and pledges were not fulfilled. They demanded that National Highways Authority and Communication and Works Depart-

ment should be directed to initiate infrastructure development for the facilitation of tourists. Speaking on the occasion, KP Governor appreciated the efforts of elders and people to highlight the genuine problems of Kumrat their efforts would help devise a strategy to address problems being confronted by locals and tourists. He urged locals to play their role to promote tourism and said that private construction should be carried out in a way that roads remain open for traffic and facilitation of people visiting the area. He said that the promotion of tourism would also create opportunities for locals and provide them with new vistas of development. He also assured the delegation of cooperation and assistance to resolve their problems. Later, a delegation of Malakand Chamber of Commerce also called on KP Governor and informs him about the concerns and problems of the business community.

## Accused of desecrating Capt Sher Khan Shaheed monument held

MARDAN (APP): The district police on Thursday identified and arrested the person who allegedly desecrated the monument of Capt Sher Khan (Shaheed) on May 9 during the protest. The accused was identified as Rehmatullah was a resident of village Haider Khan, district Mardan, informed the police spokesman on Thursday. The

accused uprooted the statue of Sher Khan Shaheed and later broke it by smashing it on the road. In his initial statement, the accused confessed that he had mistakenly desecrated the statue of Sher Khan Shaheed. Ashamed of his action, he said Pakistan Army was the pride of the nation and everyone should respect the armed forces.

## Parents urged to administer polio drops to children

PESHAWAR (APP): Patron-in-Chief Leprosy TB Blindness Relief Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Prof Dr Muhammad Arif Khan on Thursday appealed the parents to vaccinate their children under five-years of age against crippling polio disease and protect them from physical and mental ailments. In a message issued here on Thursday, Dr Arif Khan said, “It is a good initiative

of the government to give free polio drops to vulnerable children under the polio campaigns.” He said, “The expenses incurred on treatment of polio disease are much more and vaccination is free of charge.”It was a national obligation to take children to age the age of five to nearby hospitals or dispensaries timely and get them vaccinated against poliovirus to help save their lives.

## Excise recovers 42kg hashish, 1.02kg Ice in Mardan, Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Following instructions issued by Secretary Excise, Ehsan Ullah and DG Excise, Akmal Khan Khattak to curb the menace of narcotics, the department has geared up its actions against narcotics dealers, smugglers and their facilitators across the province. According to the Excise spokesman on Thursday, in the first action, a team headed by Director (Narcotics Control), Aftab uddin, Excise and Taxation Officer Zahid Iqbal Khan, Circle Officer, Sayed Naveed Jamal of Mardan Region, Station House Officer (SHO) Excise Mardan Muhammad Farooq Khan along with their team intercepted a car at GT road near Rashakai and recovered 3 kg hashish and 1.02 kg ice drug from its secret cavities. The accused Murad, a resi-

dent of Zem Tangi, Charsadda, who was at large in another drug smuggling case since last October, was arrested and shifted to Excise police station for interrogation and further legal action. In a second action, SHO Excise Rasool Khattak Peshawar Region along with Sub Inspector Inayat Afridi and his team intercepted a car bearing number H-5892 after a chase on Motorway and recovered 12 kg hashish concealed in the car’s trunk. The accused smuggler identified as Muhammad Ishaq, a resident of Khyber district, was arrested and shifted to Excise police station Peshawar for further interrogation. Secretary Excise, Ehsan Ullah has highly appreciated the efforts and services of the Excise Department Mardan for the recovery of narcotics.

## JUI (S) urges consensus, unity to address country’s challenges

PESHAWAR (Agencies): The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Sami) Provincial Executive Committee meeting on Thursday discussed the prevailing political situation in the country, emphasizing the urgent need for consensus and unity to tackle the challenges. Addressing the meeting JUI-S and Difa-e-Pakistan Chairman Maulana Hamidul Haq Haqqani stressed the importance of a united front to steer the country through the troubled times. He cautioned against violent actions disguised as protests, stating that such acts harmed the country and were against the principles of Islam, which promotes peace and security. Maulana Haqqa-

ni urged all political parties to come together and formulate a national plan of action, aimed at overcoming the challenges faced by Pakistan. He also expressed the readiness of JUI (S) to mediate and facilitate discussions in that regard. He said his party would actively participate in the next elections and would field candidates across the country. He instructed all district leaders of the provincial council to begin preparations for the elections. The meeting was attended by JUI (S) Provincial Amir Maulana Abdul Wahid Khatib, Provincial General Secretary Maulana Abdul Hai Haqqani, Provincial Deputy Amir Hafiz Abdul Rafi, and others,



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## Government of Balochistan and WFP partner to improve nutrition in Gwadar and Lasbela

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Planning and Development (P&D) Department of the Government of Balochistan have signed an agreement for the implementation of the Gwadar-Lasbela Livelihoods Support Project II (GLLSP-II) to improve nutrition behaviours and practices for food insecure communities in the Gwadar and Lasbela coastal districts. These areas are highly exposed to climate shocks, resulting in lower productivity in agriculture, livestock and fisheries. Funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the agreement was



signed in Islamabad between Rathi Palakrishnan, WFP Country Director a.i. in Pakistan and Rehmat Dashti, Project Director, P&D Department of the Government of Balochistan. "I am confident that the partnership between the Government of Balochistan and WFP will help us achieve our joint nutrition targets. I appreciate WFP's

efforts to ensure long-term solutions to the malnutrition challenge in Pakistan," said Rehmat Dashti. The project will contribute to the prevention of malnutrition through behavioural change interventions on nutrition, building on a nationwide existing programme WFP supports, the Benazir Nashonuma Programme. As part of the broader Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), the Benazir Nashonuma programme targets pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under two through 484 facilitation centres in 156 districts across Pakistan, including in Gwadar and Lasbela.

## Federal, provincial govts agree to develop National Action Plan to address Pakistan's Out of School Children

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): To address the issue of out-of-school children in Pakistan and maximize the enrollment of school-age children across the country, the Planning Ministry, the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, and all provincial governments have agreed to prepare a National Action Plan. The decision was made in a high-level consultative meeting addressing on the crisis under their chairmanship of Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal. Over the years, Pakistan has made considerable



progress in providing access to education to its school age population. However, the pace of improvement has been slow compared to other developing countries. With an estimated 22.8 million children aged five to 16 years out of school, Pakistan has one of the highest number

of such children in the world. The upcoming PSDP 2023-2024 will also institutionalize several key initiatives to achieve universal education in Pakistan. A model Universal Enrollment Pilot Project in Islamabad will attempt to ensure that there are no out-of-school children. After piloting this in Islamabad, the learnings may be replicated to produce similar results in other areas across the country. The Planning Ministry will also identify Pakistan's districts with the highest concentrations of out-of-school children.

## UNDP holds training on responsible reporting on Climate Change and GLOFs for journalists in Gilgit Baltistan

SKARDU (Agencies): UNDP Pakistan held a 3-day training on responsible reporting on climate change and Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) for journalists in Skardu, Gilgit Baltistan. The training was organised by UNDP's GLOF-II Project, a joint initiative with the Ministry of Climate Change and supported by Green Climate Fund. Twenty-five journalists from Gilgit, Skardu, Astore, Ghizer, Hunza, Shigar, Khar-mang, Ghanche, and Nagar were trained on the catastrophic impacts of climate-induced disasters such as GLOFs, torrential rains, and floods, and how they disproportionately affect women and girls. "Gilgit Baltistan's topography is rich with snow-capped mountains and monumental glaciers. However, it is unfortunate that these glaciers are rapidly melting due to the escalating climate, making communities prone to high climate risk. It



is most important for journalists to disseminate the right kind of information through responsible reporting," remarked the Additional Chief Secretary of Gilgit Baltistan, Aziza Ahmed Jamali, in his opening remarks on the first day of the training. The training entailed in-depth discussions on digital journalism

ethics, storytelling, multimedia reporting, narrative journalism, creative formats, hand-held shooting techniques and journalists' safety and security. The participants, including women journalists from Gilgit Baltistan, shared the challenges they experienced in reporting the GLOFs and floods of 2022.

## Marriyum grieved over death of mother of anchorperson Samar Abbas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday expressed deep grief over the death of the mother of Hum News anchorperson Samar Abbas. In a condolence message, terming the demise of his mother as a great tragedy, the min-

ister expressed her heartfelt condolences to Samar Abbas and his family. She said that she shared the grief of the family of Syed Samar Abbas. The minister prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

## Parliament delegation attends APA meeting in Manama, Bahrain

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Parliament of Pakistan, led by Senator Sania Nishtar, took part in the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) Standing Committee on Economic and Sustainable Development meeting held in Manama, Bahrain on May 16-17, 2023. The delegation engaged in productive sideline bilateral meetings with esteemed counterparts from Iran, Qatar, Indonesia, and Turkiye. During the bilateral meetings, a wide range of issues were discussed, with a particular focus on education, poverty eradication, and the establishment of forums to foster the exchange of Parliamentary Best Practices, knowledge, and experience. Pakistan's delegation effectively presented its viewpoints on various resolutions discussed during



the meeting. The stance of Pakistan received a warm welcome, appreciation, and acceptance from the APA Secretary General and like-minded countries. Furthermore, the delegation emphasized Pakistan's position on the illegal and forcible occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by India. The Parliament of Pakistan remains committed to fostering regional cooperation, sustainable development, and the pursuit of shared goals for the betterment of all nations.

## IESCO secures 8,793 dangerous points in various circles so far

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has cleared 8,793 dangerous points, costing Rs over 1.573 billion in various circles of the company so far. The IESCO Chief Dr Muhammad Amjad told that field formations identified around 10,000 such dangerous points in various areas. Electricity wires passing near the hous-

es were relocated to safer locations at IESCO's expense, he said. He said the first responsibility of the IESCO management was to take the best measures to protect its esteemed customers and its line staff from electrical accidents. All the operations were directly supervised by Chief Engineer Operation Muhammad Aslam Khan.

## Nomi gang busted in Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR (APP): The district police have arrested a bike lifter gang known as the "Nomi gang" and recovered eight stolen motorcycles, five mobile phone sets and cash from their possession. A spokesman for Bahawalpur police said here that the police of Civil Lines police station received information about the presence of the gang in a house. "Special police team of PS Civil Lines conducted a raid at the den and arrested the four members of the Nomi gang who were involved in lifting bikes," he said. He added that the police have also recovered eight stolen motorcycles, five mobile phone sets and cash from the gang. Civil Lines police have registered a case against the suspects. Further probe was underway.

## IRSA releases 149,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 149,000 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 129,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1427.08 feet and 29.08 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 37,300 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1116.20 feet, 66.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 40,900 cusecs and 48,000 cusecs respectively.

## Saudi Deputy Interior Minister calls on the Prime Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Minister for Interior of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H.E. Dr. Nasir bin Abdul Aziz Al-Dawood called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad today. The Prime Minister thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its support during last year's heavy floods. The Prime Minister also thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for extending support to evacuate Pakistanis stranded in Sudan as the law and order situation got worsen there. The Prime Minister showed his appreciation to the Kingdom for including Pakistan in the "Road to Makkah" project which will facilitate Pakistani Hujjaj intending to go for Hajj this year thorough the Islamabad International

al Airport. Referring to the recent KSA- Iran agreement to normalize ties, PM Shehbaz Sharif hoped that this would help promote regional peace and security. The Saudi Deputy Interior Minister thanked Pakistan for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation. He said that that brotherly ties between Pakistan and KSA were deeply rooted in history. He showed his satisfaction over the useful meetings held with the Pakistani Ministers for Interior, Religious Affairs and Narcotics Control during his visit. He informed the PM that the Road to Makkah Project would also be extended to Lahore and Peshawar from the next year to facilitate more Hujjaj in discharge of this important religious obligation.

## Pakistan, Saudi Arabia sign "Road to Makkah" agreement to facilitate pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday signed an agreement for the execution of "Road to Makkah" project aimed at simplifying the immigration process for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. The agreement was signed at the Prime Minister House during the visit of Deputy Interior Minister of Saudi Arabia Dr. Nasir Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Dawood here. Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah and Saudi deputy interior minister signed the document while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Ambassador in Islamabad Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki witnessed the ceremony. Minister for Religious Religious



Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Talha Mahmood, Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi were also present. Under the agreement, the Hajj and Umrah pilgrims of Pakistan would be provided immigration facilities in Pakistan who would be exempted from the process at Saudi airports.

## Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari invites S.Korean investors to invest in different sectors of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday said that there were immense opportunities for the South Korean businessmen and traders to invest in different sectors of Pakistan, including technology. The foreign minister expressed these views during a meeting with Ambassador of South Korea to Pakistan Suh Sangpyo who called on him, a press release said. The foreign minister said both countries enjoyed historic and friendly ties. He said Pakistan was providing trained human resources to South Korea in different sectors and wanted to further enhance it. He also reiterated



ed that Pakistan was keen to further strengthen its high-level contacts including cultural heritage cooperation with South Korea. The Foreign Office Spokesperson, on her twitter handle, separately posted that the foreign minister expressed satisfaction over the growing bilateral economic and development cooperation between the two countries.

## USD 7.99 M UTF Agreement between Punjab Government and FAO Signed to Mitigate Climate Challenges in Punjab

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Provincial Government of Punjab and Food & Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO) have signed, on Tuesday May 16, 2023, a Unilateral Trust Funds (UTF) agreement for the co-financial contribution from the Punjab government to a Green Climate Fund project called "Transforming Indus Basin with Climate Resilient Agriculture and Water Management". The project aims to increase resilience to climate change among the most vulnerable farmers in the Indus basin and to strengthen the Government of Pakistan's capacity to support communities in adapting to climate change. The project has been allocated from the Green Climate Fund a grant amounting to USD 34.99 million. The Government



of Punjab is adding USD 7.99 million and the Government of Sindh USD 4.6 million. The project will strengthen institutional and regulatory systems of agriculture, irrigation and On-farm water management for climate responsive planning and development, increase generation of climate information and its effective use in decision making, enhance adaptive capacity of the farming community, and create awareness about climate change risks and develop stakeholder capacity in these aspects.

## Bahawalpur Murder Case: IGP Punjab takes notice

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Inspector General Police, Punjab, Dr Usman Anwar has taken notice of the murder of four persons, including two women and a boy in Yazman area of the district and directed the officials concerned to immediately bring the culprits to justice. According to a Bahawalpur police spokesman on Thursday, senior officials of the Punjab Police Department had taken notice of the murder of four persons in the Yazman area of the district. He said that on the directives of IGP Punjab, RPO Bahawalpur range and DPO Bahawalpur, special police teams had been constituted to trace out the whereabouts of the assailants involved in the murder of the family. Narrating the details, he said that Yazman police received information that the bodies of a family were detected in their house in Chak

No. 102DB in Yazman Tehsil. Soon after receiving information, teams of Police and Punjab Emergency Service, Rescue 1122 rushed to the scene and shifted the bodies to hospital for postmortem, the spokesman added. He further said that the bodies included two women, a man and a boy. The assailants had murdered them with sharp edge knife. The bodies were identified as 46-year-old Rashid Imtiaz, his 35-year-old wife, Shaiza Rashid, their 16-year-old son, Abdul Rahman and their 55-year-old sister-in-law, Rahat Bibi. The police spokesman said that District Police Officer, Bahawalpur, Syed Muhammad Abbas had called in forensic teams to conduct forensic examinations of the bodies. The DPO Bahawalpur had also constituted police teams for the arrest of the killers of the four persons at the earliest.

Railways putting maximum efforts to complete rehabilitation work of tracks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is putting maximum efforts to complete rehabilitation and reconstruction work on railway track, improving the speed of the locomotives to carry passengers to their respective destinations on time. The infrastructure, including the track and signaling system from Karachi to Peshawar, Main Line-I (ML-I) and doubling of track from Lahore to Peshawar (462.20 Km) was also being revamped, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. The official noted that the length of the track was 1,726 kilometers and the department has planned to improve speed up to 160 kilometers per hour in the project of up-gradation of ML-I under the China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC). To improve the

speed of the trains and ensure fixed timings, he said the procurement of 230 passenger coaches and 820 High Capacity Wagons under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) project was also under process. The official said that around 46 Completely-Built-Up (CBU) passenger coaches have been procured up till now while the remaining 184 would be manufactured in the country and the couches would be able to travel at the speed of 160km/h. He said the rolling stock being procured under this project would be capable to run at a speed of 160 km/h whereas the department has a dedicated fleet of 55 diesel-electric locomotives of 4000-4500 HP for freight operation to cater maximum haulage at higher speed.

About 81% wheat procurement target achieved in Muzaffargarh

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): About 81 percent wheat procurement target was achieved in district Muzaffargarh and Kot Addu on direction of the provincial government. Official source said, total target for the wheat procurement was fixed as 152,741 metric ton out of which 124,831 met until now. District Food Controller, Raheel Sharif said the target for Muzaffargarh was fixed as 68241 metric ton which was measured about 77% of the total target. The similar purchase target was fixed as 36,000 metric

ton for tehsil Kot Addu out of which 31,157 metric ton purchased, estimated as 86 %. The procurement target for Chowk Sarwar Shaheed was settled as 48, 500 metric ton. To which about 40655 metric ton was procured that calculated as 83 percent. Raheel Sharif said PASCO was purchasing wheat in tehsils Alipur and Jitoi. Deputy Commissioner Salman Lodhi assured in a statement that they would soon achieve the whole procurement target with the help of concerned departments.

Two bike lifters arrested; seven stolen motorcycles recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters, members of a gang besides recovering seven stolen motorcycles, cash Rs 18,200 and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, a team under the supervision of SHO, Gujar Khan Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Mudassir and Muhammad Tayyab and recovered seven stolen motorcycles,

cash Rs 18,200 and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Saddar, Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars. He said that the operations against the lawbreakers would be accelerated further.

Purchase of two-wheelers gets difficult as prices skyrocketing

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Motorbike being considered as ‘poor man’s ride’ got almost out of the reach following exorbitant prices emerged just in a couple of months. Citizens gruded over sharp ascending of the two-wheeler prices with demanding the Prime Minister to take strict action into the issue, for buying a motorbike had become an unattainable dream of their lives right now, what they said. “Honda CD bike cost earlier Rs. 73,000 is available now Rs. 155,000 indeed a cruelty” said Mudasser and Rehan, officials of local private company to APP in a fit of disappointment. So much so, price of the motorbike model CG-125 earlier worth Rs. 90,000 shot up to Rs. 230,000 which is more than double

of the previous amount could barely found elsewhere in the globe, said Kussar and Faraz. Even China bike could be purchased at Rs.40,000 sometimes ago is offered now Rs. 110,000 a tragedy for the poor constantly are in grip of inflation as Pakistan ranked 13 among the most inflation-hit countries, as per report of the Global Innovation Index. Faisal, Sebtain and many other youths lamented that the nobody at the helms of affairs had thought about bring down the prices, let alone providing subsidy on it. “It was too good facility for students of schools, colleges is now the distant dream after skyrocketing prices of every brand of motorbikes just in few weeks,” said parents.

ANF recovers over 54 kg drugs; arrests three

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in three operations managed to recover over 54 kg drugs, 93 intoxicated tablets, 45 heroin-filled capsules and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He said acting on a tip-off, ANF conducted a raid at Karkhano Market, Peshawar and recovered 45 heroin-filled capsules from the pos-

session of two accused residents of Hangu. In another operation near Jamalabad Road, 54 kg charras was recovered. In the third operation conducted in Lahore Johar Town, 93 intoxicated tablets were recovered and ANF arrested an accused resident of Lahore. He said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

GSMA M360 EURASIA 2023 conference aims to delve into next-generation connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP):GSMA M360 EURASIA 2023 international conference concluded in Azerbaijan city of Baku objective was to delve into next-generation connectivity, ubiquitous digitalization and open technologies. This year, leaders from across the tech ecosystem, mobile networks, governments, connected industries, Influential regional, global experts and policymakers debated how to harness the power of technology – and work towards a better future for all. The event was held in the presence of Mats Granridin, Director general of the GSMA, Rashad Nabiyeu, Minister of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Zarina Zeynalova, President of “Azercell Telecom” LLC, Huawei

Middle East & Central Asia President of Carrier Business Group An Jian and other senior officials. In the first session of the “Digital sustainability for future development” conference, the speakers highlighted the impact of modern technologies on society and the importance of innovation in sustainable development. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Universal Service Fund (USF) Pakistan, Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary represented the Ministry of Information Technology (IT) & Telecommunication at the M360 Eurasia Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, organized by GSMA, said a news release received here. Chaudhary delivered an enlightening presentation on Emerging Technologies in Financial Industry.

Participation in G20 meeting tantamount to justify Indian illegal actions in IIOJK: GA Gulzar

ISLAMABAD (APP): All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Senior Vice Chairman Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar has said that participation in the G20 meeting in the United Nations-designated disputed territory is tantamount to supporting Indian crimes and justifying Indian deceitful occupation and illegal actions in the territory. Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar in a statement issued in Srinagar said Kashmiri hope that G20 member states, who believe in the supremacy of human rights, will not rub the salt on the already bleeding wounds of

the oppressed Kashmiris. He said it is expected that civilized G20 member states will not become partners of crime and they will prefer human dignity over economic and materialistic benefits. He urged the Kashmiris to follow the protest calendar of APHC in letter and spirit, observe crippling strikes in Kashmir and hold rallies and other programmes in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and all over the world to register their protest. Strongly condemning the Indian stepped-up state terrorism, especially fake encounters, killings,

widespread arrests and cordon and search operations, he said Kashmir has been turned into a fortress and its people are suffering humiliation and the worst atrocities at the hands of trigger-happy Indian troops. He urged G20 nations to realize India’s ulterior motives behind holding the bloc’s meeting in Srinagar. The G20 nations should not forget that India is committing serious crimes against humanity and they will be seen as siding with the oppressor if they accept Modi’s invitation to hold an event in IIOK, he added.

NA body rejects proposal ‘Hajj pilgrimage through sea’

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly standing committee on Maritime Affairs has rejected the proposal of starting Hajj pilgrimage through sea due to its impracticability, considering the financial cost, transportation time, and other logistical challenges. The Maritime Ministry tabled the proposal before the Senate body, which met on Thursday under the chairmanship of Mir Amer Ali Khan Magsi. During the meeting, the committee recommended that the establishments, airport and infrastructure around the vicinity of Gawadar to be named after the persons, who played an important role for the acquisition of Gawadar port from Oman as they were the national heroes. Responding to the

briefing on provincial job quotas in the Maritime Ministry, the body expressed concerns regarding the disproportionately low quotas for Balochistan and Sindh, while high quota for Punjab. The members emphasized that the quotas for Sindh and Balochistan must be increased, as Maritime Affairs holds greater relevance for littoral areas. The Ministry on-boarded the Committee upon multiple land litigation cases of Karachi Port Trust, and put a way forward for the resolution of the issue of encroachment upon the land belonging to Karachi Port Trust. Furthermore, the Committee also directed the Ministry to check upon the feasibility of introduction of a ferry service from Karachi to Chabahar.

Arrangements being made to ensure no one in future indulges in anti-state activities: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday said that arrangements were being made to ensure that no one in the future could indulge in anti-state activities in the guise of politics. Giving her reaction to Imran Khan’s statement, she said that arrangements were being made to settle once and for all Imran’s “fascism, anti-nationalism and invasion on the state”. The minister said arrangements were being made to ensure that no one could attack the state

or desecrate memorials of martyrs and Ghazis in the future. She said that Imran’s goons attacked the houses of opponents’ daughters, and during his rule, his opponents’ daughters were arrested in front of their parents, and their sisters were dragged but no one invaded the state like Imran Khan. Marriyum Aurangzeb said, “Imran punished the country and the masses by wearing the cloak of politics”. He did not even spare the country’s economy and deprived the people of employment and two-time meal.

PPP believes in dialogue: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said his party believed in the politics of dialogue and differences, but it never resorted to attacks on the state-run institutions. Addressing a press conference here, Faisal Kundi said that if the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) disrespected the state institutions, and abstained from appearing before them then how these institutions would restore their pres-

tige? Kundi urged the Federal and provincial governments to avoid arresting the women of PTI leadership and the party. He questioned the PTI top leaders that why they had hidden themselves as they used to make big claims of rendering sacrifices for their political cause. “Many PTI politicians are contacting us to join Pakistan People’s Party (PPP),” he claimed. He refused that PPP leadership would not take such violent-minded politicians into the party.

Police to construct 50 new quarters for female cops

ISLAMABAD (APP): Police have got administrative approval for the construction of 50 new houses for lady cops and two new barracks for police personnel. According to the police spokesman on Thursday, the police obtained administrative approval about 50 new quarters for lady police personnel and two barracks for 480 male personnel. He said that all possible efforts were being made for the welfare of the personnel and Chief Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan had taken several steps in that regard. He said, “Such ges-

tures will boost the morale of the force and it is the top priority to ensure the best facilities for the personnel of all wings. “The spokesman said, “A state-of-the-art first National Police Hospital of 100 beds has been already approved and construction work will be started soon.” He said the much-awaited plan of the hospital got the go-ahead with the special interest of Federal Minister for Development and Planning Ahsan Iqbal and Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan who highlighted the issue of the lack of a hospital for the police service in the country.

21 drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers and illegal weapon holders here on Thursday arrested 21 accused besides recovering over 6530 grams of charras, 29 litres of liquor, four 30-bore pistols, three 12-bore rifles and ammunition from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Gujar Khan police held a female drug smuggler namely Naveeda Bibi and recovered 1470 grams of charras. Rattaamral police rounded up Wakeel Anwar for having 510 grams of charras. Airport police rounded up Zeeshan for possessing 540 grams of charras while Wah Cantt police recovered 510 grams of charras from an accused namely Saif. Saddar Wah, Mandra and Rawat police arrested Mubashir,

Nadeem, Akmal and Zahid Aziz for having 1500 grams, 1250 grams, and 130 and 620 grams of charras respectively. Gungmandi, Pirwadhai and Kahuta police in their operations held Barkat, Gul Bashir, Majid and Idrees and recovered 29 litres of liquor from their possession. The spokesman informed that Morgah police conducted a raid and arrested two identified as Saif ur Rehman and Khuram Shehzad for running an illegal petrol agency. Meanwhile, Rattaamral, New Town, Naseerabad, Mandra, Dhamial, Rawat, and Kalar Syedan police rounded up seven accused namely Rashid, Zafar Iqbal, Ahsanullah, Faizan, Umar Qayyum, Mudasir and Manazar on recovery of four 30 bore pistols, three 12-bore rifles and ammunition.

## Ad-supported Netflix has nearly 5 million users

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): Netflix on Wednesday wooed marketers with word that its nascent ad-supported plan has grown to nearly five million users globally. The streaming television star touted its shows, viewer demographics, and more at a virtual “Upfront” presentation to advertisers. “Since early this year, our ads member base has more than doubled,” Netflix co-chief Greg Peters said as the event kicked off.



“On average, more than a quarter of our sign-ups now choose the ads plan in countries where it’s available.” As growth at Netflix cooled

last year, the Silicon Valley-based streaming company focused on creating a lower-priced subscription tier with advertising. Membership in its ad-supported tier has more than doubled since early this year, growing to nearly five million, according to Netflix. Netflix in April said that its total number of subscribers hit a record high 232.5 million. “We share a common goal,” Peters told advertisers during Upfront.

## Deutsche Bank to pay US\$75mil in Epstein victim’s suit

NEW YORK (Agencies): Deutsche Bank will pay US\$75 million to settle litigation alleging the German lender financially benefited from supporting Jeffrey Epstein’s sex trafficking scheme, according to a report Wednesday. The settlement concerns an unnamed defendant who launched a proposed class-action suit in November 2022, alleging Deutsche Bank did business with Epstein while knowing he



used funds in the account to support sex-trafficking activity, the Wall Street Journal said Wednesday. The Journal, citing people familiar with

the matter, said Deutsche Bank did not admit wrongdoing. A Deutsche Bank spokesperson declined to comment. Deutsche Bank benefited financially by supporting Epstein’s “sex trafficking organisation to successfully rape, sexually assault and coercively sex traffic Plaintiff Jane Doe 1 and the numerous other members of the Class”, said the original complaint, which was filed in US court in New York.

## Australia’s unemployment climbs, reducing rate-hike pressure

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australian unemployment unexpectedly increased in April as employers cut jobs — led by full-time roles — reinforcing the case for the Reserve Bank to stand pat at next month’s policy meeting. The currency and government bond yields declined as the jobless rate climbed to 3.7% from an almost 50-year low of 3.5%, Thursday’s data showed. The economy shed 4,300 positions following two bumper months of hiring, compared with a forecast 25,000 gain.

The weaker result following relatively contained wage gains suggests the RBA’s 11 interest-rate hikes over the past year are weighing on the corporate sector at a time when surging migration is also set to swell the labour force. That strengthens the argument for the bank to hold its cash rate at 3.85% on June 6. “We had expected a softer outcome today largely as payback to the recent strong and outsized prints,” said Su-Lin Ong, chief economist at Royal Bank of Canada. “I’m

not sure this makes the RBA relax that much on the labour market, wages and inflation front, but it might buy them a bit of breathing room to assess further incoming data.” Employment is an important piece of the policy puzzle for Governor Philip Lowe as he tries to assess the economic impact of the RBA’s aggressive tightening to date. Lowe wants to hold onto employment gains made since the pandemic while returning inflation to the 2-3% target from 7% now.

## Japan expects more investment from global chipmakers

TOKYO (Agencies): Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he expected additional investment from global chipmakers in Japan after meeting top executives on Thursday ahead of a Group of Seven (G7) summit. In remarks to reporters after meeting the executives, including from Intel Corp and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co, Kishida said the G7 leaders would discuss stabilising supply chains in their talks in the city of Hiroshima.



Executives from Micron Technology Inc, IBM Corp, Applied Materials and Samsung Electronics, among others, also met Kishida. Micron said in a statement that it would bring ex-

treme ultraviolet (EUV) technology to Japan to produce advanced memory chips and it expected to invest up to ¥500 billion (US\$3.70 billion) in 1-gamma process technology over the next few years, with close support from the Japanese government. The company is also poised to get about ¥200 billion in financial incentives from Japan to help it make next-generation memory chips in the country, Bloomberg News reported on Wednesday.

## US FTC expands probe into pharmacy benefit managers

NEW YORK (Agencies): The US Federal Trade Commission said it had sought information from two privately held companies that negotiate drug rebates on behalf of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) as part of its probe into how PBMs affect pricing of prescription drugs. The two companies, Zinc Health Services and Ascent Health Services, are group purchasing organisations,



that negotiate after-market discounts or rebates with drug manufacturers on behalf of PBMs and hold the contracts that govern those rebates. Zinc

Health negotiates rebates for CVS Health Corp and Ascent Health for Cigna Group’s Express Scripts unit and Prime Therapeutics, which is a privately held PBM, the FTC said on Wednesday. PBMs act as middlemen and negotiate rebates and fees with drug manufacturers, create lists of medications that are covered by insurance, and reimburse pharmacies for patients’ prescriptions.

## Theranos founder Holmes to report to prison in 2 weeks

SAN JOSE (Agencies): Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes will begin serving her prison sentence on May 30 for defrauding investors in the failed blood-testing startup once valued at US\$9 billion. US district judge Edward Davila set the date on Wednesday for Holmes, 39, to begin serving 11 years and three months in prison. Holmes rose to fame after claiming Theranos’ small machines



could run an array of diagnostic tests with just a few drops of blood. She was convicted of fraud at trial in San Jose, California, last year. She

had asked the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals to pause her sentence on April 25, two days before she was originally to report to prison. The court denied that request on Tuesday. Davila, who oversaw Holmes’ trial and sentencing, had previously rejected her argument that the appeal is likely to result in a new trial, the threshold for her to remain free on bail.

## SP Hinduja, patriarch of Britain’s richest family, dies at 87

LONDON (Agencies): Srichand Hinduja, the Indian-born billionaire leader of a global business empire and the patriarch of Britain’s wealthiest family, has died aged 87, his daughters said on Wednesday. Hinduja, known by his initials SP, was suffering from dementia and his family said he had “passed away peacefully this morning.” He was chairman of the eponymous



business group which owns public companies in India with interests in banking, chemicals, software and

commercial vehicles. Hinduja and his younger brother Gopichand, 83, topped the Sunday Times Rich List in 2022 for a fourth time, with an estimated net worth of £28.5 billion (US\$36 billion) that includes property worth millions in central London. “It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our father,” Hinduja’s daughters Shanu and Vinoo said in a statement.

## Siemens profit triples on orders boost, hikes outlook

FRANKFURT (Agencies): German industrial conglomerate Siemens raised its outlook for 2023 on Wednesday after second-quarter profits nearly tripled on higher orders. Between January and March, the group booked a net profit of €3.5 billion (US\$3.8 billion), up from €1.2 billion euros year-on-year. Siemens said the boost came from the partial reversal of an impairment charge



linked to its stake in Siemens Energy, as well as a 15% jump in new orders. Group revenues also climbed

by 15% to hit €19.4 billion. Demand was especially strong at the group’s smart infrastructure and mobility units, helped by easing global supply chain bottlenecks. Siemens, which runs its financial year from October to September, said it had won a record €2.9 billion contract in the second quarter to deliver 1,200 electric locomotives for Indian Railways.

## China stocks rebound as banks, AI firms shine

SHANGHAI (Agencies): China stocks rebounded on Thursday following two sessions of declines, as investors snapped up banking and artificial intelligence (AI) shares after data showed the country’s economic recovery was losing steam. China’s blue-chip CSI300 Index rose 0.4% by the midday break, while the Shanghai Composite Index added 0.8%. Hong Kong’s benchmark Hang Seng Index gained 1.1%, while the Hang Seng China Enterprises Index advanced 1.4%. Other Asia-Pacific share indexes also rallied, following

Wall Street’s lead, and the dollar held just below a two-month high versus the yen amid signs the US might be close to a deal to raise the debt ceiling and avert a disastrous default. China’s April industrial output and retail sales growth undershot forecasts, suggesting the economic recovery is losing momentum. That prompted Nomura to cut its forecast for China’s 2023 gross domestic product (GDP) growth to 5.5% from 5.9% previously and expect China’s benchmark lending rates to be cut in June.

## NZ sees bigger deficit as economy sputters

WELLINGTON (Agencies): New Zealand on Thursday announced a worse-than-forecast budget deficit as a slowing economy and a lower tax take hit its coffers, leaving the Labour government walking a tightrope as its spending plan is expected to fan inflationary pressures. In his last budget ahead of what is set to be a close-run election in October, finance minister Grant Robertson announced billions towards rebuilding infrastructure following severe weather events at the start of the year and towards helping those struggling

with increased living costs. That has heaped pressure on New Zealand’s finances, as the government has had to navigate many challenges including three-decade-high inflation, sharply rising borrowing costs, a stuttering economy and falling tax revenue. Surveys show the high cost of living as a key concern for voters, as Prime Minister Chris Hipkins has reiterated the government’s plans to return to “bread and butter issues”, as his Labour party braces for what many expect to be a closely fought election.

## Amazon’s AWS to invest US\$13bil in India by 2030

NEW YORK (Agencies): Amazon Web Services (AWS), the cloud computing division of Amazon.com Inc, said on Thursday it plans to invest 1.06 trillion rupees (US\$13 billion) in India by 2030, doubling down on its past investments to cater to an ever-growing demand. The latest investment will be used to build its cloud infrastructure in India and it will support over 100,000 full-time jobs annually, AWS said. The company runs two data centres in the Indian subcontinent – one in Mumbai which was launched in 2016, and another in Hyderabad, which started in 2022. AWS’ total planned

investment in India adds up to about US\$16.4 billion by 2030, the company said in a statement. The cloud platform offers more than 200 services, including storage, robotics and artificial intelligence. The proposed investment comes as India steps up efforts to attract more big-ticket investments. US networking equipment maker Cisco Systems earlier this month said it would start manufacturing from India to diversify its global supply chain, while Apple Inc supplier Foxconn will invest US\$500 million to set up plants in the southern Indian state of Telangana.

## SIA pays staff 8-month bonus after record results

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Singapore Airlines Ltd will pay staff a bonus of around eight months’ salary after posting a record annual profit, the Business Times newspaper reported. Eligible staff will be paid a profit-sharing bonus equivalent to 6.65 months’ pay, and a maximum of 1.5 months’ salary of ex-gratia bonus in recognition of their hard work and sacrifices during the pandemic, the newspaper reported, citing a spokesperson for the airline. Senior management won’t receive the bonus, the newspaper said. The city-state’s flag carrier on Tuesday reported a net income of S\$2.16 billion (US\$1.62 billion) for the year ended

March 31 and said forward sales are healthy across all cabin classes, led by bookings to China, Japan and South Korea. Singapore Airlines and its budget offshoot Scoot carried 26.5 million passengers in the year, six times higher than the 12 months through March 2022, with passenger capacity rising to 79% of pre-Covid levels in March. On Monday, Singapore Air said it flew 1.75 million passengers in April, up 53% from the same month last year. Hong Kong rival Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd has a way to go before it gets to those heights, with last year’s revenue still only about half of pre-pandemic levels.

## China set to resume imports of Australian timber

SYDNEY (Agencies): China is set to resume the import of Australian timber from today, China’s ambassador to Australia said on Thursday. The once A\$600 million (US\$406.98 million) annual timber trade with China has been largely suspended since late 2020 after Beijing said it had found

pests in shipments coming from several Australian ports. “Yesterday, the Chinese customs formally notified the Australian minister of agriculture that starting from today China will resume import of Australian timbers,” Ambassador Xiao Qian said in a speech in Canberra.

## Aramco appoints new heads for upstream and downstream businesses

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabian Oil Co. has named new presidents for its upstream and downstream businesses as the oil giant looks to materialize its long-term strategies across the global portfolio and value chain. According to a press statement, Saudi Aramco has appointed Nasir K. Al-Naimi as the president of its upstream business and Mohammed Y. Al-Qahtani as the president of the downstream business. The company’s board has approved

the newly created positions and appointments of directors, and the changes will be effective from July 1, 2023. Al-Naimi and Al-Qahtani will report to Amin Nasser, president and CEO of Saudi Aramco. “I am delighted to announce these appointments, which demonstrate our emphasis on the upstream and downstream components of our business as Aramco continues to transform to meet the world’s energy demand,” said Nasser.

## Dollar firms on optimism over US debt ceiling talks

SINGAPORE (Agencies): The US dollar held near a seven-week peak on Thursday, after President Joe Biden and top US congressional Republican Kevin McCarthy worked towards avoiding a damaging debt default, while the Aussie dollar slipped after disappointing jobs data. Biden and McCarthy on Wednesday underscored their determination to strike a deal soon to raise the government’s US\$31.4 trillion debt ceiling, having

agreed a day earlier to negotiate directly after a months-long standoff. While the upbeat meeting helped calm fears of an unprecedented American debt default, a cautious air tempered risk-taking. US Treasury yields remained elevated in early Asia trade after having risen in the previous session, as investors sold off the safe-haven bonds in the wake of the positive signs on the debt ceiling negotiations. Yields rise when bond prices fall.

Coventry beat Middlesbrough 1-0 to reach C'ship playoff final at Wembley

MIDDLESBROUGH (Agencies): Coventry are one game away from returning to the Premier League for the first time since 2001. Gustavo Hamer scored the only goal in the 57th minute to give Coventry a 1-0 win over Middlesbrough in the second leg of the Championship playoff semifinals on Wednesday. That was enough to put the visitors through the playoff final against Luton at Wembley on May 27, often dubbed the world's most lucrative one-off soccer game because of guaranteed earnings the winner will



get for reaching the Premier League. Coventry advanced 1-0 on aggregate after a 0-0 draw in the first leg. The goal came after Ben Sheaf pounced

on a loose pass and fed forward Viktor Gyokeres, who evaded the goalkeeper before Hamer took over, stepped inside and shot into the top corner. Coventry had spent more than 30 consecutive years in England's top division before being relegated from the Premier League in 2001, and hasn't been back since. It was playing in the fourth-division League Two as recently as 2017-18 and had a rough start to this season, having to postpone some of its early home games because of the state of the pitch in its stadium.

Ronaldo's Al-Nassr shirt a big hit on the streets of Baghdad

It's common that from season to season, teams change their football kits. It may be an altered shade of red, a new shirt sponsor or a design refresh to keep up sales each year. Sports stores are quick to reflect the changes to match the demand. But this year, walking through the markets of Iraq's capital, Baghdad, one change stands out more than any other. A sea of yellow and blue shirts has flooded the market, that of the Saudi Arabian team Al-Nassr FC. This time last year, few if any Al-



Nassr shirts would have been found. Shirts were limited to the European clubs of Liverpool, Real Madrid, Barcelona and few more of Europe's

elite. But, since the move of Cristiano Ronaldo, it's hard not to spot the Saudi Arabian club across Baghdad. It's not necessarily about the team; each of the shirts being sold has Ronaldo's name and number printed on the back. On occasions, the shirts are displayed back-facing. Jassim Khedhyr, an avid 17-year-old football fan and sales assistant at a sports store in Baghdad clarified: "Sometimes Iraqis just support a person. We follow him wherever he goes.

CrossFit icon Dani Speegle to headline 1st Saudi Arabia sports Expo

RIYADH (Agencies): Iconic CrossFit athlete Dani Speegle is set to headline the first-ever Saudi Sports for All Federation Expo in the Kingdom on Saturday. A past winner of Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson's "The Titan Games" on NBC, and a major sports personality with more than 2.3 million social media followers, Speegle will lead a panel titled "Women's Empowerment - How to Overcome Obstacles and Reach



Your Goals." The conference is being presented by the SFA - part of the Ministry of Sports - set up to promote a more active and healthier

lifestyle for people of all ages in the Kingdom in support of Vision 2030. Speegle said: "The SFA Expo is the first event of its kind in the country, and when I was invited to speak on a women's empowerment panel alongside other strong ladies from the sports world, I was excited at the opportunity to play a small part in creating more positive change in the lives of women and society on the other side of the globe.

Butler fuels Heat in 123-116 Game 1 victory over Celtics

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Jimmy Butler's 35 points and a scorching third quarter propelled the eighth-seeded Miami Heat to a 123-116 victory over the Celtics on Wednesday in Game 1 of the NBA Eastern Conference finals in Boston. The Heat erased a 13-point second-quarter deficit to snatch home-court advantage from the Celtics, outscoring Boston 46-25 in the third period to seize control. Jayson



Tatum, the 51-point hero of Boston's Game 7 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers, scored 30 points, but he coughed up two crucial turnovers in

the final minutes as the Heat turned the defensive screws. Butler added five rebounds, seven assists and six steals. Bam Adebayo scored 20 points with eight rebounds and five assists and Max Strus, Gabe Vincent, Caleb Martin and Kyle Lowry each scored 15 points for Miami. "We are just playing really good basketball," Butler said. "More than anything, we are staying together through the good and through the bad.

Fox, Connors, Hovland share PGA lead as Higa stumbles back

Rochester, United States (AFP/APP): New Zealand's Ryan Fox, Norway's Viktor Hovland and Canada's Corey Connors shared the early lead in Thursday's opening round of the PGA Championship after a double-bogey disaster for Japan's Kazuki Higa. Fox, Hovland and Connors were on 2-under with Higa tumbling back to level at par-70 Oak Hill. World number 99 Higa, making his PGA Championship debut as a back-nine starter, reeled off four consecutive birdies starting at the par-3 11th hole, but a bogey at 17 and a double bogey at the par-4 sixth dropped him from atop the leaderboard. Higa, last year's Japan Tour money leader, delivered clutch par putts from eight feet at the first hole and 12 feet at the par-5 fourth but pulled his tee shot way left at six, needed two more to reach the fairway and three from there to finish. He then made bogey at the seventh to reach level par. No one else pulled away from the early pack. Hovland back at the 10th hole and had two bogeys in three holes then birdied three in a row starting at the par-5 13th. Another birdie at the second gave



him a share of the lead. Fox, a three-time winner on the DP World Tour, birdied the par-4 second and par-5 fourth, stumbled with a bogey at the par-3 fifth but birdied the ninth from 11 feet. Connors answered a bogey at the second with birdies on the fifth, sixth and eighth holes. He began the back nine with a bogey but birdied 12 to share the lead. Frost delayed the start of the round by one hour and 50 minutes, leaving a group of reigning major champions starting off the 10th tee in warmer than expected weather. World number one Jon Rahm, the reigning Masters champion, started with a birdie at the 10th hole but was 1-over after closing the back nine with three straight bogeys. Reigning British Open champion Cameron Smith of Australia was level after the back nine. Reigning US Open cham-

pion Matthew Fitzpatrick of England made bogeys at the par-5 13th and par-4 14th and 18th. Spaniard Rahm, who has taken four PGA Tour titles this year, would be halfway to a calendar-year Grand Slam with a victory at Oak Hill and needing only a British Open to complete the career Slam. World number 10 Jordan Spieth would complete a career Slam with a triumph at Oak Hill. He only decided to play on the eve of the event after testing his injured left wrist for two days at Oak Hill. Spieth was 2-over after a double bogey at the first, his 10th hole of the round, as he tries to join a list of those to win all four majors that includes Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, Ben Hogan and Gene Sarazen. World number two Scottie Scheffler, who if he wins would overtake Rahm as world number one, birdied the 14th to join a 1-under pack. Also on 1-under were defending champion Justin Thomas, who opened with a birdie at the 10th, and Keegan Bradley, the 2011 PGA Championship winner who shared the lead before a double bogey at the par-3 15th.

Denz wins from Giro breakaway as Crans Montana looms

Rivoli, Italy (AFP/APP): Germany's Nico Denz of the Bora Hansgrohe team won a hilly stage 12 of the Giro d'Italia on Thursday as Geraint Thomas safely defended the overall leader's pink jersey. Denz and a clutch of cohorts covered the route from Bra to Rivoli a good eight minutes faster than the main peloton which was led over the finish line by Ineos rider Pavel Sivakov, showing his fall Wednesday had no profound effect. "I'm over the moon," said Denz, who revealed he had long planned to win this stage that after a mass breakaway came down to a three up sprint in downtown Rivoli.



Novak Djokovic loses to Holger Rune, again, this time at Italian Open

ROME (Agencies): Novak Djokovic sees a bit of himself in Holger Rune. The 20-year-old Danish player is solid in nearly every area: A great mover and super fit physically, he's strong off both his forehand and backhand, has good hands and is an aggressive returner. Perhaps that's why Rune has now recorded two victories over Djokovic in little more than six months, beating the 22-time Grand Slam champion 6-2, 4-6, 6-2 Wednesday to reach the Italian Open semifinals. Rune, who also defeated Djokovic in the Paris Masters final in November, gave the Serb fits with his rapid court coverage. He made his opponent hit extra balls on points that Djokovic thought



he had already finished off. Djokovic said the consistently damp conditions at the Foro Italico this week were challenging for him. "In these kind of conditions, it's very difficult to get the ball past him," Djokovic said. "He's very, very fast, very quick. Great anticipation. Just a very talented, dynamic player, all-around player.

Ackermann sprints home as crashes and COVID thin Giro d'Italia field



TORTONA (Agencies): Pascal Ackermann edged Jonathan Milan in a photo finish on stage 11 of the Giro d'Italia on Wednesday, as accidents and sickness continued to force riders out. Eight riders pulled out overnight while one of the race favorites, the 2020 champion Tao Geoghegan Hart was stretchered into an ambulance following a nasty fall with suspected breaks to his leg and pelvis. Ackermann of the UAE Team Clung on to victory as Bahrain rider Jonathan Mi-

lan flew level at the line for a photo finish with British 16-time Giro stage winner Mark Cavendish taking third. "Really, really special victory for me. After my broken coccyx last year, I'm finally back," said Ackermann. Geraint Thomas of Ineos Grenadiers retained the overall leader's pink jersey but not only lost Geoghegan Hart, but team sherpa Pavel Sivakov, who also went down, limped home minutes behind the peloton. Thomas lamented the loss but was already thinking of the road ahead. "He had great chance of winning this Giro. It would be a massive asset for the team to have two of us there, but that's racing, things change quickly, you have to adapt," said the 2018 Tour de France winner who has also been on the podium as second and third at the Tour.

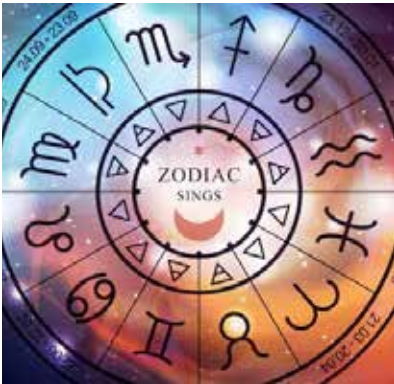
As Triple Crown chase rolls on, horse racing at a crossroads after latest spate of deaths

BALTIMORE (Agencies): Brad Cox sent 21 horses he trains to Churchill Downs in the days leading up to the Kentucky Derby and all came back from their races healthy with no problems. Still, Cox is worried. Seven horses died in a span of 10 days at and around the famous track, thrusting horse racing into a familiar, negative spotlight during Triple Crown season. The sport, which is as popular as ever, is facing intense scrutiny over the health of its animal athletes. "The sales are strong, and the purses are strong, people are still involved - hopefully we can keep it going," Cox said this week while preparing for the Preakness. "I think people are doing a good job of trying to keep their horses sound, healthy, happy and performing well. That's the main



thing. I've got a lot of questions about Derby week and what all happened there." He's not alone. Industry leaders say racing is at a critical juncture, even though horse deaths are at their lowest number since they began being tracked, money is flowing and new national medication and anti-doping rules are set to take effect next week. The hope is to clean up the sport, making it fairer for those involved and perhaps more acceptable to skeptics.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: MAY 19, 2023



- It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.  
- **ARIES**: You're zipping through projects so fast that friends and family might almost laugh, but you're having too much fun to care about appearances! It's one of those days when you're just in the zone.  
- **TAURUS**: Your usual caution (some call it good sense, others call it timidity) flies away for the day, leaving you free to try new and exciting and possibly risky activities. Have fun. It shouldn't last long!  
- **GEMINI**: You're incredibly social today even for you! The odds are good that you should meet lots of new people, many of whom could turn into friends or more. Don't dismiss anyone at first glance!  
- **CANCER**: You're forcing yourself to be more social today, possibly out of politeness, possibly with ulterior motives. It hardly matters why, though, because you find that people are their own reward.  
- **LEO**: Group activities are much more rewarding to you than anything you can do on your own today. If nothing is

on the agenda, ring up some folks and make something fun happen spontaneously!  
- **VIRGO**: Work issues are roiling away in your mind today, which might drive friends or family insane if you should be focusing on them. Try to compartmentalize as well as you can and everyone will be happy.  
- **LIBRA**: You need to spend some quality time with a close friend or relative, someone you can really talk to openly. Your good energy should help you articulate feelings you didn't know you had.  
- **SCORPIO**: You're in a good position to absorb tiny details today, so make sure to read the fine print and really look closely at everything that comes your way. You won't be disappointed with the end results!  
- **SAGITTARIUS**: You're a little less patient with other people today, so see if you can either spend a bit more time on your own or just relax when they inevitably start to irritate you in some way.  
- **CAPRICORN**: You're feeling pretty stable and secure now, but people around you seem to be totally untethered! It's one of those days when you need to let them flounder while you do your own thing.  
- **ACQUARIUS**: Spend some time working on creative projects even if you don't consider yourself an artist in any way. It's a good day to explore your deepest thoughts and try to express them to others.  
- **PISCES**: Take it easy today. You need to slow down a bit and make sure that you're not just rushing into new activities without checking them out first. It's a good time to try moving more cautiously.

## FPCCI presents budget proposals to Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on Thursday called on Finance Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar to present proposals for the upcoming federal budget. SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Secretary Finance, FBR Chairman senior officers from Finance Division and FBR also attended the meeting. The delegation led by FPCCI President Irfan Ahmad Shaikh, comprised Mian Anjum Nisar, Mohammad Younus Dhaga, Abdul Qadir

## Rallies to mark solidarity with Pakistan

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Pro-nouncing the tragedy of May 9 as the most tragic event in the history of Pakistan, Defense Pakistan Council would organize rallies across Pakistan after Friday prayers to express solidarity with the Pakistani forces. Speakers expressed these views while addressing a seminar at Pakistan Arts Council here on Thursday. They announced that the biggest rally would be held in Karachi. Speakers have made it clear that the finality of Prophethood (SAW), Pakistan and the armed forces were the red line of the nation. They demanded strict action against the facilitators and implementers of attacking state institutions and said that any political party that burns installations, vehicles, Corps commander's house, under the guise of politics must be dealt with iron hands. The speakers renewed their pledge that they will protect the Ideology of Pakistan at every cost.

## Pakistan's total foreign reserves reach at \$ 9.937 billion

KARACHI, May 18 (APP):The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 9,937.5 million while reserves held by the central bank reached at US\$ 4,311.9 million. The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign reserves of the central bank decreased by US\$ 72 million to US\$ 4,311.9 million due to external debt repayment in the week ending on May 12, 2023. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 5,625.6 million, it added. In the previous week ending on May 5, 2023, total liquid foreign reserves held by the country was US\$ 9,990.4 million. Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were US\$ 4,383.4 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were US\$ 5,607 million.

## Five government colleges to be transformed into public libraries & cultural information center in GB

GILGIT (Agencies): In a remarkable step towards promoting education and fostering a culture of learning, the Chief Secretary of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) has announced a significant initiative that will bring joy to the people of the region. Under this new endeavour, five government colleges will be transformed into public libraries & cultural information centres during evening hours, catering to both students and local communities. In an official statement to media from CS GB office it was informed that "Recognizing the importance of providing access to knowledge and resources, the Chief Secretary has directed the Secretary of Higher Education and the Secretary of School Education to oversee and execute the conversion process within a month". This transformative initiative aims to enrich the educational landscape of GB and facilitate continuous learning beyond the classroom. The conversion of these educational institutions into public libraries, cultural & information centres where different documentaries will be run on digital screens so that the youth and local communities understand the background of different historical initiatives will create vibrant spaces for students and community members to engage in intellectual pursuits, broaden their horizons, and cultivate a love for reading.

Memon, Mohammad Suleiman Chawla, Umer Masood ur Rehman, Zikriya Usman, Sohail Altaf, Engr. M.A Jabbar, Mirza Abdul Rehman, Usama Ahsan Khan, Mohammad Ali Mian, Mohammad Nadeem Qureshi and others, said a press release. Ishaq Dar, while welcoming the delegation, and highlighted the economic and financial outlook of the country and expressed the government's resolve to overcome the challenges and set the economy towards growth. He said that as finance minister he had completed the IMF programme in the past and the cur-

rent government would also complete the present programme. The minister further said the present government had fulfilled all the international obligations on time and would continue to do so in the future. He welcomed the budget proposals given by the members of the delegation and assured that government was fully cognizant of the difficulties faced by the business community and would incorporate their suggestions in the upcoming budget. The FPCCI delegation thanked the finance minister for considering their budget proposals.

## Xinjiang Chamber of Commerce and Traders delegation to help in promotion of trade: CM GB

GILGIT (APP): Gilgit-Baltistan, Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid Thursday said the visit of the Xinjiang Chamber of Commerce and Traders delegation to Gilgit-Baltistan will help in the promotion of trade between the two regions. Talking to a delegation, he said the friendship between the people of Pakistan and China was eternal and both have long-standing ties, so the people of Xinjiang were no strangers to us. He said the promotion of trade between the two regions will further promote mutual friendship. An important project like CPEC is passing through Xinjiang and Gilgit-Baltistan, keeping in mind that it is necessary for both regions to get full support from this important project, he added. Khalid Khursheed said the Government of Gilgit Baltistan will provide all possible support to the Xinjiang Chamber of Commerce and Traders for the promotion of trade. The chief minister said a visit to Xinjiang is expected soon in which agreements will

be signed regarding the facilitation of trade between the two regions. Appreciating the proposal of the Xinjiang Chamber of Commerce and Traders to establish Gilgit Baltistan Pavilion in Xinjiang, the chief minister said the establishment of the GB Pavilion will help promote all sectors including trade and tourism. The CM said the trend of Chinese tourism was the highest worldwide, keeping in mind that steps will be taken to attract Chinese tourists in Gilgit-Baltistan. A special authority can also be established to promote trade between Xinjiang and Gilgit-Baltistan on a large scale and to facilitate the traders so that the difficulties faced in relation to trade can be resolved in a timely manner, he added. Speaking on the occasion, the delegation of Xinjiang Chamber of Commerce said the visit to Gilgit-Baltistan was related to cherry and fruit exports to China and the promotion of trade. Several MoUs were signed between the two sides on this occasion.

## Dialogues & differences parts of politics but no attacks on institutions: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) believed that dialogues and differences were parts of politics, but it had never resorted to attacks on state institutions. Addressing a press conference here, Faisal Kundi said May 9 was the darkest day in the country's history and the PPP strongly condemned the incidents in which government properties and military installations were burnt on that day. All the violence, rioting and arson occurred due to instigation of workers by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership, he added. He said had the PTI leadership taken the negotiations with the government seriously, the May 9 tragic incidents would not have happened. Kundi said politicians belonging to different parties had differences with another but a situation like May 9 had never arisen in the past. PTI Chairman Imran Khan had given a call to his workers for violence which the latter did. He himself did not condemn the burning of army installations, martyrs memorials and government buildings, while his party leaders were doing so, he added. He said Imran Khan did not appear in the NAB court even yesterday, pretending that he was about to be arrested. Kundi urged the federal and provincial governments

to avoid arresting the PTI's women leaders and families. Faisal Karim Kundi said that Imran Khan always used women and children as a shield. During his government, many PPP women leaders were arrested and thrown in jails, and but now the PTI leaders were hiding for fear of arrest. He said many PTI leaders had contacted them for joining the PPP, however, the PPP would not take such violent persons into its fold. He said the PPP respected the courts. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto used to appear in courts in fake cases. One day she was to appear in a court in one city and the next day in another city hundred of miles away, but she never disrespected the institution, he recalled. Kundi said a meeting of the PPP's Central Executive Committee had been called, where Chairman Bilawal Bhutto would take the party into confidence regarding the National Security meeting. He said Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who is also Foreign Minister, would visit Azad Jammu & Kashmir from May 21 to 23 to highlight Indian atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The G-20 conference was going to be held in IIOJK and Pakistan had lodged protest at world fora, he added. He said during his three days stay in AJK, Bilawal Bhutto would address the AJK Assembly and talk to the media.

## President Alvi urges politicians to resolve issues with sagacity, patience

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi Thursday said sanity should prevail and political issues should be resolved with sagacity and patience and focus brought back to economic problems facing the nation. The president, in an interview to a private television channel, said political instability would create problems for Pakistan, however, it was a good omen that politicians were not ready to impose emergency. He said action should be taken against the persons involved in the incidents of May 9. "I was aggrieved over the incidents of May 9. Transparent and independent investigations should be held and those who attacked government and army installations, and were involved in vandalism should be punished. These incidents should be condemned." He said he wrote letters to the prime minister and the army chief and condemned the incidents as it was painful for him that the house of Corps Commander, office of the intelligence agency and martyrs monument were vandalized. However, human rights should be upheld and no one should be tortured, he stressed, adding the



right to protest should be exercised within the confines of law. The president said politicians should consider the matter of filing of cases under the Army Act. In the past, the Parliament and the Supreme Court undid punishments handed down by the military courts, he mentioned. He said anti-terrorism laws were being used to try politicians which was a cause of concern. To a question, he said he was in support of the Pakistan Army, democratic forces and the people of Pakistan. He said politicians should hold talks and elections should be held to reduce problems in the country. Elec-

## Quetta Chamber hails opening of border market with Iran

QUETTA (Agencies): The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Quetta (CCIQ) on Thursday hailed the inauguration of Mand-Pishin border sustenance market along the Pak-Iran border. "It is an unprecedented step of the incumbent government. It will pave a way for fostering invincible economic growth of the country," said CCIQ President Abdullah Achakzai said in a statement. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Iran's President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi jointly inaugurated the Mand-Pishin border sustenance market earlier in the day. The Mand-Pishin border market is one of the six border operational markets which will be constructed along the Pak-Iran common border. Abdullah Achakzai said opening of the six border markets with neighbouring country would multiply border trade between two brotherly countries manifold. "The business

community of Balochistan enjoys pleasant and highly regarded relations with Iranian trade community. It was a long-awaited demand of the CCIQ and Balochistan's trade community, which has been fulfilled by the government," he added. Besides opening of new avenues of trade, he hoped, the border markets would turn out to be central points for legal trade between the business communities of the both countries. Stressing the need for early completion of the project, the CCIQ president said completion of all the trade markets on priority would not only be beneficial for the mineral rich province, but would also help to boost the overall economy of the country. "Balochistan is known as the 'fruit basket of Pakistan', therefore, a special attention of the government is required to engage trade community to introduce its products to rest of the world," he added.

## Global stroke deaths expected to rise to nearly 5mn by 2030: Study

ISLAMABAD (APP): The number of deaths worldwide from ischemic stroke increased from 2 million in 1990 to more than 3 million in 2019, and is expected to increase to nearly 5 million by 2030, according to a study. Ischemic stroke is caused by a blockage of blood flow to the brain and is the most common type of stroke. "This increase in the global death toll of ischemic stroke along with a predicted further increase in the future is concerning, but ischemic stroke is highly preventable," said Lize Xiong, from Tongji University in Shanghai, China. "Our results suggest that a combination of lifestyle factors like smoking and a diet high in sodium along with other factors such as high blood pressure and high body mass index can lead to an increased risk of stroke," Xiong added. The study was published in the medical journal Neurology. For the study, researchers analysed data from the Global Health Data Exchange, from 1990-2019. As the world population grew, the global number of ischemic stroke deaths increased from 2.04 million in 1990 to 3.29 million in 2019, Medical Daily reported. However, the stroke rate decreased from 66 strokes per 100,000 people in 1990 to 44 strokes per 100,000 people in 2019. "This decrease in the stroke rate likely means that the overall increase in the number of strokes worldwide is mainly due to population growth and ageing," Xiong said. Researchers found that seven major risk factors including smoking, a diet high in sodium, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, kidney dysfunction, high blood sugar, and high BMI contributed to the higher number of strokes. Researchers then used the database to predict the number of deaths for 2020-2030. They found that the death toll for ischemic stroke is expected to increase further to 4.9 million in 2030. When researchers factored in the risk factors, they predicted that the overall number of deaths from stroke could reach 6.4 million if these risk factors are not controlled or prevented. A limitation of the study was that quality and accuracy of disease data from some countries cannot be guaranteed as many did not have reliable information on strokes.

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