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Scientists use AI to discover new antibiotic to treat deadly superbug

LONDON (Media): Scientists using artificial intelligence have discovered a new antibiotic that can kill a deadly superbug. According to a new study published on Thursday in the science journal Nature Chemical Biology, a group of scientists from McMaster University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have discovered a new antibiotic that can be used to kill a deadly hospital superbug. The superbug in question is *Acinetobacter baumannii*, which the World Health Organization has classified as a “critical” threat among its “priority pathogens” – a group of bacteria families that pose the “greatest threat” to human health. According to the WHO, the bacteria have built-in abilities to find new ways to resist treatment and can pass along genetic material that allows other bacteria to become drug-resistant as well. A *baumannii* poses a threat to hospitals, nursing homes and patients who require ventilators and blood catheters, as well as those who have open wounds from surgeries. The bacteria can live for prolonged periods of time on environmental services and shared equipment, and can often be spread through contaminated hands. In addition to blood infections, a *baumannii* can cause infections in urinary tracts and lungs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the bacteria can also “colonize” or live in a patient without causing infections or symptoms. Thursday’s study revealed that researchers used an AI algorithm to screen thousands of antibacterial molecules in an attempt to



predict new structural classes. As a result of the AI screening, researchers were able to identify a new antibacterial compound which they named abaucin. “We had a whole bunch of data that was just telling us about which chemicals were able to kill a bunch of bacteria and which ones weren’t. My job was to train this model, and all that this model was going to be doing is telling us essentially if new molecules will have antibacterial properties or not,” said Gary Liu, a graduate student from MacMaster University who worked on the research. “Then basically through that, we’re able to just increase the efficiency of the drug discovery pipeline and ... hone in all the molecules that we really want to care about,” he added. After scientists trained the AI model, they used it to analyze 6,680 compounds that it had previously not encountered. The analysis took an hour and half and ended up producing several hundred compounds, 240 of which were then tested in a laboratory. Laboratory testing ulti-

mately revealed nine potential antibiotics, including abaucin. The scientists then tested the new molecule against A *baumannii* in a wound infection model in mice and found that the molecule suppressed the infection. “This work validates the benefits of machine learning in the search for new antibiotics” said Jonathan Stokes, an assistant professor at McMaster University’s department of biomedicine and biochemistry who helped lead the study. “Using AI, we can rapidly explore vast regions of chemical space, significantly increasing the chances of discovering fundamentally new antibacterial molecules,” he said. “We know broad-spectrum antibiotics are suboptimal and that pathogens have the ability to evolve and adjust to every trick we throw at them ... AI methods afford us the opportunity to vastly increase the rate at which we discover new antibiotics, and we can do it at a reduced cost. This is an important avenue of exploration for new antibiotic drugs,” he added.

Former Israeli soldier returns key to Al-Aqsa Mosque after 56 years

TEL AVIV (Agencies): A former Israeli soldier handed back a key Thursday for a gate of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem after stealing it 56 years ago, Anadolu reports. The Islamic Endowments Department in Jerusalem published a video showing its director general Sheikh Azzam Al-Khatib receiving the key from the man, identified as Yair Barack. In the video, Barack said he was part of the Israeli battalion that fought on the East Jerusalem front, adding that many of his comrades died during the fighting in 1967. “I arrived at the Al-Mughrabi Gate (in the western corridor of Al-Aqsa Mosque)...and when I looked at the left side, I found a key. I don’t know why I put my hand on it and took it,” he said. “I put the key in my pocket, and since then, I’ve had it in my possession,” he added. Barack said that after 40 or 50 years, he began feeling uncomfortable that the key was still with him “simply because I stole it and I now decided to return it.” “Now I am here. I returned the key that I had stolen. I returned it back to its owners...and this is what Israel should do — to return back to the Palestinians their land, rights, respect, independence, freedom and security,” he said. He said that after returning the key, he felt he “did the right thing.” His handing back of the key came as Israeli settlers along with scores of Israeli officials joined a “flag march” to celebrate their occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967. Commenting on the controversial march, he said this is one of the worst days in the year for him, adding he stopped celebrating “flag day” a long time ago. The Flag March is staged by Israeli settlers every year to mark what they call the unification of Jerusalem, in reference to Israel’s occupation of the city in 1967. “I was part of it at that day. I wished I didn’t do it, which is occupying Jerusalem,” he said. Israel occupied East Jerusalem during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. It annexed the entire city in 1980 in a move never recognized by the international community.

Russia will not achieve military victory in Ukraine: General Mark Milley

WASHINGTON D.C. (Agencies): Russia will not achieve a military victory in Ukraine, top US officer General Mark Milley said Thursday, while also cautioning that Kyiv is unlikely to force out all of Moscow’s troops anytime soon. His comments underlined forecasts that the war in Ukraine is set to drag on, with neither side positioned to win a clear-cut victory and no negotiations currently taking place. “This war, militarily, is not going to be won by Russia. It’s just not,” Milley told journalists after the conclusion of a virtual meeting of dozens of countries that support Ukraine. Russia’s original strategic objectives, including overthrowing the government in Kyiv, “are not achievable militarily, they’re not going to be done,” Milley said. At the same time, there are hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers in Ukraine, making Kyiv’s objective of recapturing all of its territory unlikely “in the near term,” he said. “That means fighting is going to continue, it’s going to be bloody, it’s going to be hard. And at some point, both sides will either negotiate a settlement or they’ll come to a military conclusion.” The US has spearheaded the push for international support for Ukraine, quickly forging a coalition to back Kyiv after Russia in-

vaded in February 2022 and coordinating aid from dozens of countries. In total, Ukraine’s supporters have provided nearly \$65 billion in security assistance to the country, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said. The White House said last week that Washington would support providing advanced warplanes including F-16s to Ukraine, dropping previous reluctance to do so. On Thursday, Kyiv’s supporters “discussed plans for training Ukrainian pilots on fourth-generation fighter aircraft, including the F-16,” Austin said alongside Milley, noting that “planning and executing this training will be a significant undertaking.” The US defense chief said that a fund may be established for financial contributions to aid the effort from countries that do not have F-16s or the capabilities to assist directly with training, maintenance or sustainment. Milley explained the US shift in favor of providing Kyiv with the warplanes by saying that doing so earlier in the conflict would have taken funds away from more immediate needs, while building Ukraine’s air force is a long-term endeavor. “It’s going to take a considerable length of time to build up an air force that’s the size and scope and scale that’ll be necessary,” he said.

Yemen’s Houthi gov’t enters oil exploration deal with China

SANA (Agencies): Yemen’s de facto, Houthi-led government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China’s Anton Oilfield Services Group (AntonOil) and a representative of the Chinese government to invest in oil exploration in the country. According to a report by the Sanaa-based Saba News agency yesterday, the MoU comes after many negotiations and coordination with several foreign companies to convince them to invest in the war-torn country’s underdeveloped oil sector. The Sanaa government’s Ministry of Oil and Min-

erals who inked the agreement also warned foreign companies against dealing with the Saudi-initiated Presidential Leadership Council, which currently represents the internationally-recognized Yemen government. Oil and Minerals minister, Ahmed Dares called on foreign firms to visit Yemen to see the potential, investment opportunities, advantages and facilities on offer in the country. “There are many ongoing negotiations with various high-profile companies to invest in the country’s oil exploration sector,” the Yemeni official added.

South Korea approves Ukraine arms transfer :WSJ

SEOUL (Agencies): South Korea has agreed to send hundreds of thousands of artillery shells to Ukraine under a “confidential arrangement” with the United States, the Wall Street Journal reported. The move would mark an about-face for Seoul, which has been reluctant to authorize lethal aid to Kiev. Under the reported agreement, South Korea will first ship the munitions to the US, which will then forward them on to Ukraine, sources told the Journal on Wednesday. Seoul and the Pentagon have so far declined to confirm the transfer, though both acknowledged ongoing talks for the shells. However, South Korean Defense Ministry spokesman Jeon Ha-kyu said there were “inaccurate parts” in the WSJ report during

a press briefing later on Wednesday, though did not specify further. “There have been various discussions and requests, and our government will take appropriate measures while comprehensively reviewing the war and humanitarian situation in Ukraine,” Jeon said. While South Korea initially said it would send munitions last November under another behind-the-scenes deal with the US, it later “got cold feet” after the agreement was reported in the media, American officials told the outlet. At the time, Seoul reportedly feared the decision would violate its policy against providing anything beyond non-lethal aid to Ukraine, though officials were also hesitant to deny a request from Washington, a close ally.

Oath Keepers leader gets 18 years for US Capitol riot

WASHINGTON (Agencies): A federal judge in Washington, DC sentenced Oath Keepers leader Stewart Rhodes to 18 years in prison on Thursday, calling him an ongoing threat to the US. It was the longest sentence yet in the matter of the January 6 riot at the US capitol, and the first on charges of seditious conspiracy. “You, sir, present an ongoing threat and a peril to this country, to the republic and to the very fabric of our democracy,” Judge Amit Mehta told Rhodes at the sentencing. “You are smart, you are compelling, and you are charismatic. Frankly, that is what makes you dangerous.” Rhodes replied that he was a “political prisoner” and that he felt like the lead character in Franz Kafka’s ‘The Trial,’ whose guilt was foreordained. “My goal will be to be an ‘American



Solzhenitsyn’ to expose the criminality of this regime,” he told the court. Prosecutors sought at least 25 years, describing the January 2021 riot as a “brazen attack” that threatened the “most important and vulnerable part of American democracy.” Mehta agreed with their claim that Rhodes had been a leader of the “insurrection” and agreed to classify his actions as terrorism, which drastically increased the length of the sentence.

Russia Belarus signs nuclear arms deal

MOSCOW (Agencies): Moscow and Minsk have sealed an agreement on the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. Explaining the need for the move, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu cited a recent increase in the number of NATO maneuvers involving weapons of mass destruction. Shoigu and his Belarusian counterpart, Viktor Khrenin, on Thursday signed off on documents stipulating the terms of the deployment and storage of the Russian weapons. The Russian minister emphasized that the move had come in response to the “acute escalation of threats and activities by NATO joint nuclear missions.” He noted that the agreement involves “non-strategic nuclear weapons” and is in accordance



with “all international legal obligations currently in force.” “Russia is not handing over nuclear weapons to the Belarusian Republic; control over it and the decision to use it remains with the Russian side,” Shoigu added. Moscow has provided Minsk with nuclear-capable Iskander-M missiles and has helped Belarus modify some of its fighter jets so they can carry nuclear weapons, the Russian minister revealed.

Tasered 95-year-old great-grandmother dies in Australia



NEW SOUTH WALES (Agencies): A 95-year-old woman has died in hospital a week after being Tasered by an Australian police officer inside her nursing home. Clare Nowland, who had dementia, was Tasered on May 17 after staff found her holding a steak knife outside her room in Cooma in southeastern Australia. The incident left Nowland, a great-grandmother, with critical head injuries after she fell. She passed away “peacefully” in hospital surrounded by family and

loved ones, police said in a statement on Wednesday, adding that Nowland had 24 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren. After her death, Kristian White, a 33-year-old senior police officer was charged with recklessly causing grievous bodily harm, assault occasioning actual bodily harm and common assault over the incident. The policeman, who has been suspended with pay, will face court on July 5. The charges will probably change after Nowland’s death.

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.

Culprits involved in May 9 arson attacks to be awarded exemplary punishment: Marriyum

PESHAWAR (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday said that no concession would be given to miscreants and armed groups who attacked sensitive installations on May 9. “May 9 cannot be repeated and the culprits involved will be awarded exemplary punishment”, the minister said while

speaking during a ceremony on the occasion of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s visit to Radio Pakistan Peshawar. She said that the Radio Pakistan building and historical archives were burnt by arsonists. “Our precious asset was set on fire which cannot be recovered,” she maintained. The district administration and Radio Pakistan staff,

the minister said, tried their best to stop the armed groups who carried batons and petrol bombs. She said many people were injured while trying to protect the building of Radio Pakistan during the arson attack. The minister said, “They thought that they would be acquitted of this crime, under the guise of political protest,” but that was not possible.

Rally carried out on ‘martyrs’ day’; solidarity expressed with Armed forces

KHYBER (APP): The civil society, district administration and local elders on Thursday carried out a solidarity rally here in Jamrud in connection with the ‘martyrs’ day’ and expressed resolve to fully support the armed forces of Pakistan. Sector Commander Brigadier Mansoor, Colonel Abid ur Rahman of Tirah Rifles 211-Wing, Frontier Corps, local youth, tribal elders including Malik Faizullah Jan, Malik Abdul Manan, Malik Rosi Gul, Chairman Muhammad Dawood, Sabz Ali Malaguri and Malik Kifayat Khan, local government represen-

tatives and civil society attended the rally. On this occasion, tributes were paid to martyrs of security forces and a special prayer was also offered security and prosperity of the country. In his address to the participants, Brigadier Mansoor said that they are living in a free country due to the sacrifices of the soldiers of the Pakistan Armed forces, adding that Pakistan Army would not hesitate to make any kind of sacrifice for the defense of the motherland. On this occasion, Malik Faizullah Jan Afridi said that the people of the entire country were

carrying out rallies to express solidarity with the state institutions, which, he said was a clear ample example of solidarity and love of people for their armed and security forces. Pointing to the huge number of people in the rally, he said that from this great rally, it could be well estimated that the people were having full trust and confidence in their forces and standing side by side with the institutions. He said that the tribal people would continue to stand with their armed forces against any conspiracy and would foil it together.

Flood victims urge global community to make loss,damages fund of climate change operational

PESHAWAR (APP): As the second international meeting on finance mechanism to address loss and dam-

ages of climate change is in progress in Germany, people in Pakistan who suffered from devastating floods have stressed upon the global community to take immediate measures for making the initiative operational. Flood affectees including young students, heart patients, pregnant mothers, smallholder farmers and local merchants have urged the international community to ensure early implementation of loss and damages fund of climate change for reducing their ordeal caused by catastrophic flooding in the country. Speaking in a documentary prepared on the urgency of international finances for damages of climate change by Resilient Future International and Sujag Sansaar Organization, the victims of disaster said they cannot afford any delay due to negotiation on climate change

and the initiative of loss and damage funds should be implemented at the earliest. “The documentary titled as ‘Voices for Climate Justice: Loss and Damage Fund Now ‘ is launched to remind the participants of Bonn meeting and the wider world about the urgency of finances for the loss and damage of climate change,” says Aftab Alam Khan. In a press statement issued here on Thursday, Aftab said Loss and Damage Fund was a welcome step at COP27 but its success would depend upon how soon the Fund becomes operational and its finances reach the victims of climate change. The finance mechanism, called Loss and Damage Fund, was a major outcome of the last international UN Conference on Climate Change (COP27) at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt Nov 6-Nov 18, 2022.

FOREX RATES

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	309	312
China Yuan	40.74	41.14
Japanese Yen	2.15	2.2
Saudi Riyal	81.9	82.7
U.A.E Dirham	83.9	84.7
UK Pound	379	382.8
Euro	328	331
Australian Dollar	201	203
Canadian Dollar	225	227

Emergency Numbers	
Organization	Phone No
Rescue 1122 HQrs	091-2264224-25
Rescue 1122 Mardan	0937-9230770
Fire Brigade Cantt:	091-9212534
Fire Brigade City	091-2566666
Police Emergency	091-9212222
Edhi Ambulance	091-2214575
Red Crescent Ambulance	091-2210836
Emergency Ambulance	091-2590846
Civil Defence, Peshawar	091-9212176
Lady Reading Hospital	091-9211430
HMC Peshawar	091-9217140-46
KTH Peshawar	091-9216340-8
Irnarn Hospital	091-9216115
Mission Hospital	091-2212371
Al-Khidmat Hospital	091-2215945
Fauji Foundation Hospital	091-9212771-4
Frontier Foundation Blood Services	091-5703463
Hamza Foundation, Peshawar	091-5841632
Sui Gas, Peshawar	091-9213016
Wapda Complaint Peshawar	091-9212041
PIA, Peshawar	091-9213351
Airport Inquiry	114
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Nation to not forgive if attackers of civil,defence installations escaped from justice: PM

PESHAWAR (APP): Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday said that the nation would not forgive if the attackers of civil and defence installations on May 9-10 escaped from justice. The prime minister added that those involved in rioting and planners would be tried under the relevant sections of Anti Terrorism Act. Chairing a high-level meeting at Governor House Peshawar to review the law and order situation, the prime minister also assured that no injustice would be made with those who were found not involved in subversive activity. Besides others, the meeting was attended by Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan, Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcast-

ing Marriyum Aurangzeb, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Prime Minister Adviser Amir Muqam, Chief Secretary and IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Prime Minister said that this important meeting was planned soon after the May 9-10 incident, but was delayed due to some unavoidable engagements. However, he said that a zoom meeting was arranged with the Governor KP and Chief Minister to get himself appraised about the huge damages and losses inflicted by the rioters. The prime minister regretted that these elements, who claimed themselves as pro-Pakistan, were in fact involved in vandalism and by attacking the defense installations they have caused damage beyond imagination that even could not have been done by our enemies in the 75 years history of the country.

Ransacking of Radio Pakistan’s building exposes barbaric mindset of attackers: PM

PESHAWAR (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the ransacking and putting on fire of the historic Radio Pakistan Peshawar’s building exposed the barbaric mindsets of the attackers, who had no regard for humanity and national heritage. Addressing an event here to express solidarity with the employees of Radio Pakistan and Associated Press of Pakistan at Radio Pakistan Peshawar’s building, the prime minister said that a wave of widespread anger against attackers was felt in the country after the attack. He mentioned that people from all walks of life strongly condemned the assaults at the government buildings and security installations across the country on May 9 and 10. “There is no difference between the rioters of May 9-10 and the terrorists,” the prime minister said, adding that his government would ensure that such deplorable incidents never repeat again. He vowed exemplary punishment to the culprits as per the law. The prime minister said the May 9-10 devastation was beyond imagination and even the enemy was not able to carry out such deplorable incidents in the past. He said the

Radio Pakistan Peshawar was a historic station established before the independence of Pakistan in 1935. The announcement of Pakistan’s independence was also made from this station and the Radio Pakistan Lahore station at midnight of August 13-14, 1947. He said millions of Muslims, under the leadership of Father of the Nation Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, rendered great sacrifices for the motherland, adding the violent incidents of May 9 and 10 put the entire in a state of grief and anger. The prime minister said the ransacking of the historic Radio station was against the spirit of patriotism and love for national heritage. He strongly condemned the alighting of the model of Chaghi hills constructed in the premises of Radio Pakistan Peshawar in memory of the May 28, 1998 successful nuclear explosions that made the country’s defence impregnable. He recalled that the iconic structure depicted the historic moment where the country’s defence was made invincible on May 28, 1998, under the leadership of then prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. PM Sharif said that living nations protect their nation-

PM chairs meeting on law,order in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting here at the Governor House about the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Federal Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and Advisor to the PM Ameer Muqam attended the meeting. On the occasion, KP Governor Ghulam Ali, CM Azam

Khan, Chief Secretary KP Nadeem Aslam, Home Secretary Abid Majeed, IG Police Akhtar Hayat Gandapur and other administrative secretaries were also present. Chief Secretary KP Nadeem Aslam and Home Secretary Abid Majeed briefed the prime minister about the security situation and the challenges in the province. Earlier, upon his arrival at the Governor House, the prime minister was received by KP Governor Ghulam Ali, CM Azam Khan and Advisor to the PM Ameer Muqam

Harm to prestige of martyrs unacceptable: AC Zainab

PESHAWAR (APP): Assistant Commissioner Sayyeda Zainab Naqvi has said that martyrs were our heroes and no one would be allowed to harm their prestige and stature at any cost. She said this during her visit to the graves of Commandant Frontier Constabulary, Shaheed Safwat Ghayur and Shaheed SHO Asghar Khan here on Thursday. She laid floral wreaths on the graves and offered Fateha for the departed souls. Later, along with SHO Ibrahim Khan, she went to the residence of Shaheed SHO Asghar

Khan and expressed sympathy with the bereaved family. She assured all out support on part of the government to the family members of the martyred SHO. She said our martyrs rendered their lives for the security of the motherland and nourished the soil with their blood. We could not forget the sacrifices and services of our martyrs as they were our national assets. The services and sacrifices rendered by our army, law enforcers, police, security agencies and people will be remembered forever, she added.

Three cops injured in attack on polio team

PESHAWAR (APP): Three police officials were injured on Thursday after unidentified assailants opened fire at a polio team in Dara area of Khyber district. According to district police, the workers of the polio team remained unhurt in the incident as the police officials on duty retaliated timely and forced the miscreants to retreat. The po-

lice and security forces immediately reached the spot and shifted the injured cops, Naekmat Shah, Saddam and Gul Muhammad, to the hospital where their condition was stated to be stable. The police and security forces have started a search operation in the area to arrest the culprits while the polio teams resumed the vaccination drive.

Elder brother of PS to KP Excise Minister dies

PESHAWAR (APP): The elder brother of Anwar Ali, Private Secretary to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Excise and Narcotics Control Haji Manzoor Afridi died here on Thursday after a brief illness. The funeral prayer of the deceased was offered at Gujrano Kally in Dagai area of Swabi district that was attended by

a large number of people from all walks of life Haji Manzoor Afridi has expressed profound grief over the demise of the elder brother of his private secretary. He also prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family for bearing this irreparable loss with fortitude.

Center for Water Informatics and Climate Resilience launched

PESHAWAR (APP): The Center for Water Informatics and Climate Resilience was launched here at Institute of Management Sciences (IMScirnc-es) on Thursday. The ceremony was held under a GIZ & BMZ funded project titled, “Supporting Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Improving Climate Governance”. Accordingly to a press release issued here, CWC is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) at the National level and the Planning & Developing Department (P&DD) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. Various national and provincial government officers, experts from academia,

the private sector, UN agencies, and NGOs attended the event. The aim of the ceremony was the official launch of the Centre for Water Informatics and Climate Resilience (CWC), IMSciences. Under the aforementioned project, IMSciences will extend support to GoKP in setting up a Climate Change Cell at the P&DD of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and operationalizing the Climate Finance Unit at the MoCC. In addition, IMSciences is tasked to develop climate change-related curricula and implement a one-year diploma on climate change at the IMSciences for the relevant government officers and young professionals.



IIOJK: DFP thanks G20 nations for boycotting Srinagar meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), led by incarcerated senior APHC leader, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, has said that the boycott of the G20's Srinagar meeting by key stakeholders has vindicated the Kashmiris' stand that Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory and India has illegally occupied it. According to Kashmir Media Service, the DFP, in a statement issued in Srinagar, expressed its profound

gratitude to China, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Egypt, Indonesia and other such countries for realizing the sensitivities involved in attending the G20 event in Srinagar. The DFP said the step taken by these countries boosted the morale of the Kashmiris. It urged India to take practical steps for the settlement of the Kashmir dispute as per the United Nation's resolutions as it can no longer hoodwink the world by promoting fake normalcy in the occupied territory. Meanwhile, In-

dia's Special Investigation Unit conducted raids on houses in Padder, Keshwan and Thakrai areas of the Kishtwar district, today. Indian troops launched a cordon and search operation in Baramulla district. In London, a member of the British Parliament Paul Bristow from the Conservative Party, while expressing his concern over the ongoing Kashmir conflict called for giving the Kashmiri people their right to self-determination to end the decades-old dispute.

Modi regime resorting to nefarious tactics to mislead world on IIOJK situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has deplored that Narendra Modi-led Indian government is resorting to nefarious tactics to mislead the international community about the prevailing grim situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, the APHC in a statement issued in Srinagar said that on one hand, the Modi regime has usurped all basic rights of the people of occupied territory while on the other, it is attempting to hide its crimes by holding events like the G20 meetings in the territory. It said the people of occupied Kashmir have been suffering immensely under the Indian

military occupation and witnessing oppression and bloodshed for the last over 7 decades. The APHC said that under the prevailing circumstance, every justice-loving person in the world must become the voice of oppressed Kashmiris. It said that the world must play its role by listening to the cries of beleaguered Kashmiris. "International community must shun its double standards and help the Kashmiris exercise their right to self-determination. It is time for the UN to honour its commitments regarding the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Modi and his henchmen must be brought to book for brutally suppressing the Kashmiris," it added.

Junior champ Ahsan Ayaz Pakistan's new trailblazer in squash world: Masood Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan has expressed confidence that junior squash champion Ahsan Ayaz will bring laurels to the country in line with the country's pride icons Jahangir Khan and Jansher Khan. "Ahsan Ayaz seems to have inherited that legacy and will make Pakistan proud again," the envoy said as World Junior Champion Ahsan Ayaz called on him at Chancery in Washington DC, according to a statement received here. Receiving him warmly, Ambassador Masood Khan congratulated Ahsan Ayaz on his numerous successes including securing nine major international titles and assured him of the

embassy's support. Khan reminisced about the golden period of Pakistan's sterling performance in squash led by international icons Jahangir Khan and Jansher Khan. Ahsan Ayaz said every title that he has won is special to him, but the closest to his heart was World Junior Championship that he won in Poland. About his priorities, Ayaz said his utmost priority right now was to keep improving his world ranking and be in the world's top 10. This, he said, would not only be a personal milestone achievement but a feat for the entire Pakistani nation. Ayaz said he was travelling around the world and getting training from international coaches.

Govt disburses Rs 91.636 for various water sector schemes so far

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government had released an amount of Rs 91.636 billion for various water resources schemes under the annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) so far in the current fiscal year 2022-23. According to the official data issued by the Planning Commission, the government had specified a sum of Rs 97.559 billion for various projects in PSDP 2022-23. Out of the total release amount, the local component stood at Rs 78.57 billion while the foreign aid component was Rs 13.06 billion. A sum of Rs 59.97 billion had been spent on various water-related projects so far. The Ongoing schemes included 13 hydel and 61 water sector projects, whereas the new projects were only 13 in

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

Punjab chief secretary pays tribute to Maj Shabir Sharif

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman paid a visit to the grave of Major Shabbir Sharif Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) on Thursday in connection with the 'Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada' observance. After laying a wreath and offering Fateha at the grave, he also prayed for all Shuhada and their families. The chief secretary said that living nations always remember their Shuhada. He pledged to maintain honour and dig-

nity of Shuhada and their families. "The Shuhada, who rendered their lives in the line of duty for ensuring integrity, sovereignty and honour of the nation and motherland, in fact, set a great example of bravery. That's why, the nation is paying tribute to them today," he added. He said, "Shuhada-e-Pakistan are our heroes and a great asset, whose sacrifices can never be allowed to be demeaned or undermined by anyone.

Event held at Police Lines to mark Martyrs' Reverence Day

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada (Martyrs' Reverence Day) was observed in Bahawalpur to pay tribute to martyrs who laid their lives for their motherland. An event was held at Police Lines Bahawalpur to mark the day. GOC 26 Div Major General Shahid Parvez, Regional Police Officer Bahawalpur Rai Babar Saeed, Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Dr Ehtesham Anwar, Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa, and other officers participated

in the ceremony. Guard of Honor was also presented on the Martyrs' Reverence Day. The participants prayed for the elevation of the ranks of martyrs. GOC 26 Div Maj Gen Shahid Parvez and Regional Police Officer met with the family of the martyrs in the conference hall. They paid rich tributes to the sacrifices of the martyrs. Gifts were also distributed among the families of martyrs. RPO said that martyrs are assets of our country and their sacrifices will always be remembered.

PM condoles with Ayaz Sadiq over his brother's death

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Sardar Mahmood Sadiq, the elder brother of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. The prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and elevate the ranks in paradise. He also prayed for grant of courage to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.

ANF foils two bids to smuggle drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in two operations managed to foil two bids to smuggle drugs and recovered 600 grams heroin and 48 heroin-filled capsules, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. In an operation, ANF recovered 600 grams heroin from a parcel booked at Islamabad GPO for Birmingham. In another operation at Lahore International Airport, 48 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Jeddah-bound passenger, resident of Sargodha, going on SV-739. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

Martyrs day observed in Kasur

KASUR (APP): Special programs and events were held to commemorate the sacrifices of martyrs on Pakistan Martyr's Reverence Day here in the district on Thursday. Police said that Quran recitation was organized in District Police Lines Kasur early morning in which District Police Officer (DPO) Kasur Tariq Aziz Sindhu, SP investigation, Circle officers and a number of personnel participated. They offered 'Fatiha' for raising the status of the martyrs and prayed for the peace and security of the country. The DPO Tariq Aziz Sindhu also laid floral wreath on the graves of martyrs. Tariq Aziz highlighted that "34 police officers from Kasur were martyred in line of duty". He added that living nation never forget their 'Shuhada' who sacrificed their lives to save the country's future.

Police arrest PO wanted in murder case

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police have arrested a Proclaimed Offender (PO) wanted in a murder and attempt to murder cases, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He said Naseerabad police arrested PO namely Sohail, wanted in a murder case of a citizen, Faizan, adding that he was also wanted in an attempt to murder case registered in 2019. Police recovered 1600 grams charras from his possession. He said that Rawalpindi district police were taking stern action in accordance with the law against the lawbreakers, adding, the operations would continue and all the POs would be sent behind bars. SSP Operations, Rawalpindi Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against POs and most wanted criminals, he added.

Three profiteers held

SARGODHA (APP): The district administration arrested three shopkeepers accused of profiteering in various parts of city on Thursday. According to official sources, the magistrates inspected various points, including Satellite Town, Istaqalabad and Silanwali road and arrested shopkeepers- Safdar, Javed and Imran.

Marriyum urges masses to show solidarity with martyrs, Ghazis on 'Pakistan Martyrs Day'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday urged the nation to "say no to May 9 by showing exemplary solidarity with the martyrs, Ghazis, defenders of the homeland and their families on "Pakistan Martyrs Day" today. In a tweet,

she asked the people to pay tributes to the sacrifices of martyrs by visiting their shrines and memorials of the martyrs. The minister said this was the day of changing the collective thinking of the nation and erasing the blot of May 9 by remembering the sacrifices of the martyrs.

Nation stands shoulder-to-shoulder with armed forces', PML-N leaders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-N senior leaders on Thursday paid rich tribute to the martyrs who laid their lives while protecting the motherland and reiterated their commitment that the entire nation stands shoulder-to-shoulder with Pakistan forces. "We salute to our forces who laid down their lives defending our motherland", on the eve of Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan PML-N leader Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh said while talking to ptv news channel. He said the sacrifices of martyrs and the services of Ghazis were the armed forces' valuable asset and capital of pride for the coun-

try. Meanwhile, Salma Bhutt PML-N leader added that the Pakistan Army as an institution always remembered every person associated with it and their families and its relationship as a family was a proud and exemplary one. The armed forces of Pakistan have played a remarkable role and every segment of life including the army, police and law enforcement agencies have rendered invaluable sacrifices. PML-N leaders regretted that the incidents of May 9 were intolerable and unpardonable as the monuments and statues of the martyrs of armed forces and law enforcement agencies were vandalized.

Martyrs' sacrifices will always be remembered: Javed Latif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Javed Latif on Thursday paying rich tribute to the 'Shuhada' on 'Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan' said that sacrifices of the martyrs who laid their lives while protecting the motherland would be remembered forever. "On this day, we resolve that we would defend our country at all cost as the entire nation stands

alongside the armed forces to thwart evil designs of the enemy against the integrity and prosperity of the country," he said while talking to a private news channel. He said that the government was committed to providing all necessary resources to strengthen Pakistan's armed forces, adding, the nation was proud of its armed forces for making the country's defence impregnable.

Govt. spends Rs. 4,407.81 million on IT-related projects in ten months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has released funds amounting to 4,407.81 million to execute Information Technology related projects during the ten months of the current fiscal year under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23). According to official data

available with APP, the government has authorized the utilization of development funds amounting to Rs 6,876.07 million out of a total allocation for various ongoing and new projects of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication.

Three street criminals arrested; Rs 24,000 snatched cash recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police, in an operation against criminal elements, here on Thursday arrested three street criminals and recovered Rs 24,000 snatched cash, four mobile phones and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Gungmandi police arrested three members of 'Shani' gang including Zeeshan alias Shani, ringleader, Anis and Faiz ul Rehman, wanted in various cases.

He informed that the police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Gungmandi Police Station on the directives of the Superintendent of Police conducted a raid and managed to net the accused. Police also recovered Rs 24,000 cash, four mobile phones, and other items from their possession. As per the preliminary police record, the criminals were also involved in other crimes, he said.

Pak Army gave countless sacrifices: state minister

SARGODHA (APP): State Minister for Production and Industries Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi paid rich tribute to the martyrs, who had laid their lives while protecting the motherland. "We salute our forces who laid down their lives defending our motherland," he said while talking to APP on the Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada (Pakistan Martyrs Reverence Day), being observed here on Thursday. He said that whole nation stands

with the Pakistan Army and solutes all Shuhada and Ghazis. Tasneem Qureshi, who's also a senior PPP leader, said that sacrifices of martyrs and the services of Ghazis were a valuable asset to the armed forces and pride for the country. He said that the incidents of May 9 were intolerable and unpardonable as the monuments and statues of martyrs were vandalised by the unruly political activists on that day.

Advent of summer in AJK blesses with unexpected heavy downpour:

MIRPUR (APP): With the advent of summer, various parts of AJK including the semi-hilly lake - side city of Mirpur was blessed with first heavy downpour of the season we hours Thursday breaking the just-emerging hot spell to considerable extent. In Mirpur, the cats and dogs rains started wee hours Thursday owed by wind storm that hit various parts of the district partially affecting the daily life. Various low-lying areas along Mirpur-Kotli highway and other city streets inundated with rainy water. Mirpur lashed with rainfall with

mild wind storm, which continued intermittently till filing of this report partially affecting the electricity and telecommunication system in certain areas of the Mirpur division comprising Kotli, Mirpur and Bhimbher district, according to the reports. There are also reports of uprooting of trees at several places in the division because of the wind storm. The reported stormy rains also turned the weather more pleasant in various top mountainous parts of AJK including the picturesque Leepa and Neelum valleys and the State's metropolis.

People demand action against beggars

SARGODHA (APP): People on Thursday demanded the authority concerned to take action against professional beggars in the city. A large number of professional beggars thronged to the markets, parks,

main highways, bus stands and other busy places of the district and creating a nuisance for the people. Talking to APP, people said an increasing trend of beggars could become a security threat.

Paf Pays Tribute to Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed on Youm-E-Takreem Shuhada-E-Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): To pay homage to Pakistan's valiant son and the youngest recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed, the Directorate General Public Relations (Air Force) has released a short documentary on the occasion of Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan. On 20 August, 1971 an unforgettable saga of bravery was crafted with his ultimate sacrifice. On this fateful day, Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed, vanquished the iniquitous intentions of his instructor pilot Flight Lieutenant Mati-ur-Rahman, who tried to hijack his training T-33 jet towards India. Rashid battled to take back the controls of the aircraft and finally preferred to crash the plane before it could cross the border. The brave son of soil accepted to sacrifice his life but didn't allow the country's dignity to be tarnished. In



recognition of Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas's supreme sacrifice and indelible courage, the Government of Pakistan awarded him with the highest gallantry award Nishan-e-Haider. He will always be remembered as an icon of bravery & sacrifice and will remain a beacon for our future generations.

NA Speaker and Deputy Speaker condole death of elder brother of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of National Assembly (NA) Raja Pervez Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani on Thursday condoled the death of Sardar Mehmood, elder brother of Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Former Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. In their separate condolence messages to Sardar Ayaz Sadiq,

the Speaker, and the Deputy Speaker expressed their heartfelt sorrow and grief over the tragic news about the passing away of his elder brother. They also prayed to Almighty Allah to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to Ayaz Sadiq and the other members of the family to bear the irreparable loss with fortitude.

The Secretary-General Message On Africa Day 2023

We mark Africa Day at a time when cooperation and solidarity to advance the continent's future is more needed than ever. Africa's dynamism is unstoppable; its potential is breathtaking, from the vibrancy of its huge number of young people to the possibilities of free trade. The African Union has designated 2023 the year of the African Continental Free Trade Area. When fully established, the world's largest single market could lift 50 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035, driving progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. I look forward to African governments continuing to

seize the opportunities presented by the continent's natural, human, and entrepreneurial richness, by working to increase private investment and raise resources at home. And I urge the international community to stand with Africa. Currently, historic and economic injustices hamper its progress. Multiple crises – from COVID to climate and conflict – continue to cause great suffering across the continent. African countries are underrepresented in global governance institutions, from the Security Council to the Bretton Woods System, and denied the debt relief and concessional funding they need.

Naval Chief Inaugurates High School at District Sanghar

KARACHI: A simple yet impressive ceremony to inaugurate Admin and Secondary education block at Govt Boys High School (GBHS) was held at Sanghar. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi graced the ceremony as Chief Guest. Upon his arrival the Chief Guest was warmly welcomed by Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah. Education Minister Sindh was also present at the ceremony. The aim of High School inauguration is to provide quality education to the local students. Speaking on the occasion, Naval Chief expressed his deep sentiments and called it a matter of great pride to inaugurate the school where he spent precious moments of his student life. He paid rich tribute to his teachers who taught him great lessons of life and nurtured leadership qualities in him. The Admiral underscored that teachers are the backbone of nation building. They play their vital roles in shaping the overall structure of



society through nurturing the children in all aspects i.e. academically, socially and morally. Admiral briefly highlighted contributions of Pakistan Navy in education sector throughout hinterland of the country that include chain of Bahria Universities, Colleges and schools. He emphasized that establishment of State-of-the-Art Cadet College Ormara is a testament of providing quality education for coastal community of Balochistan and beyond. Towards the end, Admiral thanked Govt of Sindh for the financial support in development of the school and provision of quality infrastructure and essential facilities for modern line education.

Kundi welcomes PTI MP in PPP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday welcomed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Dr Haider Ali for joining Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Kundi in a press conference here while observing the Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan (Day of Honouring the Martyrs of Pakistan) said, "We stand with the families of the Shuhada." "I on behalf of the party and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and former president Asif Ali Zardari welcome Ali to the party which top priority is to give respect to everyone. PPP workers have always stood with their leaders through thick and thin," he said. Commenting on dialogues with PTI, he said, "If we look at Former President Asif Ali Zardari's previous interviews, he has always said that PTI is not a political party." "Im-

ran Khan is not a political leader but a sportsman. PTI will fall through its weight only and we can see it today," he quoted Zardari as saying. "When an assassination attempt was made on Shaheed Benazir Bhutto in Karachi at Karsaz the very next day she was visiting the homes of PPP leaders to inquire about their health. This is the true identity of a leader," he said. Kundi said PTI was just restricted to Zaman Park and their leaders were nowhere to be seen now. "The way forward to the political crisis is free and fair elections. PPP's stance has been loud and clear that whichever party gets the highest polls should run the country. All institutions in the country should remain within their constitutional limits and work," he said. He said even how tough the times were, PPP had never thought of defaming or damaging any organ of the state or institution in the country.

NA felicitates people of Gujjar Khan on approval of Punjab University Potohar Campus

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf here on Wednesday felicitated the people of Gujjar Khan on the approval of Rs. 4 billion for the establishment of 'Punjab University Potohar Campus' by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP). In a statement, he said, "The establishment of Punjab University Potohar Campus would usher in the new era of prosperity and development in Gujjar Khan." Punjab University's Potohar Campus Gujjar Khan, Rawalpindi



di was approved at the cost of four billion rupees in the meeting of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal held the other

IRSA releases 177,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 177,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 205,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1427.52 feet and was 29.52 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 68,600 cusecs and 60,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1117.95 feet, which was 67.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 57,400 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 68,700, 61,100, 42,100 and 14,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 43,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 24,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

WAPDA Union Bahawalpur marks safety day

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Under the auspices of the WAPDA Hydro Electric Union Bahawalpur chapter, safety day was observed at WAPDA Offices and grid stations here across the Bahawalpur district. A ceremony in connection with safety day was also held here at Bahawalpur Circle Training Center. The speakers who addressed the ceremony included XEN Model Town, Chaudhary Saqib, XEN City, Tariq Memon, Additional XEN (Safety), Aamir Ansari, Regional Chairman, WAPDA Hydro Electric Union, Chaudhary Ghulam Rasool Gujjar, the Regional Vice Chairman, Chaudhary Zulfiqar, Zonal Chairman, Jaffar Khan and others. They emphasized the need to adopt safety measures while working on transmission lines and electric projects.

MQM London terrorist held

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Karachi on Thursday arrested an alleged terrorist affiliated with MQM (London) from Korangi area. The arrested accused, identified as Wasi Ahmed Khan alias Kashif was unit in-charge of Korangi and was involved in numerous targeted killings of cops and opponent party members, said a news release. He remained the unit in-charge of unit 74 from 2009 to 2014 and carried out terrorist activities on the instructions of sector in-charge Raees Mumma. The accused had been jailed for his involvement in different cases earlier also. The arrested accused was being interrogated about the existing network of MQM (London).

'Martyrs Reverence Day' observed

SUKKUR (APP): The 'Martyrs Reverence Day' was observed with enthusiasm and solemnity here on Thursday. Tributes were paid to martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty to safeguard the country from all threats, at a gathering, organized by Civil Society which was attended by families of martyrs police men and people from all walks of life including lawyers, traders, religious leaders, journalists, and civil society representatives. Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Sukkur, Dr Muhammad Essa said, "Shuhada-e-Pakistan are our heroes and a great asset, whose ultimate sacrifices can never be allowed to be demeaned or undermined by anyone."

DG (EPA) to ensure strict actions against those shops using polythene bags, Committee



ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination met at Parliament House Islamabad under the Chairpersonship of Ms. Nuzhat Pathan, MNA. The Committee directed the Ministry to seal all those factories that are still manufacturing plastic bags and to provide list of those shops and factories who have been fined for violating environmental laws. The Committee also directed the Director General of Environment Protection Agency (EPA) to ensure strict actions against those shops using polythene bags as this move, being part of Committee's efforts, will reduce the amount of

plastic waste produced in the country. The Committee also stressed upon launching of publicity awareness campaign regarding disbanding of usage of plastic bags on Electronic and Print media. On the complaint launched by DG, EPA, regarding attack on her at Savour Foods Islamabad; the Committee was informed that the DIG Police Islamabad had extended full cooperation to the Ministry and gave assurance for resolution of the issues faced by officials in enforcing and implementing climate laws. The Committee commended DIG Police Islamabad for his support and commitment to combating environmental challenges.

OGDCL and PRL Sign MOU for Collaborative Growth in Pakistan's Energy Sector



ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Tuesday established a strategic partnership with the Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL) to identify and pursue potential cooperation opportunities and foster mutual growth in the energy industry of Pakistan. Both companies have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a strategic cooperation relationship in the energy industry. The MOU sets the framework for future collaboration and cooperation between the two companies. Under the MOU, OGDCL, a leading Oil and Gas Exploration and Production company in Pakistan, and PRL, a prominent refinery engaged in the production and sale of petroleum

products, will engage in good faith negotiations to identify potential areas of cooperation and collaboration. One of the key aspects of this strategic cooperation includes OGDCL's equity investment in PRL as a strategic investor, with adequate board representation, aimed at the upgradation and growth of the refinery. Both companies will work together to execute necessary agreements, including confidentiality agreements for data exchange, to identify suitable investment opportunities. The parties will also facilitate and support each other in realizing the objectives outlined in the MOU, with a commitment to defining a specific Scope of Work/TOR for any joint investment opportunity prior to entering into a definitive agreement.

Rally taken out to pay tribute to martyrs on Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada

BAHAWALPUR (APP): A rally was taken out from Khatm-e-Nabuwat Chowk to Milad Chowk in connection with Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada (Martyrs' Reverence Day) which was led by Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Dr Ehtesham Anwar. Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa, officers and staff of government departments, Ulema, workers of political parties, teachers, students, members of civil society, and media representatives participated in the rally. Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Dr. Ehtesham Anwar while speaking on

the occasion, said that the sacrifices of the martyrs are a matter of pride for our nation. Due to the great sacrifices of the martyrs, our country is safe and stable, he added. Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa said that the entire nation salutes the sacrifices of martyrs and Pakistani forces. He said that martyrs have sacrificed their lives, property, and families in the line of duty and the entire Pakistani nation stands with the Pakistan Army. Allama Abdul Razzaq Shaiq and others paid tribute to the martyrs of the Pakistan Army while addressing the rally.

When blood of martyrs spills, it changes destiny of nations: Sanaullah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has said the martyrs are our benefactors, and nations that fail to remember those who sacrificed their lives for their people cannot exist for long. In his video message on Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan on Thursday, he paid heartfelt tributes to the martyrs, quoting a Punjabi verse that translates to "when the blood of martyrs spills, it changes the destiny of nations." He stressed that it was our duty to remember and honor our martyrs with respect. Sanaullah said

that the family members of martyrs, including parents, siblings, spouses and children, should never feel that the people had forgotten their loved ones who selflessly gave their lives for the nation. Condemning the incidents on May 9, he said it was painful to see how the miscreants inflicted pain upon the families of the martyrs by desecrating and destroying the monuments dedicated to the Shuhada. "The whole nation strongly condemns these incidents and stands unwaveringly in solidarity with the martyrs' families."

Germany slips into recession with negative first quarter

BERLIN (Agencies): Germany fell into a recession around the turn of the year, official figures published Thursday showed, as Europe's largest economy contracted by 0.3% over the first three months of 2023. The negative growth figure was revised down by the federal statistics agency from an initial estimate of zero percent. The poor performance was the second consecutive quarter of negative growth, following a 0.5% con-



traction in the last three months of 2022, as Germany battled an energy crisis unleashed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The dwindling of energy

supplies from Russia following the outbreak of the war sent prices soaring, stoking inflation and weighing on the economy. The impact of higher prices was felt particularly by consumers in the first quarter of 2023, according to Destatis, as they reined in spending on items such as food and clothing. Germany, which had long been heavily reliant on Russian energy imports, was left particularly exposed following the Russian invasion.

S'pore's travel boom shields economy from recession

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Singapore is confident that a rebound in travel that's boosting the services sector will help the island's economy avoid a recession this year despite a darkening global outlook. Authorities retained their forecast for gross domestic product growth to range between 0.5% and 2.5%, with the actual expansion seen likely coming in at the midpoint. The ministry of trade and



industry also published on Thursday final estimates for the first quarter, which showed GDP declined an annualised 0.4% from the previous three

months, better than the 0.7% drop estimated earlier. "We do not expect a technical recession this year," said Yong Yik Wei, MTT's chief economist. "Given the downside risks and the weakening outlook, we cannot rule out the possibility that there could be some quarters of negative Q-o-Q growth this year. But again, that's not our baseline," she said, referring to the sequential performance.

Fitch warns US debt standoff could hit credit rating

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Ratings agency Fitch put the US on notice that its perfect credit rating could be jeopardised if the White House and Republican opposition fail to overcome their impasse on raising the nation's borrowing limit, a week before a key deadline. Fitch placed the country's AAA-ranked credit on "rating watch negative" – a move it said "reflects increased political partisanship that is hindering reaching



a resolution to raise or suspend the debt limit" ahead of a looming deadline. The US Treasury Department has said June 1 is the "X-date" when

the government will run out of money, triggering a default with likely devastating economic consequences. "Fitch still expects a resolution to the debt limit before the X-date," Fitch said in a statement. "However, we believe risks have risen that the debt limit will not be raised or suspended before the X-date and consequently that the government could begin to miss payments on some of its obligations."

Nvidia shares surge 21% as sales forecast jumps

NEW YORK (Agencies): Nvidia Corp on Wednesday forecast second quarter revenue more than 50% above Wall Street estimates, with the company saying it is boosting supply to meet surging demand for its artificial intelligence chips, which are used to power ChatGPT and many similar services. Shares of Nvidia, the world's most valuable listed semiconductor company, jumped as much as 21% to a record-high US\$370 in ex-



tended trade. Nvidia's surge after the bell increased its stock market value by nearly US\$150 billion to more than US\$900 billion, extending the Silicon Valley company's lead as the

world's most valuable semiconductor firm. The artificial intelligence boom has helped Nvidia become the fifth most valuable US company by market value. Nvidia has strained to meet demand for its AI chips, with Tesla CEO Elon Musk, who is reportedly building out an artificial intelligence startup, earlier this week telling an interviewer that the graphics processing units (GPUs) are "considerably harder to get than drugs."

Deutsche, Citi admit anti-competitive activity in UK probe

LONDON (Agencies): Deutsche Bank and Citigroup admitted anti-competitive activity by exchanging sensitive information on UK government bonds between 2009 and 2013, Britain's anti-trust watchdog said, as it provisionally found five banks in breach of competition rules. HSBC, Morgan Stanley, and Royal Bank of Canada, meanwhile, have not admitted any wrongdoing over the alleged sharing of information in one



or more one-to-one conversations between a small number of traders in Bloomberg chatrooms in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. Britain's Competition and Markets

Authority (CMA) said in a statement on Wednesday it would consider further representations from the banks before reaching a final decision on its next steps and the possible issue of financial penalties. The CMA said the conversations are alleged to have related to the buying and selling of UK government bonds – specifically, gilts and gilt asset swaps – and included details on pricing and other aspects of trading strategies.

'Worst yet to come' for EU states on energy – Qatar

DOHA (Agencies): A warm winter has prevented the EU from a severe energy crisis but the "worst is yet to come" for the bloc, Qatari Energy Minister Saad Al-Kaabi warned on Tuesday, citing a lack of investment in oil and gas. Speaking at the Qatar Economic Forum in Doha he claimed that an "aggressive" energy transition will discourage investment in hydrocarbons and could result in energy shortages in the EU over the coming decade. "There's going to be a big shortage of gas in the future, predom-



inantly because of the energy-transition push that we'd say is very aggressive," Al-Kaabi warned. "Economic stability and environmental responsibility are not mutually exclusive. You have to have both." The EU has been struggling with an unprecedented

energy crisis following a drop in oil and gas shipments from Russia. The sanctions that the bloc has imposed on Russian energy imports have resulted in record high inflation and an overall cost of living crisis across the EU. "The only thing that saved humanity and Europe this year was a warm winter and the slowdown in the economy," AL-Kaabi said, adding that "if the economy starts churning back up in (2024) and you have just a regular winter, I think the worst is yet to come."

Moody's outlines Russia's role in global economy

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russia's economic pull in the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) remains strong despite geopolitical tensions and Western sanctions, according to Moody's. The rating agency, however, noted that growing uncertainty is undermining Moscow's role as a major diplomatic player and economic hub. According to the report, the conflict in Ukraine has led Central Asian countries to reassess their trade routes, export mar-



kets, and investment sources, as they seek to diversify. This could boost regional economic growth and transform labor markets, Moody's wrote. The conflict has repercussions on the

world stage, especially in the ex-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) nations, it added. The report predicted that increased cooperation and infrastructure development between Central Asian countries will diminish Russia's central role, as more diverse regional trade routes emerge as alternatives to the historical "hub and spoke" model that links Moscow to the former Soviet republics.

Russia and Iran to increase use of own currencies in trade

TEHRAN (Agencies): Russia and Iran have reached an agreement to boost the use of their respective national currencies in settlements as a push toward de-dollarization gains momentum in bilateral economic relations, Iranian media reported on Wednesday. The head of Russia's Central Bank Elvira Nabiullina has held a meeting with her Iranian counterpart Mohammad Reza Farzin



as part of her visit to Tehran where the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) summit is taking place. "I had a good and productive meeting with my Russian colleague

Elvira Nabiullina," Farzin wrote on Twitter after the meeting, adding: "We both advocated a serious consensus on the development of currency relations between [our] countries, on the basis of which we prepared a road map. Part of this operational plan is the use of national currencies in bilateral relations and the strengthening of the system of bilateral settlements."

Saudi Arabia's merchandise exports rise 4.4% to \$28bn

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's total merchandise exports rise by 4.4 percent in March to SR106.1 billion (\$28.29 billion), compared to SR101.1 billion in the previous month, according to the latest report released by the Kingdom's General Authority for Statistics. The report, however, noted that the Kingdom's overall merchandise exports fell 25.3 percent year-on-year in March, as the value of exports amounted to SR142 million in the same month of 2022.



GASTAT, in its report, pointed out that this year-on-year fall in exports was primarily driven by a decrease in oil exports which fell by 26.5 percent in March to SR83.1 billion.

Dollar rises on strong US economy, haven demand

TOKYO (Agencies): The dollar pushed to a two-month high against the euro and a six-month peak versus the yen on Thursday, as a resilient US economy led traders to pare their bets on rate cuts this year. The greenback has also benefited from demand for safe havens, paradoxically as a US debt ceiling impasse threatens a disastrous default as soon as June 1, when the Treasury has warned it would be unable to pay all its bills. The dollar touched US\$1.07425 per euro early in the Asian session for the first time since March 24 and remained elevated to



last trade at US\$1.0748. The dollar also bought ¥139.66, a level last seen on Nov 30. With only a week left until the "X-date" for a debt ceiling resolution, and a divided Congress also needing several days to pass legislation, investors are becoming increasingly jittery.

EU, Google to develop AI deal ahead of new rules

BRUSSELS (Agencies): Alphabet and the European Commission aim to develop an artificial intelligence (AI) pact involving European and non-European companies before rules are established to govern the technology, EU industry chief Thierry Breton said on Wednesday. Breton earlier met Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google and its parent company Alphabet, in Brussels. "Sundar and I agreed that we cannot afford to wait until AI regulation actually becomes applicable, and to work together with all AI developers to already develop an AI pact on a voluntary basis



ahead of the legal deadline," Breton said in a statement. He also urged EU countries and EU lawmakers to finalise details of the Commission's proposed AI rules before the end of the year. Both groups have yet to start negotiations to iron out their differences.

Judge rules JPMorgan can sue Jes Staley over Epstein ties

NEW YORK (Agencies): JPMorgan Chase & Co may move forward with its lawsuit seeking to hold former executive Jes Staley liable for concealing what he knew about the disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein, a US judge ruled on Wednesday. The ruling by US district judge Jed Rakoff in Manhattan means Staley, who is also a former Barclays Plc chief executive, could be on the hook for millions of dollars over his ties to Epstein, a JPMorgan client from 1998 to 2013. Rakoff said he will provide reasons for his ruling "in due course." Lawyers for Staley did not immediately respond to requests for comment. JP-



Morgan declined to comment. Staley has expressed regret for befriending Epstein, denied knowing about his crimes, and accused JPMorgan of making him a fall guy for its own supervisory failures. Now 66, Staley led JPMorgan's asset management business from 2001 to 2009 and its investment bank from 2009 to 2013.

EU court rejects Meta's antitrust challenge

BRUSSELS (Agencies): Meta Platforms suffered a setback on Wednesday as Europe's second-top court ruled as legitimate the EU antitrust watchdog's requests for information related to its investigation into Facebook's data and online marketplace. A spokesperson for the US tech giant, which had compared the European Commission to a fishing super trawler vacuuming up data over the requests, said it was "considering its options" over the court decision. "The General Court finds that Meta Platforms Ireland has not successfully demonstrated that the request to provide documents to be identified by search terms went be-



yond what was necessary," the Luxembourg-based General Court said. The court added in its ruling that Meta had also not shown that "establishing a virtual data room failed to ensure that sensitive personal data was sufficiently protected". Meta can appeal on points of law to Europe's highest court, the EU Court of Justice.

Asian stocks sink on Fitch's US debt warning

HONG KONG (Agencies): Most Asian equities sank Thursday on fears of a US default as the struggle to hammer out a debt deal led Fitch to warn the country's gold-plated credit rating was at risk. Nerves have been rattled across global markets owing to a lack of real headway in the standoff on Capitol Hill to increase the US borrowing limit so it can meet its debt obligations. Talks earlier this week between President Joe Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy were described as "productive" but the two sides have made little progress since, with Republicans demanding spending cuts but Democrats calling for a "clean" increase. And analysts said that while there is a broad expectation



an agreement will finally be reached – likely at the last minute following a period of brinkmanship – investors were growing increasingly agitated and risk-averse. On Wednesday, the uncertainty led Fitch to put the country's AAA-ranked credit on "rating watch negative". The firm said the move "reflects increased political partisanship that is hindering reaching a resolution to raise or suspend the debt limit" before June 1, when the US Treasury Department warned the government will run out of money, triggering a default.

Argentina to visit Indonesia for football friendly

JAKARTA (Agencies): World Cup winners Argentina will visit Indonesia next month for a friendly against its national team, a top football official said today, in a boost for a country that has suffered a succession of recent football setbacks. The visit will be part of an Asian tour by the South American side that also includes a June 15 stop in Beijing for a friendly against Australia. The announcement comes at a time when Argentina is hosting the Under-20 World Cup as a replacement for Muslim-majority Indonesia, which



in March was stripped of the tournament over domestic resistance to the participation of Israel. The friendly will take place eight months after Indone-

sia suffered one of the world's deadliest stadium stampedes, with 135 people killed in a scramble to flee as police fired tear gas into the stands in Malang in East Java. Though football is huge in the country of 270 million people, Indonesia has struggled to make its mark in the international game since a single World Cup appearance back in 1938 as the Dutch East Indies. Its fans are, however, currently on a high from last week winning the gold medal at the South East Asian Games for the first time since 1991.

Ronaldo magic rescues Al-Nassr and keeps title race alive

RIYADH (Agencies): Cristiano Ronaldo saved his best goal since arriving in Saudi Arabia for when Al-Nassr needed it most on Tuesday, scoring the decisive strike in a dramatic 3-2 victory against Al-Shabab. The Yellows found themselves 2-0 down in this crucial Riyadh derby that they had to win, and a spectacular second-half strike from the five-time Ballon D'Or winner achieved just that. The result also keeps alive Ronaldo's dreams of adding the Roshn Saudi League title to the dozens of tro-



phies already won in a glittering career as it prevented leaders Al-Ittihad from

celebrating a first league championship since 2009. At the same time, Al-Ittihad defeated bottom, and now relegated, team Al-Batin 1-0 to stay three points clear with two games of the season remaining. With a better head-to-head record — goal difference does not separate teams level on points — the Jeddah giants can lift the trophy with a win against Al-Faiha on Saturday. The pressure will now be on, however, thanks to a determined performance from Al-Nassr to defeat their local rivals.

Gamers Without Borders raises \$10m for humanitarian aid

RIYADH (Agencies): Gamers Without Borders, the world's largest charitable esports event, has concluded this year's edition by raising a total of \$10 million for its humanitarian aid partners. The money will go to Direct Relief, International Medical Corps, UNICEF, King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, the UN's World Food Programme and the UNHCR. The donations were made by teams, players and gamers worldwide. The funds will be used for urgent humanitarian projects



and add to the work achieved through the \$30 million in donations from the GWB's three previous editions. Orga-

nized and held virtually by the Saudi Esports Federation, this year's event was titled "Gamers Without Borders: Gaming For Good." From April 10, six weeks of action saw the GWB host five tournaments across four major gaming titles: StarCraft II, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO), Rocket League and Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege. One particularly special moment saw NAVI Javelins triumph at the first all-women CS:GO tournament at GWB to claim a \$1 million prize for charity.

Thomas boosts bid to become oldest Giro winner, Almeida wins tough 16th stage

MONTE BONDONE (Agencies): Geraint Thomas boosted his bid to become the Giro d'Italia's oldest winner by moving back into the leader's pink jersey on Tuesday as the race exploded into life at the start of a dramatic and decisive final week in the Dolomites. Joao Almeida won the tough 16th stage atop Monte Bondone for his first victory in a Grand Tour. The Portuguese cyclist crossed the summit finish just ahead of Thomas, who also picked up



valuable bonus seconds. Primož Roglič was third 25 seconds further behind.

The result saw Thomas move back into the lead, 18 seconds ahead of Almeida and 29 in front of Roglič. "Yeah it would have been nice to win the stage, but it was one of them where I had to keep riding, didn't want to play cat and mouse with João with Roglič behind," said Thomas, who rides for Ineos Grenadiers. "So we worked well together ... and unfortunately he had the jump on me and won the sprint. But it's nice to be back in pink and to gain some time."

UAE e-gaming boosted with new deal

DUBAI: Abu Dhabi Entertainment Company has signed a deal with PRO Events to launch e-gaming and e-sports events in Abu Dhabi and Al-Ain. The Memorandum of Understanding also leverages both organizations' talents and resources to help expand the regions' sports, e-sports

and leisure sectors, Emirates News Agency reported on Thursday. Khalid Al Mutawa, Acting Chief Executive Officer of ADEC, and Rashed Abdulla, General Manager of PRO Events, signed the agreement. "ADEC and PRO Events share a common vision for Abu Dhabi and

are committed to working together to achieve this vision," Abdulla said. "Through this partnership, we hope to create a meaningful impact and make a positive difference in the lives of our customers." PRO Events is a subsidiary of Al-Ain Club Investment Company.

Arrest warrant issued for five people in El Salvador stadium stampede

SAN SALVADOR (Agencies): El Salvador's Public Prosecutor's Office ordered the arrest of five people allegedly responsible for the weekend stampede at the Cuscatlan stadium in the country's capital that left 12 fans dead during the second leg of the quarter-final playoffs between Alianza FC and Club Deportivo. The Public Prosecutor's Office has named three Alianza FC team officials, including the president, the security manager and the financial manager, as well as the general manager of Estadios Deportivos de El Salvador (EDESSA) and the person in charge of the stadium keys, who will be prosecuted for cul-

pable homicide, culpable injury and public damage. "Negligence in the organization and greed, by over-selling, generated a human avalanche that caused the loss of lives, as well as injuries and endangered the safety of the attendees. They will be brought before the courts in the coming days," the Prosecutor's Office said on Twitter on Thursday. A total of 12 fans died and hundreds were treated by rescue services last Saturday after a stampede was reported at one of the entrances to the general sector of the Cuscatlan stadium, an event that shocked football internationally. According to the institution's investigations, the gates

provided were not sufficient for the number of fans and the entrances were not opened early enough for an orderly and safe entry. The organizers, having sold out the tickets available for the sporting event, decided to illegally sell tickets issued for previous matches, it added. Reuters could not immediately contact those named or their lawyers. Salvadoran Football Federation fined Alianza FC \$30,000 and handed down a one-year stadium ban on Tuesday. On Wednesday night, El Salvador's football authorities ended the 2022-2023 professional league championship to focus on reinforcing security measures for the events.

Brilliant Madhwal takes 5-5 as Mumbai knock Lucknow out of IPL

CHENNAI, India (Agencies): Akash Madhwal took five wickets for as many runs to lead Mumbai Indians to a crushing 81-run win in the second IPL playoff game and knock Lucknow Super Giants out of the tournament on Wednesday. Australia's Cameron Green (41) and Suryakumar Yadav (33) put on 66 to help guide five-time champions Mumbai to 182-8 after they elected to bat first in the knockout contest in Chennai. Madhwal then returned figures of 5-5 in 3.3 overs to dismiss Lucknow for 101 as Mumbai booked a meeting with holders and regular season table-toppers Gujarat Titans in the next playoff encounter on Friday in Ahmedabad. The winners of that clash will meet Chennai

Super Kings in the final on Sunday. "It's nice that it's going well at the moment," Green said. "Our batting's been really good. Madhwal has been the game changer for us; five today, and got four for the other day." Green, who was the second-most expensive player bought in the auction at \$2.11 million, added: "Gujarat are the best team. It's going to be a tough challenge, especially on their home turf." Lucknow's innings imploded as they collapsed from 69-2 to be bowled out in 16.3 overs, losing three key wickets to run outs. Green, who hit his maiden T20 century in Mumbai's previous win, looked in control during a 23-ball knock laced with six fours and one six until his departure. Naveen-ul-Haq,

who took four wickets for Lucknow, sent back Suryakumar and Green, bowled by a slower off-cutter from the Afghanistan pace bowler, in the space of three deliveries to push Mumbai onto the back foot. Tilak Varma hit back with a quickfire 26 and a 43-run stand with Tim David, who was out caught for 13 after unsuccessfully reviewing a full toss for being over waist-height. Naveen finished with 4-38 and Yash Thakur took three wickets but despite their efforts Mumbai's impact sub Nehal Wadhwa boosted the total with his 12-ball 23. Lucknow lost their openers early including impact player Kyle Mayers for 18 before Australia's Marcus Stoinis attempted to pull the chase together in his 27-ball 40.

Celtics rally past Heat, prevent East finals sweep

MIAMI (Agencies): Jayson Tatum collected 33 points and 11 rebounds as the visiting Boston Celtics staved off elimination with a 116-99 victory over the Miami Heat on Tuesday in Game 4 of the Eastern Conference finals. Tatum made 14 of 22 shots from the floor — including 4 of 8 from 3-point range. He also had seven assists for the second-seeded Celtics, who trail 3-1 in the best-of-seven series heading into Thursday's Game 5 in Boston. Jaylen Brown scored 17 points and Derrick White added 16 to help the Celtics prevent Miami from becoming the second eighth-seeded team to advance to the NBA Finals. The 1998-99 New York Knicks accomplished the feat during a lock-out-shortened season. Grant Williams scored 14 points off the bench and Al



Horford added 12 points and seven rebounds for the Celtics, who turned the tide by outscoring the Heat 38-23 in the third quarter. Boston shot 51.2% from the floor (43 of 84) for the game and 40.9% from 3-point range (18 of 44). Miami's Jimmy Butler overcame a slow start to record 29 points and nine rebounds. Gabe Vincent scored 17 points and Caleb Martin added 16 off the bench for the Heat, who fell to 6-1 at home in the playoffs.

City's Guardiola want financial charges dealt with quickly



MANCHESTER (Agencies): Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola would like the financial charges against the club to be dealt with "as soon as possible". City, who secured their fifth league title in six seasons under Guardiola last weekend, were charged by the Premier League in February with more than 100 alleged breaches of the league's financial rules between 2009 and 2018. They were also accused of not cooperating with the investigation since it began in

December 2018. The club have denied any wrongdoing. "What I would like is if the Premier League and judges could make something as soon as possible," Guardiola told reporters ahead of Wednesday's trip to sixth-placed Brighton & Hove Albion. "Then, if we have done something wrong everybody will know it and, if we are like we believe as a club for many years, (done things) in the right way, then the people will stop talking about it. "We would love it tomorrow. This afternoon better than tomorrow." City, who were acquired by the Abu Dhabi-based City Football Group in 2008, are alleged to have breached rules relating to the provision of accurate financial information, "in particular with respect to its revenue ... and its operating costs".

Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr has red card rescinded

MADRID (Agencies): Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr's red card in Sunday's LaLiga match at Valencia, in which he was also racially abused, has been rescinded, the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) said on Tuesday. The Brazilian winger was sent off in stoppage time by referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea for striking an opponent following a scuffle with Valencia players in which Vinicius appeared to be grabbed around the neck. Vinicius had earlier been racially abused by fans at the Mestalla Stadium, which led to the game being halted for 10 minutes as the player pointed out people who were abusing him in the stands. "The RFEF Competition Committee considers that the referee's assessment was determined by the omission of the entirety of



the play that took place, which affected the refereeing decision," the federation said. "The fact that he (the referee) was deprived of a decisive part of the facts led him to adopt an arbitrary decision. And this is because it was impossible for him to properly assess what happened." Seven people accused of different hate crimes against Vinicius were detained by the Spanish police earlier on Tuesday.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: MAY 26, 2023



– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.
– **ARIES**: You may get frustrated easily today, especially with detail-oriented work that doesn't seem to quite line up no matter what you do. Go as far as you can, but chill out when you're ready to pop.
– **TAURUS**: Your affinity for art is strong every day, but right now you're having a hard time focusing on anything else. Visit a museum, make your own, or just dream about the next big thing.
– **GEMINI**: Today is perfect for sitting down at home at taking care of any paperwork or other tiny chores that have accrued lately. You're in the right frame of mind to make your life simpler.
– **CANCER**: If you keep your eye on the small stuff today, the big picture should take care of itself. See if you can get your friends or family to join in, but if you have to do it all yourself, that should be fine.
– **LEO**: You're more than a little cost conscious now, though you might not

be able to specify exactly what's going on with that. If family members tease you, just shrug and get on with it.
– **VIRGO**: You're at your best working with small details, and today, your energy is amplified in a great way! If you need to do home repairs or take care of paperwork, it should go flawlessly.
– **LIBRA**: Make sure that you're really dealing with the people you've been meeting lately rather than just smiling and saying hi and moving on. Today brings a renewed interest in learning more.
– **SCORPIO**: Planning comes naturally to you, but only when you're really motivated. Right now, you know just what you want and how to get it, so make sure everything is in place for your success.
– **SAGITTARIUS**: You've got problems with people who are important to you, but now might not be the best time to work them out. See if you can just take a deep breath and put this stuff off until later.
– **CAPRICORN**: You're feeling a bit nostalgic or curious and need to connect with someone who is far away. Try to make sure that you're keeping the right attitude toward the endeavor.
– **ACQUARIUS**: You should try to check in with those you are closest to. They may have wildly different ideas about what's supposed to happen next. Try to get as much input as possible from all parties.
– **PISCES**: You're much better able to hash out problems or break down big projects into manageable parts today and should use that brainpower to make your life at least a little bit easier.

Iran says it has successfully test-launched ballistic missile

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iran successfully test-launched a ballistic missile with a potential 2,000-km range on Thursday, state media said, two days after the chief of Israel's Armed Forces raised the prospect of "action" against Tehran over its nuclear programme, Reuters reports. Iran, which has one of the biggest missile programmes in the Middle East, says its weapons are capable of reaching the bases of arch-foes, Israel and the United States, in the region. Despite US and European opposition, the Islamic Republic has said it will further develop its "defensive" missile programme. "Our message to Iran's enemies is that we will defend the country and its achievements. Our message to our friends is that we want to help regional stability," Iranian Defence Minister, Mohammadreza Ashtiani, said. State TV broadcast a few seconds of footage of what it said was the launch of an upgraded version of Iran's Khoramshahr 4 ballistic missile with a range of 2,000 km (1,243 miles) and able to carry a 1,500-kg (3,300-pound) warhead. The



state news agency, IRNA, said the liquid-fuel missile had been named the "Kheibar", a reference to a Jewish castle overrun by Muslim warriors in the early days of Islam. "The domestically built Kheibar missile's outstanding features include quick preparation and launch time, which makes it a tactical weapon in addition to a strategic one," it said. US State Department spokesperson, Matthew Miller, said, "Iran's development and proliferation of ballistic missiles poses a serious threat to regional and international security and remains a significant non-proliferation challenge." Iran was continuing to seek missile technology from foreign suppliers and conducting tests in defiance of a UN Security Council resolu-

tion, Miller told reporters at a regular press briefing, adding that Washington would continue to use tools including sanctions to counter those efforts. Israel, which the Islamic Republic does not recognise, sees Iran as an existential threat. Iran says its ballistic missiles are an important deterrent and retaliatory force against the United States, Israel and other potential regional adversaries. An Israeli military spokesperson said the military does not comment on such matters. On Tuesday, the top Israeli General mooted possible military action against Iran as efforts by six world powers to revive Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal have stalled since last September, amid growing Western fears about Tehran's accelerating nuclear advances. The deal, which Washington ditched in 2018 under then President Donald Trump, had imposed curbs on Iran's nuclear activities that extended the time Tehran would need to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear bomb, if it chose to do so. Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons.

Libya government says it conducted air strikes in western areas

TRIPOLI (Agencies): Libya's Government of National Unity (GNU) said it had conducted air strikes against smuggling networks on Thursday, with blasts hitting a western city that is home to armed factions that have backed a rival administration, Reuters reports. Three residents of Zawiya, just west of Tripoli, said they had heard explosions on Thursday, with one also hearing gunfire. The city has been the site of sporadic clashes this year between factions that back and oppose the GNU. While the Tripoli-based government has no known air power of its own, allied Turkish military forces have previously deployed drones in western Libya. The GNU said "our national air force" had targeted what it called criminal gangs involved in trafficking fuel, drugs and people in western coastal areas. Libya has had little stability since the 2011 NATO-backed uprising against Muammar Gaddafi, and it split in 2014 between rival eastern and western factions though there has been no major warfare since a 2020 ceasefire. The GNU was created through a UN-backed process in 2021 to unify Libya's divided institutions and oversee an election planned for that year. However, the vote was never held, amid disputes over the rules and the eastern-based Parliament said the GNU's term had expired and appointed an alternative government. Most western armed factions continued to back the GNU, as did Türkiye which had helped the Tripoli government fight off an eastern assault in early 2020. However, some factions in the west oppose the GNU and, last summer, there were clashes in Tripoli between the two sides as the Prime Minister designated by the Parliament in eastern Libya attempted to enter the capital. The Parliament-backed administration, on Thursday, condemned what it called indiscriminate drone strikes in several sites in Zawiya and another port, Maya, which it said had injured several personnel affiliated with the Ministry.

Bahrain to resume diplomatic representation with Lebanon



Bahrain's foreign ministry will resume diplomatic representation with Lebanon by exchanging ambassadors, the state news agency said on Saturday, Reuters reports. Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf countries expelled Lebanon's envoys in October 2021 in response to critical comments made by a Lebanese minister about the Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen. Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati welcomed Bahrain's decision. "We appreciate this decision and welcome it in the context of the brotherly relations between the two countries," he added in a statement.

Kuwait to continue ban on visas for Philippines workers after talks fail to resolve labour dispute

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies): Kuwait is maintaining a ban it imposed on issuing visas for workers from the Philippines amid an ongoing labour row between the two countries which talks have failed to resolve. After Filipino authorities alleged failure to comply with a labour agreement it previously reached with Kuwait, the Gulf nation suspended the issuance of all visas for Filipino workers earlier this month. According to Kuwait, the ban was imposed in response to "wrong practices" made by the Philippines' embassy in the country and the alleged crimes committed by some members of the Filipino community against Kuwaitis. Amongst the reported violations listed by Kuwait's Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) were attempts to get domestic labour recruitment offices to withdraw Filipino house workers from Kuwaitis' households on the pretext that their employment contracts were completed, putting pressure on employers to renew contracts with undesirable conditions, and circumventing competent agencies in Kuwait by directly contacting Kuwaiti citizens and recruitment offices to check on matters with the Philippines' embassy. In addition, PAM cited the "inappropriate treatment" of Kuwaiti citizens who were checking with the Philippines' embassy upon its request, and the embassy was also accused of sheltering Filipino workers who violated Kuwait's residency law or were registered as absentees. From the Philippines' side, however, it has for years insisted that its workers in the small Gulf nation

face abuse and poor treatment, forcing Manila to demand greater rights for their citizens. In a statement by PAM, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Talal Al Khalid, asserted that "Kuwait's sovereignty and its people's dignity are a red line". The statement added that Kuwait is committed to international accords signed with the Philippines and the renewal of Filipinos' valid residency permits. In talks this month, requested by the Filipino government, Kuwait set a number of conditions for resolving the dispute, including the embassy's acknowledgment of having committed violations and infringing Kuwaiti laws, and for it to make an official pledge to not repeat them in the future. Kuwait also requested that it notify the Philippine government of the acknowledgment and the pledge, and to have them published in official media. Only after then, Kuwait said, would its Interior Ministry evaluate the situation, as well as follow up on the embassy's abidance by security regulations for at least three months before deciding what it sees fit to do. The Filipino delegation asked for 72 hours to check with its government on the conditions set by the Kuwaiti side, which were rejected by Manila. As a result, Kuwait has said that its decision to suspend the issuance of all visas for Filipinos will continue "until further notice", with First Deputy Prime Minister, Al Khalid, directing PAM to coordinate with the Foreign Ministry to reach agreements with other countries for the provision of skilled workers to Kuwait.

Egypt defers payments for wheat imports amid dollar crunch

CAIRO (Agencies): Egypt has deferred payments for its large wheat purchases, in some cases by months, according to a government official and traders, as the country grapples with a shortage of hard currency, Reuters reports. Egypt is one of the world's biggest wheat importers and uses the purchases to make heavily subsidised bread, a politically sensitive benefit available to tens of millions of people. Most deferred payment cargoes have been shipped and unloaded without interruption, so far, and Egypt's state wheat reserves used to make subsi-

dised bread have not been impacted. Following the war in Ukraine, Egypt now depends mostly on Russia for its wheat. Egypt's Supply Minister told Reuters the country's state grains buyer has deferred opening letters of credit to pay for wheat imports to alleviate financial pressures caused by a foreign currency shortage. Four grain traders told Reuters, on condition of anonymity, that delays in payments for state-purchased wheat – considered a top priority commodity – were unprecedented as they were stretching to months.

Algeria: Channel permanently shut down after showing explicit scenes

ALGIERS (Agencies): The Algerian judiciary ruled to permanently shut down a private television channel and sentenced the channel director to three years in prison on charges of broadcasting a sexually explicit scene last November. The Algerian newspaper Ennahar reported that the misdemeanour court in the Algerian city of Sidi M'hamed issued a three-year prison sentence against the director of Al-Ajwaa TV channel, Zubiri Boushaqour, after broadcasting "offensive" content. The same court also issued a one-year prison sentence for

the channel's editor-in-chief and one of the channel's female journalists involved in the case. The Audiovisual Regulatory Authority (ARAV) decided to shut down the channel permanently following the incident that agitated public opinion in the country. The government body explained that its decision came after the channel broadcasted scenes that were: "Offensive and contrary to the values of our society and our religion." The channel's management expressed regret and apologised to the Algerian people for the "terrible mistake".

Israel shoots down drone from Lebanon, military says

TEL AVIV (Agencies): Israel shot down a drone that had crossed over from Lebanon on Thursday, its military said in a statement, Reuters reports. "A short while ago, IDF (Israel Defence Forces) soldiers identified and downed a drone crossing from Lebanese territory into Israeli territory towards the town of Zar'it," the military said. It did not immediately identify who had sent the drone from Lebanon and released a photo of a UAV lying in a thicket of thorns. "The IDF

will continue to prevent any attempt to violate Israeli sovereignty," the military said. Last month, Israel said Lebanese armed group, Hezbollah, was behind a rare roadside bomb attack that wounded a motorist in northern Israel in March, and in the past has said it shot down the group's drones. Iran-backed Hezbollah and Israel fought a month-long war in 2006 and have traded fire on several occasions since, but have avoided a large-scale confrontation.

Bahrain Shia cleric released from jail following protests

MANAMA (Agencies): A prominent Bahraini Shia scholar has been released by authorities, days after being arrested over calling for the release of political prisoners. Sheikh Muhammad Sanqour's release was announced today by the

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) and comes after protestors were joined by scholars to denounce the recent arrest of prominent Shia imam Sheikh Muhammad Sanqour and have called for his release.

UN, Africa Bank work to ease Russia grain, fertiliser exports - UN official

The United Nations is working with the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) to create a platform to help process transactions for Russian exports of grain and fertiliser to Africa, the top UN trade official told Reuters on Wednesday. An agreement struck in July last year requires the UN to help Russia overcome any obstacles to its grain and fertiliser exports for three years. It was reached at the same time as a deal allowing the safe Black Sea export of food and fertiliser from Ukraine following Russia's February 2022 invasion. The deals were intended to ease a global food crisis that the United Nations said was worsened by the war because both countries produce grain and fertiliser for world markets, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. "We have not turned the corner on this," Rebeca Grynspan, who leads the implementation of the UN deal with Russia, said in an interview, describing the Black Sea accord and pact between the UN and Russia as continuing to "be a life line for food security" around the world. The Black Sea deal was extended last week for the third time after Russia agreed to a further two months. But Moscow has been threatening to quit unless a list of demands to improve its own food and fertiliser exports is met.

Russia's agricultural exports are not subject to Western sanctions imposed over the invasion of Ukraine, but Moscow says there are restrictions on payments, logistics and insurance and a wider chilling effect from the measures. The United States and others have dismissed Russia's complaints. Grynspan said she was working with Afreximbank to try to help small and medium-sized countries in Africa combat disrupted trading and access Russian grain and fertiliser through "more agile transactions." "We are working with them (Afreximbank) and making a platform that will allow for a more agile due diligence with the clients to comply with the sanctions, but allow for the transactions of food and fertilisers with Africa," she said. Cairo-based Afreximbank was not immediately available for comment. Grynspan did not share any further details as discussions continue. Russia's agricultural bank, known as Rosselkhozbank, was cut off from the SWIFT international payment network by the European Union in June. Russia wants it reconnected, but the EU has said it was not considering reinstatement of Russian banks.

COVID-19 ranks as most prevalent virus in Beijing for four weeks:

BEIJING (Agencies): COVID-19 infections have ranked as the most prevalent virus in Beijing for four weeks after overtaking the city's influenza cases in late April, according to the COVID-19 weekly reports released by the Beijing Center for Disease Prevention and Control on Wednesday. According to the Beijing Center for Disease Prevention and Control, the number of cases involving 16 kinds of notifiable infectious diseases across Beijing has risen to 25,544 from May 15 to May 21, a four-fold increase compared with the number from April 24 to April 30. Respiratory infectious diseases accounted for 96.5 percent of the 25,544 cases.

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