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Editor: Omer Rizwan

Xi: China willing to help foster Palestine peace-making with Israel

BEIJING (Agencies): China is willing to play a positive role to help the Palestinians achieve internal reconciliation and promote peace talks with Israel, Chinese President Xi Jinping told his Palestinian counterpart in Beijing on Wednesday, Reuters reports. "The fundamental solution to the Palestinian issue lies in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital," Xi said, according to Chinese state media. Palestinians seek statehood in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war. Israel withdrew soldiers and settlers from Gaza in 2005, but continues to expand settlements in the West Bank and calls Jerusalem its eternal, indivisible capital. Peace talks that were brokered by the United States collapsed in 2014, with no revival on the horizon. "We have always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights," Xi told



Abbas at a welcoming ceremony at Beijing's Great Hall of the People. China has had historically good ties with the Palestinians and, since Abbas' last visit in 2017, has consistently talked up its capabilities in mediation, although with little to show in this regard until it brokered a surprise deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia to restore diplomatic relations in March. Abbas is in Beijing on a three-day visit in which he hoped to demonstrate Chinese support for a Palestinian state, after failing to

meet with US officials while in New York for the United Nations General Assembly last year. Xi reiterated Chinese support for the Palestinian Authority becoming a full member of the United Nations and said Beijing would continue to stand up for the Palestinian side in multilateral forums, state media reported. The United States opposes full Palestinian UN membership barring a peace deal with Israel, a step requiring a vote in the Security Council where the US, like China, holds a veto.

Israel Rafael developing hypersonic missile interceptor



TEL AVIV (Agencies): The Israeli state-owned defence contractor behind the Iron Dome and David's Sling air shields announced, on Wednesday, the development of a new system to counter hypersonic missiles, a week after Iran said it had produced its first such weapon, Reuters reports. The SkySonic interceptor will "enable us to intercept all kinds of hypersonic threats - hypersonic ballistic missiles, hypersonic cruise missiles," Yuval Steinitz, Chairman of Rafael Advanced Defence Systems Ltd., told Reuters at a media event. The Pentagon was briefed on the development, Rafael said. It declined to say if or when the Israeli military might deploy SkySonic. Israel's Defence Ministry had no immediate comment.

Egypt applies to join BRICS

CAIRO (Agencies): Egypt has officially applied to join BRICS, Russia's ambassador in Cairo told reporters on Wednesday. The Arab Republic of nearly 100 million people would be a significant addition to the bloc of the largest developing economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Egypt is "very interested" in one of BRICS' current initiatives, namely the bloc's push to switch to alternative currencies in trade, be it one of the bloc's national currencies or a new joint one, ambassador Georgy Borisenko told TASS news agency. Egypt first voiced its intention to join BRICS last July, according to Purnima Anand, the President of the BRICS International Forum. In February, the country sent official letters to the bloc's members expressing its interest in joining, something that Russia supports, according to ambassador Borisenko. Also in February, Egypt joined the New Development Bank, established by the group to fund infrastructure and sustainable development projects in emerging markets and developing countries. About a dozen countries have so far applied to join BRICS, including Iran and Argentina. The bloc hopes to introduce a framework for admitting new members before the August summit in South Africa.

CPJ calls on US to press India's Modi to end media crackdown



NEW YORK (Agencies): The Committee to Protect Journalists, a New York-based international watchdog body, Wednesday called on the United States to press India to end its media crackdown and release the six journalists arbitrarily detained in retaliation for their work, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepares for his upcoming visit to the U.S. "Since Prime Minister Modi came to power in 2014, there has been an increasing crackdown on India's media," CPJ President Jodie Ginsberg said in a statement released on Wednesday. "Journalists critical of the government and the BJP party have been jailed, harassed, and surveilled in retaliation for their work. India is the world's largest democracy, and it needs to live up to that by ensuring a free and independent media-and we expect the United States to make this a core element of discussions," he said. Prime Minister Modi of India, a strategic ally of the U.S., begins his state visit to the US on June 21. On Wednesday, June 14, CPJ convened an online panel, "India's Press Freedom Crisis," with opening remarks and moderation by Ginsberg alongside panelists Geeta Seshu, founding editor of the Free Speech Collective watchdog group; Anuradha Bhasin, executive editor of the Kashmir Times newspaper; and Shahina K.K., senior editor for Outlook magazine. The panelists discussed the deterioration of press freedom over the last decade, with Seshu detailing the rise in censorship and "vicious" attacks on the media, while Shahina shared her ongoing battle to fight terrorism charges filed nearly 13 years ago by the Karnataka state government, then led by Modi's BJP party, in retaliation for her investigative reporting. Bhasin spoke about the "effective silence" that Kashmiri journalists have dealt with since the Modi government unilaterally revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special autonomy status in 2019, with multiple cases of reporters being detained and interrogated. CPJ called on President Joe Biden, who is hosting Modi's visit, to urge India to act on the following press freedom

violations:
— The ongoing detention of six journalists—Asif Sultan, Gautam Navlakha, Sajad Gul, Fahad Shah, Rupesh Kumar Singh, and Irfan Mehraj—in retaliation for their work. All have been targeted under draconian security laws, CPJ said. Shah faces trial on spurious terrorism charges in relation to a 2011 article published by his online magazine The Kashmir Walla. The other five journalists remain in pretrial detention, it added.
— The harassment of the domestic and foreign media, including routine raids and retaliatory income tax investigations launched into critical news outlets. In February, income tax authorities raided the BBC's offices in Delhi and Mumbai after the government censored a critical documentary on Modi by the broadcaster. Foreign correspondents say they have faced increasing visa uncertainties, restricted access to several areas of the country, including Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, and even threats of deportation in retaliation for critical reporting in recent years.
— The media crackdown in Kashmir, including the use of preventative detention, terrorism and criminal cases, travel bans, raids, and summons for questioning in retaliation for journalists' work. In 2020, the government enacted a stringent media policy outlining powers for authorities to accredit the media, distribute government advertisements, and determine what constitutes "fake news."
— Ongoing impunity in cases of killed journalists. At least 62 journalists have been killed in India in connection with their work since 1992. India ranked 11th on CPJ's 2022 impunity index, with unsolved cases of at least 20 journalists killed in retaliation for their work from September 1, 2012, to August 31, 2022. Digital media restrictions, including using the IT Rules, 2021, to censor critical journalism, including the BBC documentary on Modi. India led the world in internet shutdowns for the fifth year in 2022, impeding press freedom and the ability of journalists to work freely.

New impeachment motion brought against Biden



WASHINGTON (Agencies): A US lawmaker filed articles of impeachment against President Joe Biden on Tuesday alleging that his southern border policies make him unfit for office. The motion, filed by Rep. Lauren Boebert, a Republican from Colorado, charges Biden with abuse of power and dereliction of duty in "presiding over an executive branch that has continually, overtly, and consistently refused to enforce the Nation's immigration laws and secure the southern border." Boebert told Fox News that she encouraged her party, which currently has a majority in the House of Representatives, to act on the allegations but that she was willing to move forward on her own. "If the committees and/or leadership does not step up and actually do something about the president's failure ... then I will call my legislation, my articles of impeachment for a privileged motion," Boebert told the network. The lawmaker sought to impeach Biden

and Vice President Kamala Harris in 2021 over the administration's handling of the crisis in Afghanistan and ultimate withdrawal of US troops from the country. Another Republican legislator, Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, also seeks to have Biden removed from office and announced her own charges against the president last month. Both congresswomen described the influx of illegal immigrants entering the US via Mexico as an "invasion." They complained about the practice of releasing aliens on American soil pending a court hearing of their cases and linked a perceived lack of border control with the surge in fentanyl overdoses. On Monday, Republican Tennessee Rep. Andy Ogles introduced another motion to impeach the Democratic leader. Ogles alleges that Biden has "weaponized" the executive branch to protect "the business and influence peddling schemes" of his family from public scrutiny.

Hospital doctors in England stage 72-hour walkout



London (AFP/APP): Hospital doctors in England began a new 72-hour strike over pay on Wednesday, prompting warnings from health officials of huge disruption to patients and services. The strike is the latest in the state-funded National Health Service (NHS), which has also seen nurses and other medical staff picket for more pay. The walk-out by junior doctors — those below consultant level — started at 7:00 am (0600 GMT) and is set to last until Saturday. The British Medical Association's Junior Doctors Committee says medics have seen a 26 percent pay cut in real terms in the last 15 years, as salaries have failed to keep pace with soaring inflation. They want pay restored to 2008-2009 levels but the government says that would mean an average pay award of about 35 per-

cent this year and is too costly. Instead, it has offered an extra five percent. The BMA has warned that while it was open to further talks, it would stage further strikes in the coming months if the government sticks to its offer. At a picket line outside University College Hospital in London, 27-year-old trainee anaesthetist Arianna Zembryzcka said she was struggling to pay rent. The government's offer was "frankly disrespectful and disgraceful" and would not cover this year's inflation "let alone years of pay erosion", she said. On Tuesday, NHS England's national medical director, Stephen Powis, warned that most routine or pre-planned care could be affected. A similar walk-out in April saw 196,000 hospital appointments and operations rescheduled.

Macron demands French AI 'champions'

Paris (AFP/APP): President Emmanuel Macron made a pitch on Wednesday for France to become a leader in artificial intelligence (AI) as he spoke at VivaTech in Paris, one of Europe's biggest technology trade shows. He announced 500 million euros (\$543 million) in new funding to "create champions" in AI and praised projects targeting French speakers, as concern grows about Silicon Valley firms fuelling English-language domination of AI systems. Twitter and Tesla boss Elon Musk is scheduled to appear at VivaTech on Friday when he is likely to talk about his company

Neuralink, which recently won US approval for human testing of technology that uses implants to link brains with computers. More than 2,000 firms are displaying at VivaTech, which runs from Wednesday to Saturday, with products ranging from augmented-reality ski masks to an AI-animated bot that allows you to "chat" with Dutch master Vincent Van Gogh. Tens of thousands are expected to visit the event, with Saturday open to the public. Macron is a regular visitor and this year his intervention promises to ramp up the competition for primacy in AI technology in Europe,

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.

FIA confiscates worth Rs 1302mln Pak, foreign currencies in actions against money dealers

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in various crackdowns across the province against illegal foreign exchange operators and money dealers arrested 468 accused and recovered foreign and local Currency worth Rs 1302 million from December 2021 to

June 2023. Deputy Director FIA Afzal Khan Niazi told this agency that FIA teams conducted 394 raids and registered 392 cases while arresting 468 accused and sealing 44 shops, adding that 158 persons were convicted by the courts. He said that a total of 200 operations were carried out in Peshawar

including 51 raids in the renowned Chowk Yadgar area here where most of the money exchangers have businesses. He said the confiscated currency included US Dollar worth Rs 67.059 million, other foreign currencies in Pak rupees 189.5151 million and Pak currency worth Rs 1045.4333 million

KP govt committed to solving problems of journalists’ community: Minister

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information Feroze Jamal Shah on Wednesday said that the provincial caretaker government was committed to solving the problems being faced by journalists in the province. Addressing the media here, he said that the government was taking pragmatic measures to improve the welfare of journalists and trying to provide best services to them within available resources.He said that the goal of the government was to

conduct transparent elections in the country but some elements were not serious about the elections process. The minister deplored that during the last nine years, youth was misled by a political party that also deprived them of their cultural values including paying respect to elders and treating younger with love. He pointed out that during the past government, Rs 130 million funds in the provincial Information Department were misappropriated and official cheques were illegally transferred to private ac-

counts which were being probed. The Minister urged the media to provide facts to the people and highlight good initiatives of the government besides the criticism. Feroze Jamal said that the problems of journalists’ community would be solved through a committee comprising senior journalists adding that the government was also regularly reviewing and auditing the policy regarding advertisements. We will not let dummy newspapers and dummy channels exploit the rights of professional journalists, he added.

2nd edition of Inter-Madrasas Games from June 21 in Peshawar: Pir Abdullah Shah

PESHAWAR (APP): The second edition of the Inter-Madrasas Boys Games will be commencing on June 21 at five different places wherein more than 800 students of religious

Madrasas of the merged districts will participate. This was stated by Director Sports Merged Area Pir Abdullah Shah while addressing a press conference here on Wednesday. Assistant Director Admin and Media Focal Person Awan Hussain, Chairman Competition Ayub Khan and coaches Amir Hussain, Rahad Molagori were also present. The Games, which is the second edition being organized by the Directorate of Sports Merged Area with players from all the districts are taking part in five different Games including Qirat, Cricket, Football, Volleyball, and Tug of War.0 He said the students of the Madrasas of the merged areas are enthusiastic to take part in the games to be organized at five different venues including Gymkhana ground, Tehmas Khan Football, Peshawar Sports Complex and Arena Hall inside Qayyum Sports Complex. Pir Abdullah Shah said that

the arrival of the athletes would be completed by June 20, followed by the opening ceremony at 10.00 a.m on June 21 at Lala Ayub Hockey Stadium. He said the players would be provided full uniform including track-suit, shoes, playing kits, TA and DA. He said the age limit is fixed as 30 years old so that the maximum number of students from all the Madrasas of the merged areas would take part. He said, Sports competitions are being organized for the second time between tribal and religious madrassas in which cricket, football, volleyball, tug-of-war, Qirat competitions would be organized. Pir Abdullah said that these games are the special efforts of Secretary Sports Captain (Rtd) Mush-taq Ahmed, DG Sports Captain (Rtd) Khalid Mahmood. In these games, around 800 students from all the districts of the tribal areas will compete in five different competitions.

Hot, dry weather with chances of thunderstorm, isolated rains in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Wednesday predicted very hot and humid weather over most districts of the province. However, it said that wind-dust storm/ thunderstorm and rain with isolated heavy falls/ hailstorm is likely to occur over Chitral, Lower & Upper Dir, Malakand, Buner, Swat, Shangla, Kohistan, Battagram, Torghar, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Charsadda, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, Hangu, Kohat, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, North & South Waziristan, Tank and Dera Ismail Khan districts. During the last 24 hours, the weather remained very hot and humid over most districts of the province. However, isolated thunderstorm-rain occurred in

Abbottabad, Lower Dir, Bannu, D I Khan, Buner, Saidu Sharif, Upper Dir, Mohmand and Chitral districts. Rain recorded (in mm): Kakul 18, Timergara 15, Bannu & D.I.Khan 13 (each), Buner 05, Saidu Sharif 03, Dir 02, Mamad Gut-Mohmand 01 and Chitral Trace. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar City 40/27, Chitral 33/16, Timergara 38/21, Dir 32/16, Mirkhani 37/17, Kalam 27/08, Drosh 36/19, Saidu Sharif 36/18, Pattan 39/26, Malam Jabba 23/15, Takht Bhai 38/26, Kakul 32/17, Balakot 37/19, Parachinar 29/15, Bannu 42/22, Cherat 34/20, D.I. Khan 43/24. The highest temperature recorded in the province was 43C in Dera Ismail Khan.

Caretaker govt to continue working till general elections: Feroz Shah

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Caretaker Minister for Information Feroz Jamal Shah on Wednesday said that everything was clearly mentioned in the constitution regarding the period of a caretaker government and the present government would continue its constitutional responsibilities till general elections. “We have the constitutional mandate to look after the provincial affairs till the general elections,” he said, adding that it was the responsibility of the President of Pakistan and Governor KP to decide the election date. He said that the Election Commission had already notified October 26 as the election date and the caretaker government would fulfill its responsibilities till that date. “We have no intentions to keep occupying the seats,” Feroz clarified. He said the caretaker Chief Minister (CM) and provincial finance minister were a “blessing in disguise for KP” as both played an active role in taking the rights

and arrears of the province from the Federation. He said both the CM and finance minister held extensive discussions on all the issues of the province with the federation at various meetings and on different occasions and finally got the practical results. He expressed gratitude to Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for listening to the problems of the KP and giving instructions to the relevant departments. Feroz said, “The prime minister always showed great love and support for the province.” He also condemned May 9 and 10 vandalism and arson and recalled that he personally took the injured of an attack on Radio Pakistan here to CMH in his own car. The minister said that Karnal Sher Khan was the first martyr of KP, who got Nishan Haider, adding that the people of the province know well the value and dignity of a martyr. Desecration of the monuments of Sher Khan and other martyrs was highly condemnable and unacceptable, he stressed.

Gas supply to CNG stations suspended in KP: Notification

PESHAWAR (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) on Wednesday has notified that the gas supply to all CNG stations across the province would remain suspended till June 16 due to cyclonic storm “BI-PARJOY” over the east-central Arabian Sea which had affected arrival of LNG shipment. A notification issued here said that the gas supply has been suspended due to sudden depletion of system pack and on account of acute shortage of gas supplies, adding that

gas supply would be immediately restored as and when optimum system pack is maintained. It said that the optimum system pack could be maintained till June 16 therefore the CNG sector was requested to extend co-operation till achievement of healthy system pack. Meanwhile, Chairman All Pakistan CNG Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Fazal Muqeem Khan addressing a press conference assured to extend full cooperation with the government in national interes

Property dispute claims lives of four cousins in Bara

PESHAWAR (APP): At least four people were killed when they were fired at by the assailants over an issue related to the ownership of a land piece in Soor Dhand area of Bara tehsil in Khyber district, police informed on Wednesday. Local police said the incident occurred during late night hours in Fort Slob area of Soor Dhand, Bara where assailants shot dead four cous-

ins over a property dispute. Those killed were identified as Hazrat Ullah, son of Qayyum Khan, Ziarat Gul, son of Sardar Khan, Abdul Malik, son of Saida Khan and Mubin Afridi of Malak Din Khel. Police shifted the bodies to Dogra Hospital for medico legal procedure and started investigation into the incident after collecting evidence from the crime scene.

Commissioner chairs anti-dengue-outbreak meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): Commissioner of Peshawar Division Muhammad Zubair here on Wednesday presided over a high-level meeting held to review steps to contain the dengue outbreak. The meeting among others was attended by the Deputy Commissioners (DCs), District Health Officers (DHOs), and relevant officers from all districts of the jurisdiction of Peshawar Division including Nowshera, Charsadda, tribal district Mohmand, and Khyber district. The DCs of five districts briefed the meeting in detail regarding steps taken to prevent the dengue outbreak. The DCs were directed at the meeting to monitor all the anti-dengue activities by themselves and submit a report on a daily basis. The DCs were also directed to start anti-dengue fumigation in their respective jurisdictions.

The DHOs were directed to provide fumigation supplements and medicines to the teams. With regard to anti-dengue initiatives in sensitive areas of Peshawar, directives were issued for timely and effective fumigation and maintaining cleanliness to contain possible outbreaks of dengue fever. The meeting was told that an awareness campaign regarding the dengue impact continued in the five districts of Peshawar Division for the last year which has yielded very positive results. The meeting expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the anti-dengue campaign. Addressing the meeting Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair said due to the successful one-year anti-dengue campaign, no such big issue with regard to dengue spread was reported during the months of April and May.

Karachi-Peshawar railway project cost doubles due to numerous delays

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) on Wednesday notified that due to maintenance work, the power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Rehman Baba Grid Station on 15th, 19th, 22nd, 26th and 29th June from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Subsequently, it said consumers of 11KV Kachori, Shalozai, Safdar Abad, Khanmust, New HazarKhwani, Surizai, Phandu Baba, Urmar 2, Hazar Khwani, Yakatooth, New Chairman Daftar, Jameel Colony, Ring Road, BeriBagh, Rashid Ghari, Surizai, Akhon Abad, Ring Road 2, SIDB feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will also remain suspended from 132 KV Kohat Road Grid Station on 15th, 19th, 22nd, 26th and 29th June from 8:00 a.m.to 2:00 p.m, resultantly, the consumers of 11 KV PAF Express, Kohat Road, Wazir Bagh, Sonehri Masjid, Bana Mari, Civil Quarter, No-

thia, Murshad Abad, Abasin, Old DehBahadar, Deh Bhadar, Wazir Abad, Ameen ColonyJ Bara, Nodhya Payan, Murshid Abad, Dora Road, Nodiya Bahadar, Lundi Arbab 1,2,3, Sheikh Muhamadi, Pishtakhara, Swati Gate, Gulbarg, Schem Chowk feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar City Grid Station on 15th, 19th, 22nd, 26th and 29th June from 8:00 a.m.to 2:00 p.m. due to which the consumers of 11 KV Sikhandar Abad, Zaryab, Phandu Road, City Home, Bana Mari, Urmar, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Sheikh Abad, Molvi G, Nishtarabad, NHA feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from132 KV Mardan 2-Katlang Transmission Line on15th June from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. resultantly consumers of 132 KV Katlang grid connected with 11KV feeders will face inconvenience.

Power suspension for Peshawar,Mardan, Chakdara notified



PESHAWAR (Agencies): Due to delays, the development cost of the ambitious Main Line-1 (ML-1) railway project has more than doubled. This has made acquiring funding a lot harder for the government. Envisaged under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2016 with an estimated \$6 million cost and financial assurance from Beijing, it will now cost \$13 million. Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif highlighted this during the Pakistan Railways (PR) meeting. A source privy to the meeting told Dawn that the government received no finan-

cial assistance to complete the project. Therefore, the PM had ordered the authorities to at least start the first phase from Karachi to Sukkur using government funds. The meeting was informed that China had pledged to pay for the ML-1 project. Although, the country is yet to give any confirmation in this regard. The current administration blamed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf administration for “jeopardizing” the project by switching plan ML-1 from a Build Operate Transfer (BOT) to an Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) model.



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Govt to complete its tenure: Sharmila Faruqi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan People's Party Senior Leader Sharmila Faruqi Wednesday said that the current government would complete its tenure and elections would be held on schedule. Talking to ptv news channel, she said that the former PTI government destroyed the country's economy and we were now suffering what it sowed in four years. She said that economic stability was not possible in a country without political stability. The aim of the Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership was to stay in government only by violating the constitution and attacking state institutions. She also hailed that the budget 2023-24 presented by the incumbent government can be considered a balanced one. The government has set some long-term plans for the economic revival, she said, adding, the need of the hour was to improve trade relations with neighbour countries where Bilawal Bhutto plays an important role. She

claimed that Khan had ruined the country's economy and the PDM-led government had been working hard to steer the country out of the quagmire. In response to a question, he said that the incidents of May 9 should be investigated and the culprits should be brought to justice. The civil and military leadership has taken a timely and wise decision to deal with the miscreants of these violent incidents with iron hands, she said.

DG urges stakeholders to come forward for balanced population growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General (DG) of the Population Programme Wing Dr Sabina Durrani on Wednesday urged all the stakeholders of society to come forward and contribute to sensitizing the public about the negative implications of overpopulation which was not only affecting human health but also burdening the economy of the country for achieving a balanced population growth. Talking to the ptv news channel, she expressed her serious concern about overpopulation and said, "Population growth is a looming crisis in Pakistan now which is growing day by day and we are facing the impacts of population growth in all walks of life. " "The

stakeholders of the society should collectively work for effective long-term policies to control the population." She further said, "The government has established various task forces to mitigate the population growth rate." "The high fertility rate, low mortality, high birth rate, urbanization, and migration crisis are some of the reasons." Replying to a question, she said, "Effective policy and changing attitudes for long-sized families are essential to control the rapidly growing population of Pakistan." "Moreover, awareness initiatives on maternal health and contraceptive use shall also contribute to lowering the population rate in the future," she added.

President condoles with family members of martyred soldiers

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday condoled with the family members of the Pakistan Army soldiers who embraced martyrdom for the country. He saluted the martyrs and their families on their passion for sacrifice. He also paid tributes to the martyrs for sacrificing their lives for the sake of the country's security. He telephoned the family members of the soldiers who were martyred in Miran Shah on June 9. The president talked to the

family members of Subedar Asghar Shaheed, Sepoy Naseem Shaheed, and Muhammad Zaman Shaheed. He also telephoned the family members of Sepoy Saqib ur Rehman who embraced martyrdom in Haider Khel on May 31. Paying tributes to the services and sacrifices of the martyrs for their country, President Alvi thanked the families of the martyrs on behalf of the nation. He also prayed to Allah Almighty for the elevation of ranks of the departed souls in paradise.

E-Flow assessment of critical sites of River Ravi initiated: PCRWR

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) has initiated E-Flow assessment of critical sites of River Ravi. According to PCRWR, E-Flow assessment requires a comprehensive study of geomorphology, water quality, riparian vegetation, macro-invertebrates, fisheries, socio-economics, and hydraulic parameters. In this connection, PCRWR has organized a consultative meeting to have inputs from stakeholders to develop a holistic E-Flow assessment methodology

on June 13. Welcoming the technical representatives of Punjab Wildlife, Pak EPA, RUDA Lahore, Punjab Forest Department and PCIW Chairman PCRWR explained the conditions of rivers of Pakistan and the theme behind this E-flow study. Dr Hifza Rasheed, Director General PCRWR presented the methodology and initial results of the E-flow survey study. A very healthy and fruitful discussion was conducted and valuable feedback was received from all the stakeholders.

PTI purposefully deploys violence as policy: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said keeping in view the facts that had been established so far, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) under its chief purposefully deployed violence as a policy. Responding to a tweet of the PTI chairman, the prime minister in his tweet said if there was someone who deserved the title of modern-day Joseph Goebbels, chief propagandist for the German Nazi Party, was none other than Imran Khan. "He is certainly perfecting the art of lying." "How convenient of IK to forget how he incited his cult followers to violence over a span of one year!

He called the Army and intelligence leadership names, exploited the people's emotions through slogans of 'Haqeeqi Azadi' and use of religious symbols and even administered the oath of 'Jihad' to them," he said. He said as the state symbols and military installations came under attack at the hands of his goons, he (the PTI chief) refused to condemn violence, what to speak of urging the arsonists to stand down. "His speeches and Twitter posts have enough evidence to refute his claims and establish a build-up to the events of May 9," he said adding "he can lie through his teeth, history doesn't".

Improving medical facilities in public hospitals top priority: minister

SIALKOT (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health Dr. Jamal Nasir has said that improving medical facilities in government hospitals was the top priority and the problems of district, tehsil level and primary health centers would be resolved at earliest. Cases will be reviewed for approval of development projects, posts of doctors and medical staff in government hospitals of district Sialkot. He expressed these views while talking to media here on Wednesday during his visit to various areas of Sialkot district. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health expressed satisfaction over the performance of the District Health Authority and appreciated the Deputy Commissioner Adnan Mehmood Awan and the District

Health Management Team for their effective supervision. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Health Dr. Rehan, Principal Khawaja Muhammad Safdar Medical College Sialkot Dr. Abdul Sattar and MS Dr. Ilyas were also present. Meanwhile, the Caretaker Provincial Health Minister also visited Allama Iqbal Teaching Hospital Sialkot and Civil Hospital Sambrial. He inspected the emergency ward, surgical ward, lab and issued instructions to improve the facilities. Dr. Jamal Nasir directed to issue notices to the laboratory supervisors both hospitals for not maintaining quality control standards in the lab. He directed that the patients should be prescribed the medicines available in the hospital stores, and attention should be paid to improve the quality of the tests.

Cheques disbursed among investigation officers

SARGODHA (APP): In line with special directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Sargodha Muhammad Faisal Kamran, Superintendent of Police (SP) Investigation Farhan Ahmed distributed cheques amounting to Rs 2.41 million among investigation officers under investigation cost here in a ceremony held at DPO office on Wednesday. While addressing, SP Investigation Farhan Ahmed directed officers concerned to utilize the expenses for early completion of investigations of the cases. He asked them to complete investigation of cases at the earliest in order to provide justice to masses. He also urged them to cooperate with the complainant and solve their issues on merit.

Malik pledges to serve nation as SAPM Interior

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jawad Sohrab Malik expressed his unwavering resolve to do his utmost to serve the nation in his new capacity as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Interior. In a tweet, he said, "May Allah Almighty help me to serve the nation with humility and righteousness." "He also expressed gratitude for the privilege and honor of serving the people, vowing to earn their confidence through dedicated efforts. On Tuesday, the Cabinet Division issued a notification designating Jawad Sohrab Malik as the SAPM on Interior with immediate effect.

Police organized free medical camp

SARGODHA (APP): Sargodha Police on Wednesday organized a free medical camp aimed to provide better healthcare facilities to destitute people here at Police Lines. Police said on Wednesday that a full penal of specialist doctors provided services to a total of 300 patients including 120 men, 80 children and 100 women in the camp. DPO Sargodha said that police was striving for the welfare of the masses and would continue taking such steps to highlight the soft and positive role in society.

Two killed, one injured in road accident

FAISALABAD (APP): Two persons were killed, while another sustained serious injuries in a road mishap in the area of Chak Jhumra police station. Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Wednesday that a speeding dumper truck hit a motorcycle near Nallaywala bridge late Tuesday night. Consequently, Saqlain Ejaz (22) and Mani Abdul Ghafoor (25) residents of Chak 75-RB Lohkay received serious injuries and died on the spot, whereas 18-year-old Ahmad Khalid was shifted to Allied Hospital in critical condition. The police took the bodies into custody and started investigation for arrest of the accused truck driver who managed to escape from the scene, he added.

Woman abducts her own child for ransom

LAHORE (APP): Kasur police have recovered an abducted teenage child safely and arrested the mother and her brothers involved in the case. Police said here on Wednesday that one Yaseen, resident of Gaye Jamoon village, filed a complaint that his 15-year-old son Saqib was kidnapped by unidentified outlaws and demanded ransom amounting to Rs 10 million.

Artists asset of nation who play key role in promoting national culture, identity: Marriyum

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said that artists were national asset who play a key role in promoting national culture and developing national identity. She expressed these views in a meeting with film, stage and television artists here. "Encouragement of creative thinking is indispensable for the growth of the society," the minister remarked. In the budget of the next fiscal year, Rs. 2 billion had been allocated for the film finance fund while Rs. 1 billion for the health insurance of artists, she said, adding that revival and development of the film industry was the "top priority of the government". The minister said that promoting the positive image and true identity of Pakistan



around the world was the need of the hour. Films are an important means of highlighting a country's culture, history, values, heritage and tourism sector, she added. The information minister assured to solve the problems of artists and redress their grievances. The artists expressed their gratitude to the minister for allocating a significant amount of money for the film finance fund and artists' health insurance in the budget.

PM paid homage to martyrs by inaugurating Captain Colonel Sher Khan avenue: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid homage to the martyrs of the nation by inaugurating the avenue named after the hero of the nation, Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed, who compelled the enemy to ac-

knowledge his unparalleled courage and bravery. In her tweet, she said that after the tragedy of May 9, this was a salute from the nation to martyrs and Ghazis. She said it was also a message to those who desecrated the memorials of martyrs that the Pakistani nation respected and honoured its martyrs.

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righteousness. "He also expressed gratitude for the privilege and honor of serving the people, vowing to earn their confidence through dedicated efforts. On Tuesday, the Cabinet Division issued a notification designating Jawad Sohrab Malik as the SAPM on Interior with immediate effect.

ANF seizes over 161 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in six operations conducted across the country managed to net four accused and recovered over 161 kg drugs, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that in an operation near Gujranwala Toll Plaza, ANF recovered 93.6 kg charras concealed in secret cavities of a vehicle and arrested two drug smugglers, residents of Khyber. In another operation near Kuchlak bypass Quetta, ANF seized 50 kg heroin concealed in a dry rainy nullah. In third operation conducted near 'Jarhoi Zakha Khail' area, eight kg charras concealed in

plastic bags was seized. The spokesman informed that in fourth operation in Mianwali, ANF managed to recover 1.2 kg opium and 40 grams charras from the possession of a motorcyclist resident of Bhakkar. In the fifth operation conducted at Pakistan International Container Terminal, Karachi, ANF recovered five kg Ice drug concealed in decoration pieces. The container was booked for Australia by a Peshawar-based private company. In the sixth operation conducted at Pak-Afghan Border area in Chaman, ANF recovered four kg suspicious material from the possession of an accused.

Expert on 'World Blood Donor Day' urged people to donate blood

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health experts on World Blood Donor day urged healthy people must donate blood voluntarily as our single drop of blood can save precious lives and urged youth to take active part for awareness campaign through social media platforms for safeguarding humanity. WHO Advisor on Blood Safety Prof. Dr. Hasan Abbas Zaheer talking to ptv news channel said that awareness on blood donation was essential to encourage the people to come forward to support the needy people. He urged the young generation participate in this pious deed through special camps to ensure adequate availability of blood in local healthcare centres. Blood transfu-

sion saves lives and improves health, but many patients requiring transfusion do not have timely access to safe blood, he mentioned. Providing safe and adequate blood should be an integral part of every country's national health care policy and infrastructure, he added. Replying a question, he recommends that all blood donations should be screened for infections prior to use, adding, screening for HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and syphilis should be mandatory. Blood screening should be performed according to quality system requirements, he said, adding, we should thank worldwide blood donors and spread more awareness of the need for regular blood donation.

Political stability key to economic strength, development, prosperity: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that political stability in the country was highly important to achieve economic strength, attract investment, and ensure development and prosperity. "Political stability and economic stability both are interlinked with each other," he said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the reconstructed Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Road (previously known as IJ Principle Road) here. Shehbaz Sharif said in a situation where there was political instability in the country, the political opponents were hatching conspiracies everywhere, spreading false propaganda and misleading the nation, and national and foreign investors would be ready to invest in the country. Putting the responsibility

of the current economic crisis in the country on the previous government, the PM said it breached its own agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) due to which the confidence of the Fund in Pakistan shattered and it was hesitant to resume its agreement now. He said the current government had met all the conditions of the IMF and hoped that the programme would resume anytime very soon. Shehbaz Sharif resolved that under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, we all together would bring the country out of all crises. He said the previous government had ignored the development projects and progress on the reconstruction of IJP road was also going on at a snail's pace. However, he said the current government made it possible to complete it within the stipulated time.

Water inflow in major rivers jump to 295,700 cusecs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Water inflow in all major rivers has significantly increased due to the surge in temperature and Wednesday it stood at 295,700 cusecs against the outflow of 226,600 cusecs. According to the data released by the Indus River System Authority (IRSA), water inflow in the River Indus at Tarbela has jumped to 129,200 cusecs against the outflow of 85,000 cusecs. The water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1441.82 feet and was 43.82 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Similarly, wa-

ter inflow in River Jhelum at Mangla dam was recorded as 57,900 cusecs against the outflow of 33,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1140.70 feet, which was 90.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. Water inflow in the River Kabul touched 66,000 cusecs at Nowshera and 23,600 cusecs in River Chenab at Marala. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 101,000, 99,300, 58,700 and 22,600 cusecs, respectively.

Secretary HED S.Punjab visits Govt College Layyah

MULTAN (APP): Secretary Higher education South Punjab Muhammad Altaf Baloch visited Government Boys College Layyah to gauge its performance. He inspected the college's staff room, ground, urdu, English departments computer lab, BS block and library. He checked cleanliness arrangements furniture and attendance of teachers. The secretary also presided over the meeting regarding various issues of the college Speaking on the occa-

sion Baloch said that the problems of the college teachers would be resolved and the vacant posts would be filled. He urged the students to take part in co-curricular activities for shaping their personalities. Secretary Higher Education South Punjab Altaf Baloch was briefed about the performance of other colleges of the district. Deputy Director Colleges Prof Zulfiqar Haideri, and Principal Dr. Sajad Hussain Gut were present.

PM,MQM convener discuss political situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and convener of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Khalid Maqbool Siddiqi met here Wednesday and discussed the political situation in the country. Siddiqi expressed gratitude to the prime minister for allocating development funds in the national budget 2023-24 for Sindh, particularly its

urban areas. He also paid tribute to PM Sharif for performing the ground-breaking of the long-awaited K-4 project to address the issue of clean drinking water. The MQM convener thanked the prime minister for taking all measures to deal with the situation in the wake of Biparjoy Cyclone approaching the coastal areas of the country.

Mepco teams to protect power installation in Biperjoy cyclone

MULTAN (APP): In a view of possible arrival of Biperjoy cyclone at seashore, three mepco teams were dispatched under supervision of SE Mepco Vehari from here. The teams were mandated to protect Wapda installations as well as repairing with shifting people to safe locations in case of emerging emer-

gency on the occasion. It's included with line staff, technical staff expert in related fields with the officers. SE Mapco said departure of Mepco officials to Karachi would help meet possible emergency situations. He vowed to play coherent role to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity in the capital.

Thrilling three-day sports event for law enforcers concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): A three-day sports event aimed at showcasing the spirit of sportsmanship among law enforcement agencies came to a successful close at the Police Headquarters in Islamabad. The event witnessed tough competition and camaraderie among teams representing various organizations. The concluding ceremony, graced by the presence of Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Capital City Police Officer, acknowledged the exceptional efforts exhibited by the participating teams throughout the tournament.

Book fair on promoting local culture and celebrations held at Chitral

CHITRAL (APP): The District Youth Office Lower in collaboration with the district administration Chitral here on Wednesday organized a book fair at the University of Chitral to promote and celebrate local literature. Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Anwar Akbar inaugurated the fair as the chief guest. The guests of honor, Professor Dr Muhammad Zahir Shah Vice Chancellor and Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Dr Muhammad Atif Jalib highly appreciated the organizers and encouraged the students to make the most of the opportunity to promote local literature. Talking to this scribe, District Youth Officer Lower

The event saw the active involvement of teams from Islamabad Capital Police, National Highways Authority, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Frontier Constabulary, and the Ministry of Interior, who enthusiastically competed in volleyball, football, and cricket matches. In a thrilling finale, CDA clashed with the Frontier Constabulary, resulting in an exhilarating showdown. Ultimately, the Frontier Constabulary emerged as the victors, showcasing their exceptional skills and teamwork.

Eight dengue cases reported this year

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as eight dengue-positive cases had been reported in the Rawalpindi district this year, but there was a need to remain vigilant to control the spread of the fatal disease as the prevailing weather was suitable for breeding larvae. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control Dr Sajjad Mehmood told APP, that four patients were admitted to the District Headquarters Hospital, three to the Holy Family Hospital, and one to the Shifa International Hospital.

Giving details of the punitive actions, the health officer said that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had registered 107 FIRs, sealed 62 premises, issued Challoans to 134, notices to 752, and a fine of Rs 244,600 imposed on violations of dengue SOPs in 2023.21 people were also arrested for violating SOPs, he added. Dr Sajjad informed that 1,124 health teams during indoor surveillance checked around 155,313 houses and found larvae at 1,148 sites.

Islamabad police to further strengthen traffic enforcement,improve road safety measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Wing) would ensure traffic discipline in the city and implement effective measures for a safer road environment, besides further activating the squad formed for the collection of fines from violators of traffic rules. It was decided in a meeting presided over by the Chief Traffic Officer Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer, which was aimed at evaluating the monthly performance of all zones and

implementing effective measures to enhance traffic rule enforcement. The meeting, held at Traffic Headquarters Islamabad, brought together key officials including SP Traffic, DSPs, and Zone In-charges, who discussed strategies to address various road safety concerns. With a focus on eliminating accidents and ensuring compliance with traffic laws, the meeting emphasized the need for strict implementation and effective disciplinary actions

against those neglecting their duties. During the meeting, Islamabad's traffic officials assessed the monthly performance of all zones. The Primary objective was to reinforce the effectiveness of the existing squads responsible for enforcing traffic rules while addressing prevalent issues that compromise road safety. The meeting instructed to further activate the squad formed for the collection of fines from traffic violators.

1007 Policemen promoted during last two months

SARGODHA (APP): Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sargodha Sharukh Kamal Siddiqui on Wednesday said that a total of 1007 police personnel across the region were promoted during the last two months which was the first time in the history of Sargodha policeWhile talking to APP here ,he maintained that 73 inspectors, 283 sub-inspectors, 352 Assistant sub/inspectors, 344 constables and 86 police officers were promoted in next grade after conducting six promotion boards. He urged upon the policemen to work with determination and devotion.

Three drug pushers convicted

SARGODHA (APP): Additional district & sessions judge Noorpur Thal on Wednesday handed down nine years jail term with a fine of Rs 800,000 each on three drug pushers. According to the prosecution, Muhammad Waris, Imran Khan and Amir Shahzadwere arrested with drugs by police some times ago. The police sent their challansto the court which decided the case today.

Pesticides shop sealed

SARGODHA (APP): A shop was sealed for selling pesticides without a license here on Wednesday. According to the official sources, a team of agriculture department checked various pesticides shops and found that a pesticides dealer Sajid Ali was selling pesticides illegally at the shop. The team sealed the shop and got registered a case against the dealer.

Police arrest seven for carrying illegal weapons

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police have arrested seven accused for carrying illegal weapons and recovered weapons and ammunition from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that Bani, Morgah and Gujar Khan police in their ongoing operations held seven accused, namely Faisal, Muhammad Hassan, Abdul Rehman, Tariq, Salman, Amad and Ali Jan for possessing illegal weapons and recovered seven 30 bore pistols, and ammunition from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

LHC issues notice in Shehryar Afridi detention case

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC)Rawalpindi bench on Wednesday issued notices to Chief Secretary,Inspector General of Police Punjab,Deputy Commissioner and City Police Officer Rawalpindi against the detention order of former State Minister for Interior Shehryar Khan Afridi case. According to details, the former minister had filed a writ petition challenging the detention order in the LHC Rawalpindi bench.

Hijama therapists advocate for regulatory body after surge in quacks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hijama therapists have expressed concerns about the growing number of unqualified practitioners and urged the government to create an exclusive regulatory body that would be responsible for overseeing the practice of cupping therapy. Talking to APP here on Tuesday, Dr Sohail Qureshi emphasized that 80 percent of patients experience positive outcomes after receiving hijama therapy which indicates that the results are not

merely attributable to the placebo effect or belief healing. Dr Qureshi provided further insights into the therapy, dispelling a common misconception that “cupping therapy is suitable for everyone”. He cautioned that individuals with diabetes, anaemia, or who are pregnant should refrain from undergoing the treatment. He stressed the importance of therapists possessing a medical background for understanding the intricacies of the procedure and

identifying the appropriate Hijama points. “Mishandling or neglecting necessary precautions can result in health hazards,” he warned. According to Dr Qureshi, cupping therapy has been practiced for centuries and comes in two forms that include wet cupping and dry cupping. Dry cupping involves solely creating a vacuum on the hijama points, while wet therapy entails making incisions after creating the vacuum suction, he added.

Effective tracking of Cyclone Biparjoy continues with all safety measures in place:Sherry informs NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Sherry Rehman on Wednesday informed the National Assembly the government was ensuring effective monitoring of the tropical cyclone Biparjoy, moving with full intensity and likely to hit the coastline of Pakistan and India on Thursday. “All tracking institutions of Pakistan including PMD and Suparco are working round the clock with international satellites, especially of Bangkok, as it is inching towards Pakistan and India's coastline with intensity. Tomorrow it is expected if it remains as per the expected trajectory, which stood correct so far,” she said while briefing the House about the cyclone's movement and the precautionary measures taken by the

government. She said it could affect the coastal areas of Karachi with landfalls and gusty winds, and going away from Balochistan its’ intense hit’ was expected at the KT Bundar Khaas. “Currently it is moving at the speed of around 140-50 kilometer per hour. Its center has much speed and density.” The minister said the Sindh government had timely issued the advisory well before the time, following which voluntary and mandatory areas were being evacuated as per safety measures, which had almost been completed. “Now it's (cyclone) all focus is in Sindh, however, parts of Balochistan will also be affected but with gusty winds and rains. There will be its brunt in Badin, Thatta, Sajawal and Malir areas of Sindh.

Javed Latif demands action against facilitator, planners of May 9 incident

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister Javed Latif on Wednesday demanded action against the facilitators and planners responsible for the harrowing May 9 incident that targeted public and defence installations. Speaking during a general discussion on the budget for the year 2023-2024 on the floor of the National Assembly, he stressed the importance of bringing the planners and facilitators of the attacks to justice. The minister expressed concerns over the current inflation rate, stating that the salary and pension increases for government employees were insufficient. He further highlighted a unique situation in the country's political landscape, with no political parties

willing to take credit for the current budget. He criticized the leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for their alleged mismanagement of the country's economy during their tenure while acknowledging the challenges faced in presenting the budget amidst a difficult economic situation. The Minister questioned the justification for international financial institutions interfering in Pakistan's political affairs, arguing that their focus should instead be on supporting economic reforms. He raised suspicions about external actors protecting an individual who caused destruction and damage to public and defence installations under the pretext of human rights.

Reduction in RLNG based power generation causes increase in temporary load-shedding:Ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Energy has said cyclone Biparjoy has disrupted the R-LNG supply in Pakistan, causing a temporary reduction in RLNG-based power generation and a temporary increase in load-shedding. “We are ensuring the full supply of fuel to K-Electric to maintain normal electricity supply to the citizens of Karachi,” the ministry said on its official Twitter handle account. Five power distribution companies Gujranwala Electric

Supply Company (GEPCO), Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO), Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO), and Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO) have also activated to provide support to Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) for restoration of electricity during and after the cyclone. The restoration teams of said DISCOs would soon move to be likely affected coastal areas.

May 9 rioters being dealt as per country's constitution and laws: HR Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Human Rights, Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Wednesday said that no one should teach us a lesson on human rights as Pakistan was effectively dealing with the May 9 attackers in accordance with the country's constitution and laws. Speaking here in National Assembly, the minister defended Pakistan's stance on human rights, stating that no one should deliver lecture to the country on this matter. He emphasized that Pakistan was effectively dealing with the attackers from the May 9 incident in accordance with the country's constitution and laws. Furthermore, he

highlighted that the National Commission for Human Rights had not received any complaints regarding the mistreatment of women in prisons. He expressed concerns about the defamation of Pakistan by its adversaries through social media. The minister stressed that Pakistan was fully aware of the challenges faced by minority groups. He accused the neighboring country of interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs and fueling religious animosity. The minister noted a decrease in targeted sectarian killings in Quetta following the arrest of Kulbhushan, indicating a potential connection.

UK GDP reaches pre-pandemic level with April rise

LONDON (Agencies): British economic output inched higher as expected in April, driven by the retail sector and the filming industry, while manufacturing and construction contracted, official data showed on Wednesday. Britain's economy grew by 0.2% month-on-month in April, the Office for National Statistics said, matching the consensus in a Reuters poll of economists. Financial markets showed little immediate reaction to the figures – in contrast to



recent labour market and inflation data which boosted expectations for higher interest rates from the Bank of England. "High growth needs low inflation, so we must stick relentlessly to our plan to halve the rate

this year to protect family budgets," finance minister Jeremy Hunt said in response to Wednesday's figures. The ONS said the economy in April stood 0.3% above its pre-pandemic level of February 2020. Services output rose 0.3% on the month, with growth driven by the retail, information and communications, and the filming industry. But manufacturing output dropped 0.3% and the construction sector contracted unexpectedly by 0.6, the figures showed.

Shell boosts dividend 15% in oil, gas refocus

LONDON (Agencies): Shell Plc will increase its dividend 15% and boost natural gas production as new CEO Wael Sawan refocuses on the fossil fuels that drove record profits last year. It's part of a pivot by the European oil major to expand the most profitable parts of its business, even if they are carbon-intensive while scaling back ventures that don't make high enough returns. The company reiterated its pledge to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. "We will invest in the models that work — those with the high-



est returns that play to our strengths," Sawan said in a statement. The CEO and his management team will lay out more details of the plan to shareholders at a presentation in New York later on Wednesday. As well as the dividend increase, which will take effect this

quarter, Shell committed to buying back at least US\$5 billion of shares in the second half. The company will reduce capital spending from US\$22 billion to US\$25 billion a year for 2024 and 2025. Key to achieving higher returns will be the oil and gas business that drives the majority of Shell's profits. The company will no longer seek to cut oil production by 1% to 2% annually, having achieved its initial output-reduction plan — announced in 2021 amid a focus on cutting carbon emissions — faster than anticipated.

BYD reopens vandalism-hit Hong Kong showrooms

HONG KONG (Agencies): Chinese automaker BYD Co Ltd has restarted operations at two showrooms and a service centre in Hong Kong after they were vandalised earlier this week, BYD's sole agent said in a notice on its website on Wednesday. Restoration work on another showroom in the outlying district of Yuen Long in the New Territories was expected to be completed by the end of the week, BYD's Hong Kong sole agent JC Motor Ltd said. "The incidents have been



reported to the police and we will co-operate with the investigation and will await the conclusion from the police," JC Motor said in the notice. Its showrooms in the districts of Wan Chai on Hong Kong island and Tsim Sha Tsui

in Kowloon, as well as its service centre in Tin Shui Wai in the New Territories, had resumed normal operations, it added. JC Motor did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment on the cause and impact of the vandalism. Two BYD showrooms and a service centre in Hong Kong were daubed with red paint, while a car also rammed into the roller shutter at its Yuen Long showroom in the early hours of Monday, causing damage, police told Reuters.

Toyota faces shareholder backlash over governance

TOKYO (Agencies): Toyota faces an unprecedented challenge at its annual shareholder meeting on Wednesday, with some pension funds voting against Chairman Akio Toyoda on governance issues, while seeking more disclosures on the Japanese automaker's climate lobbying. The world's top car maker has become a target in recent years for activists and green investors, who say it has been slow to roll out battery electric vehicles (EVs). Now, some investors have taken aim at the independence of its board. The



two largest US public pension funds – California's CalPERS and CalSTRS – as well as New York City's pension system and other asset managers have said they are voting against Toyoda. Two prominent US proxy advisers have flagged concern about Toyota's

board independence. The step comes as companies across Japan face more pressure from investors, especially on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. Shareholders have made a record number of proposals at annual meetings this year. Governance code revisions make clear that boards are to provide oversight, not just advice, but some Japanese companies "seem reluctant to accept the conclusion" and still regard boards as advisory, said Kentaro Shibata, a lawyer and corporate governance expert.

US bill may end China's e-commerce tariff exemption

NEW YORK (Agencies): A bipartisan group of US lawmakers planned to introduce a bill on Wednesday to eliminate a tariff exemption widely used by e-commerce sellers to send orders from China to US shoppers, one of the sponsors said. The exception, known as the de minimis rule, exempts imports valued at US\$800 or less from tariffs if the items are shipped to individual consumers. The bill would ban such shipments from China immediately upon enactment, sponsor Republican Senator Bill Cassidy said. E-commerce sellers such



as China-founded, Singapore-based Shein, and Temu, a rival owned by PDD Holdings Inc that operates the Chinese e-commerce site Pinduoduo, are big beneficiaries of the exemption. A federal brief in April said the companies "exploit" de minimis to avoid duties and import illegal items such

as those made in China's Xinjiang region with forced Uyghur labour. A Shein spokesperson said Tuesday the company has no manufacturers in Xinjiang. Temu did not immediately respond to a request for comment. De minimis shipments have drawn attention at least since 2019 when the US Consumer Product Safety Commission reported it struggled to catch unsafe imports because of the heavy volume of low-value packages. Such shipments rose to 685.5 million in 2022 compared with 410.5 million in 2018, US customs data showed.

Dollar falls to 3-week low on Fed pause bets

TOKYO (Agencies): The dollar fell to near a three-week low to the euro and a one-month low versus sterling on Wednesday, after unexpectedly soft US inflation data cemented the view that the Federal Reserve will skip an interest rate hike later in the day. China's yuan sagged to a 6-1/2-month trough, continuing its slide after the central bank cut rates on Tuesday, amid speculation even more stimulus is on the way to support the sputtering post-Covid economic recovery. The dollar index – which measures the currency



against six major peers, including the euro and sterling – was little changed at 103.29 in early Asian trading, after dipping to the lowest since May 22 overnight at 103.04. The US consumer price index (CPI) edged up just 0.1% last month and notched its smallest year-on-year

increase since March 2021 at 4.0%. That saw bets for a quarter-point hike to US rates later on Wednesday pared to less than 6% currently, from 21% 24 hours earlier, according to the CME Group's FedWatch Tool. "The soft inflation report effectively cements a Fed pause, although I doubt it will be enough to warrant a dovish undertone as it's not in their interest with CPI twice the Fed's target," said Matt Simpson, senior market analyst at City Index, who points to 103 as a key support level for the dollar index.

US judge blocks Microsoft's Activision takeover

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): A US federal judge on Tuesday temporarily blocked Microsoft from completing its US\$69 billion buyout of gaming giant Activision Blizzard, a court filing showed. Judge Edward Davila said in a ruling that it "is necessary to maintain the status quo" while the court considers a longer-term injunction on the purchase as requested by regulators at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). A hearing was set for June 22 and June 23 in



San Francisco federal court to hear evidence in the matter, according to the ruling. The ruling came a day after the FTC asked a federal court to prevent Microsoft from complet-

ing its blockbuster buy of Activision Blizzard as it considers regulatory action. "A preliminary injunction is necessary to ... prevent interim harm" while the FTC determines whether "the proposed acquisition violates US antitrust law", the regulator said in the filing. Tuesday's ruling bars Microsoft from moving forward with the deal before the court decides whether to issue a preliminary injunction sought by regulators.

Kuwait signs contract with Turkiye to buy \$367m worth of drones

RIYADH (Agencies): Kuwait has concluded a contract worth \$367 million with Turkish defense firm Baykar to buy its TB2 drones through direct negotiations between the two governments, the Kuwaiti army said in a statement on Tuesday. The statement did not reveal how many drones would be delivered to Kuwait or when. International demand for Baykar's TB2 drones soared after they featured in conflicts in Syria, Libya and Azerbaijan and interest



in them increased further following their use by Ukraine's military to thwart Russian forces. The State of Kuwait would be the 28th country in the world to conclude a contract for the Bayraktar TB2 drones.

EU lawmakers to back world's first AI rules

STRASBOURG (Agencies): European Parliament lawmakers will vote Wednesday to kickstart talks to approve the world's first sweeping rules on artificial intelligence systems like ChatGPT, aiming to curb potential harms while nurturing innovation. Although the EU's plans date back to 2021, the draft rules took on greater urgency when ChatGPT exploded onto the scene last year, showing off AI's dizzying development and the possible risks. There is also growing clamour to regulate AI across the Atlantic, as pressure grows on Western governments to act fast in what some describe as a battle to protect humanity. While AI proponents hail the



technology for how it will transform society, including work, healthcare, and creative pursuits, others are terrified by its potential to undermine democracy. Once adopted by the EU parliament, officials say negotiations for a final law with the bloc's 27 member states will begin almost immediately, starting later Wednesday. The race is on to strike an agreement on final legislation by the end of the year.

Big clients key to AMD-Nvidia AI chip battle

NEW YORK (Agencies): Advanced Micro Devices Inc on Tuesday gave new details about an artificial intelligence chip that will challenge market leader Nvidia Corp, but the company left out what Wall Street wanted to know – who plans to buy it. Santa Clara, California-based AMD said the forthcoming chip, which will start trickling out in the third quarter followed by mass production beginning in the fourth quarter, will have 192 gigabytes of memory. That could help tech companies get a handle on the spiralling cost of delivering services similar to ChatGPT, AMD chief executive Lisa Su told Reuters in an interview. She spoke following a keynote presentation in San Francisco during which Su showed an AI system on the MI300X chip writing



a poem about the city. "The more memory that you have, the larger the set of models" the chip can handle, Su said. "We've seen in customer workloads that it runs much faster. We really do think it's differentiating." But unlike past presentations where AMD has talked up a major customer for a new chip, AMD did not say who will adopt the MI300X or a smaller version called the MI300A. The company gave no details on how much the chip will cost or how it will bolster its sales.

Ubisoft eyes VR, AI revolutions in gaming

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): French videogame titan Ubisoft is eyeing artificial intelligence and virtual reality as the next big things in gaming, its chief executive said, especially ahead of the release of Apple's new mixed reality headset. Ubisoft has long been known to take chances on new gaming innovations – the company launched an early partnership with Nintendo on its 2006 sensation the Wii console. Now, ahead of next year's release of Apple's Vision Pro headset, Ubisoft chief executive Yves Guillemot is ready to make another bet on the future of gaming – that virtual reality is around the corner. After a decade that saw the revolutionary rise of free-to-play smartphone games and titles streamed directly



from the internet cloud, Guillemot thinks VR is likely to be the next major industry disruptor. "VR is eventually going to happen," he told AFP Monday at a company showcase event in Los Angeles. "Apple investing massively in the field is fantastic for all of us," he added. With Vision Pro, Apple joins Facebook's Meta, which had been the driving force behind VR video games, in lobbying studios to adapt versions of hit titles for its virtual reality Quest device.

Amazon cloud back online after major outage

NEW YORK (Agencies): Amazon.com said cloud services offered by its unit, Amazon Web Services (AWS), were restored after a big disruption on Tuesday affected websites of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Boston Globe among others. Several hours after Downdetector.com started showing reports of outages, Amazon said, "the issue has been resolved and all AWS Services are operating normally". Tuesday's impact stretching from transportation to financial services businesses underscores the adoption of Amazon's younger Lambda



service and the degree to which many of its cloud offerings are crucial to companies in the internet age. According to research in the past year from the cloud company Datadog, more than half of organisations operating in the cloud use Lambda or rival services, known as "serverless" technology.

Asian shares up as US inflation data backs Fed pause

SYDNEY (Agencies): Asian shares rose and the dollar was under pressure on Wednesday after slowing US inflation solidified bets that the Federal Reserve would skip a hike later in the day, but uncertainty remained about further rate increases beyond this week. The much-watched US CPI report overnight showed prices barely rose in May, with just a 0.1% increase from the prior month. On an

annual basis, consumer prices rose 4%, the smallest in more than two years, slowing from April's 4.9%. That led traders to firm up expectations of a rate pause by the Fed to 91.9% when it concludes a two-day policy meeting on Wednesday, but the still-strong underlying price pressures suggest an over 60% probability the central bank could resume hikes in July, according to CME Group's FedWatch Tool.

From ‘sirens and bomb shelters’ to NBA glory:The legend of Nikola Jokic

NEW YORK (Agencies): Nikola Jokic completed one of the most improbable journeys in NBA history after guiding the Denver Nuggets past the Miami Heat 94 - 89 in a thrilling Game 5 victory, securing a gritty series win and a first-ever championship. The Serbian was named Finals MVP, joining New York Knicks legend Willis Reid as the only other second-round pick to win the award. Jokic averaged 30.0 points, 13.5 rebounds and 9.5 assists in 20 games in the 2023 playoffs. He is now one of eleven players who’ve secured two regular-season MVPs and at least one Finals MVP, joining legends such as Michael Jordon, Tim Duncan, Stephen Curry, Giannis Antetokounmpo, Moses Malone, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, LeBron James, Wilt Chamberlain, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Denver went 16-4 during its playoff run, and Jokic led the playoffs in all points, rebounds, and assists. No player in NBA history has ever achieved this during the playoffs. Jokic is unique. “It puts him in the legendary category for what he’s done statistically in the Finals,” Isaiah Thomas, the former Detroit Pistons star, told ESPN. “I don’t know if there’s anyone who’s ever had a statistical run in the NBA Finals as a center as he had in these categories.” “The job is done, and we can go home now,” said an earnest Jokic. Having grown up in a cramped two-bedroom apartment that he shared with his parents, two brothers and grandmother in northern Serbia, his basketball abilities were honed playing with his two older brothers, Strahinja and Nemanja. His father worked as an agricultural engineer to help provide for the family. When he was four years old,



Nato troops bombed Serbia for 11 weeks in 1999 at the tail end of a war between Yugoslavia’s six neighbouring states: Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. “I remember things like sirens, bomb shelters, always turning off the lights,” Jokic recalled in 2017 in a conversation with Bleacher Report. “We practically lived in the dark. Even at like 9 a.m., everything was turned off.” Jokic left home when he was just 16 to play with Mega Leks, a Serbian basketball team in the Adriatic League. By his third year, he was named league MVP, a sign of things to come. Nicknamed “the Joker”, Jokic was selected by the Nuggets with the 41st pick in the second round of the 2014 NBA draft. His moment was slightly overshadowed when his name was called during a Taco Bell commercial, and the 6 ft 11in star opted to remain in Eastern Europe for an extra season and finally arrived in Denver in 2015. During the draft, Jokic was fast asleep in Serbia when he received a call in the middle of the night from his older brother, Nemanja. Nemanja informed his younger brother that he had been drafted into the NBA while popping a

bottle of champagne. Jokic came into the league without draft pedigree. He was never supposed to be where he is today. Now he is arguably the best player in the NBA. The future Hall of Famer redefines modern-day positionless basketball as his unconventional playmaking and slick scoring blur the lines between a point guard quarterbacking the offence and a high-scoring big man. The NBA champion has proven to be unstoppable in the pick-and-roll. He bends defences with his smooth passing and soft touch around the basket. His man-to-man defence is unconventional, slow and ugly but it still gets the job done. Throughout his historic trip to the NBA finals, Jokic has surpassed Wilt Chamberlain for the most triple-doubles in a single playoff run. The two-time MVP also won the championship without a single all-star teammate. “The Joker” has etched his name in history with his dominating playoff run, but he couldn’t have done it without his co-star Jamal Murray. Murray has averaged 26.1 points, 7.1 assists and 5.7 rebounds in 20 games in the 2023 playoffs. The Nuggets also put together a strong supporting cast of roleplayers that were tailor-made to play with the dynamic duo.

FIFA strikes Women’s World Cup TV deal in Germany — reports

BERLIN: FIFA has reportedly secured a deal with German broadcasters to televise the 2023 Women’s World Cup, avoiding the threat of a controversial blackout in the country. German media reported on Wednesday the tournament will be broadcast on public networks ZDF and ARD. According to information seen by AFP subsidiary SID, an agreement between FIFA, the networks and the European Broadcasting Union will soon be announced. FIFA boss Gianni Infantino had been critical of broadcasters in the ‘Big Five’ European countries, believed to be Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom, for offering substantially less than the amount paid to show the men’s World Cup. ARD director Axel Balkausky had previously said his network offered a fair bid for the rights and told Germany’s FAZ newspaper



broadcasters “would not allow themselves to be blackmailed.” In May, Germany captain Alexandra Popp accused administrators of “empty words” in the ongoing dispute, saying a World Cup

blackout would be “so bad for women’s football.” Germany are among the favorites at the World Cup, which will take place in Australia and New Zealand from July 20 to August 20.

Milner joins Brighton on one-year deal

LONDON: Brighton on Wednesday announced the signing of James Milner on a free transfer from Premier League rivals Liverpool. The 37-year-old former England midfielder has agreed a one-year contract at the Amex Stadium, with the option for a further 12 months. “I’m very glad to welcome James to Brighton,” manager Roberto De Zerbi told the club’s website. “He’s an excellent addition for us and I’m sure he will help to bring us to an even higher level.” Milner, who began his career with Leeds and has also played for Newcastle, Aston Villa and Manchester City, won a clutch of trophies in his eight years at Anfield, including the Premier League and Champions League. He will join Brighton



on June 30 following the expiry of his Reds contract and add experience to

their squad ahead of the club’s maiden Europa League campaign.

Top fighters set for Dubai International Jiu-Jitsu Championship 2023

DUBAI: The AJP Tour Dubai International Jiu-Jitsu Championship 2023 – GI is set to take place from June 16 to 18 at Al-Nasr Club in Dubai, with fighters from divisions including kids, youth, amateurs, professionals, and masters, vying for medals and ranking points. The tournament, organized by the UAE Jiu-Jitsu Federation in partnership with the Abu Dhabi Jiu-Jitsu Pro, will be the third AJP competition in the UAE this season. Aiming to build on the success of the past two events, the competition is in line with the UAEJJF’s vision to attract top athletes from local and international arenas and provide them with an ideal venue to showcase their skills. Fahad Ali Al-Shamsi, secretary-general of the UAEJJF, said: “The AJP championships are considered one



of the major tournaments included in the UAEJJF’s agenda for the season as they contribute to raising the technical level of the athletes and shed light on promising new talents. “Hosting and organizing such prom-

inent tournaments will pave the way for the participation of athletes who make up the next generation of champions and will further reinforce the country’s global leadership in sports.”

Wizards,Bradley Beal plan to work together in the event of a trade,and the Heat are interested

With suitors reaching out, the Washington Wizards and Bradley Beal are working together in the event the franchise decides to trade the three-time All-Star, according to multiple reports. Per ESPN’s Adrian Wojnarowski, Beal’s agent agent Mark Bartelstein is in close contact with team president Michael Winger as other teams are already making inquiries. Per The Athletic’s Shams Charania, it’s not yet clear if Washington intends to initiate a rebuild under Winger and general manager Will Dawkins, both of whom were hired in recent weeks. If they do, they’ve already reached an understanding with Beal to work together on a trade. The Miami Heat are among the teams interested in Beal, according to Charania. Beal has four years remaining on his five-year, \$251 million contract that includes a \$57 million player-option in the final year and a no-trade clause. He turns 30 on June 28. Bartelstein would be directly involved in any trade discussions between the Wizards and interested teams, Wojnarowski reports. Beal signed the contract under previous team leadership helmed by then-president and general manager Tommy Sheppard, who was fired in April. Owner Ted Leonsis hired



Winger in May to oversee the Wizards, Mystics and the G-League’s Capital City Go-Go. He has full authority to reshape the team in his image and oversaw the hiring of Dawkins. The team is awaiting player-option decisions from center Kristaps Porzingis and forward Kyle Kuzma, both of whom would become unrestricted free agents if they opt out of their contracts. The NBA Draft will take place June 22, and free agency begins July 1.

Formula 1 betting,odds: It looks like a fight for second-best ahead of the Canadian Grand Prix

Who is the second-fastest team in Formula 1? That’s a big question entering Sunday’s Canadian Grand Prix (2 p.m. ET, ABC). We all know by now that Red Bull is the dominant team of the season and will stay in that position barring a catastrophe. But the fight for No. 2 in the constructor’s standings is an intriguing one. Especially after the Spanish Grand Prix. Mercedes’ Lewis Hamilton and George Russell rounded out the podium spots behind Max Verstappen in Barcelona to bump Mercedes up to best-of-the-rest status in the standings. Aston Martin had been the No. 2 team thanks to Fernando Alonso’s excellence, but Alonso had his slowest race of the season in his home country. The Spanish Grand Prix looked like validation for Mercedes’ upgrades that debuted at Monaco and showed that Ferrari still had some work to do. Charles Leclerc struggled after starting at the back of the field and Carlos Sainz didn’t have any speed to match the Red Bull or Mercedes cars. Aston Martin looks poised to bring updates to the Canadian Grand Prix as Alonso is chasing his first F1 win since 2013. Alonso has scored five podium finishes over the first seven races of 2023 after getting just three podium



finishes combined in his last seven years in the series. If the Aston Martin upgrades are more like Mercedes’ and less like Ferrari’s, then the team will be in the mix right behind Verstappen on Sunday. And that could set up a big battle for second place unless Sergio Perez somehow has pace to match Verstappen. Perez enters Sunday’s race as the No. 2 favorite at +500 behind Verstappen at -275 while Hamilton is at +800, Russell is at +1200 and Alonso is at +1400. Mercedes has finished on the podium in each of the last eight Canadian Grand Prix races while Hamilton has seven career wins at the track. If you’d prefer to bet a constructor, there’s no value unless you are going with a non-Red Bull winner: Red Bull is -700 to win the race while the rest of the field is at +400. Mercedes is the No. 2 favorite to produce the winner at +600.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: JUNE 15, 2023



– It’s a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.
– **ARIES:** There’s no good reason for you to focus on the small stuff today. In fact, details might be harder for you to grasp than usual. Think about how things are going around the world instead.
– **TAURUS:** Talk with someone close about how you’ve been doing lately. They may not have the faintest idea. You could feel a little flighty, but it’s still a good time to talk about big issues
– **GEMINI:** You’re busy today and can’t help but check in with others to see how they’re doing. It’s a good time to make connections and try new things. There’s no way to wear out on this high-energy day.
– **CANCER:** You’re getting annoyed with the people you have to deal with every day, even those you like quite a bit! Small stuff adds up, and right now you’re in the process of flushing your emotions.
– **LEO:** Someone knocks your socks off with something they say or do today, and that good impression is the right

one! See if you can share your enthusiasm with them soon.
– **VIRGO:** You’re feeling brainy today and should be able to figure out what’s really going on even if people are trying to keep it from you. Of course you can’t read minds, but your reasoning is sound..
– **LIBRA:** You’re feeling somewhat mixed about a new person or issue in your life, but it’s not bad at all! In fact, your ability to see the good and the bad help you maintain a sense of what’s realistic.
– **SCORPIO:** YYou’re moving with greater care today. You can tell that things need to settle down a bit more before you can afford to take any risks. This is especially true at work or with legal issues..
– **SAGITTARIUS:** You’re frustrated with your friends who are talking a lot but not saying much. Even worse, there’s nothing really happening, so you don’t have much to stave off the boredom today brings.
– **CAPRICORN:** You’ve got too much going on today, or maybe it’s just too much stuff in the closet! It’s a great time to get rid of any excess, even if means going through some kind of extreme purge..
– **ACQUARIUS:** You are ready to make something creative happen, maybe art, a performance of some kind, or just a novel solution to an old problem. Someone takes notice right away!
– **PISCES:** Try not to make too many promises today, or any at all if it can be helped. You need to try not to pin yourself down. If you make it through the day without new obligations, consider it a success!

Ukraine attacks the front line; Russia says big losses inflicted

KYIV/MOSCOW (Agencies): Ukraine says it has recaptured about 100 square kilometres (40sq miles) of its territory during the 68th week of Russia's invasion as a long-planned counterattack gains momentum. But Russian President Vladimir Putin said Ukraine was suffering "catastrophic" losses and Kyiv's casualties were 10 times greater than Moscow's. "All counteroffensive attempts made so far have failed, but the offensive potential of the troops of the Kyiv regime is still preserved," said Putin. The counteroffensive is still in its early days, said Demetries An-

drew Grimes, a former commander who spent two years retraining the Ukrainian military from 2015 to 2017. "All we're seeing right now is softening of the [Russian] front lines with harassment fire with everything from small arms and rockets to drones and artillery," Grimes told Al Jazeera. "The aim of that is to stretch out the opposition to thin their forces... they're lengthening the conflict zone and forcing the Russians to expose their supply lines so those can be disrupted and [Ukrainian forces] can encircle smaller groups." Ukraine stepped up attacks along much of

the 1,200km (745-mile) front. Russia's defence ministry said it repelled four Ukrainian ground attacks in the Kreminna area of the eastern Donetsk region on June 9. Further south, eastern forces spokesman Serhiy Cherevatyi said Ukrainian forces advanced by 1,200m (3,940 feet) around Bakhmut on June 9, and by 1,400 metres (4,600 feet) the following day. Russian military sources corroborated these advances. Ukrainian forces also launched a new front where Donetsk meets the Zaporizhia region on June 9. Russia's defence ministry said initial attacks were repelled.

Harvard morgue manager charged with theft, sale of body parts

LONDON (Agencies): The former morgue manager at Harvard Medical School was among five people indicted by a grand jury over allegations they stole and sold body parts from cadavers donated to the school, federal prosecutors said. Cedric Lodge, 55, who was fired from his job on May 6, and the other defendants were accused of carrying out a black market body parts scheme from roughly 2018 to 2022, the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania said in a statement on Wednesday. Prosecutors said Lodge, who was hired by Harvard in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1995, would at times let potential buyers into the school's morgue to examine cadavers and select what

parts to buy. The buyers mostly resold the body parts, prosecutors said. Lodge would also sometimes take body parts – which included heads, brains, skin and bones – back to his home where he lived with his wife, Denise, 63, and some remains were sent to buyers through the mail, authorities said. Bodies donated to Harvard Medical School are used for education, teaching or research purposes. Once they are no longer needed, the cadavers are usually cremated and the ashes are returned to the donor's family or buried in a cemetery. A sixth person was previously charged in Arkansas in the same investigation on suspicion of stealing body parts from a mortuary she worked for, prosecutors said.

Saudi Cabinet approves Civil Transactions Law

Riyadh: The Saudi Cabinet has approved the Civil Transactions Law, the third of four laws announced as part of legal reforms in 2021. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announced the approval of the law following its review by the Shoura Council. The remaining law is the penal code for discretionary sanctions. The crown prince said that the Civil Transactions Law represents a "remarkable transformation" within the system of specialized legislations. "The law was prepared in a way taking advantage of the latest legal trends and the best international judicial practices, in light of the provisions of the Islamic Shariah and its purposes. It also comes in harmony with Saudi Arabia's international obligations in light of the agreements that have been ratified by it so as to keep pace with the

developments of contemporary life," he said. He added that the law was based on foundations represented by the protection of property, stability and validity of contracts, identification of sources of rights and obligations and their effects, and clarity of legal positions. "The law will have a positive impact on the business environment and increase its attractiveness, and will also contribute to regulating economic movement and the stability of financial rights, in addition to facilitating decision-making with regard to investment. It will also enhance transparency and increase the ability to predict judgments in the field of civil transactions and reduce discrepancies in judicial reasoning to reach prompt justice, apart from contributing to bringing down disputes," the crown prince said.

Opposition member to sit on judges panel in blow to Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (Agencies): Parliament delivered a surprise blow to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition on Wednesday by electing an opposition member to sit on a committee that appoints judges, a panel at the heart of a political battle over Israel's justice system, Reuters reports. Karine Elharrar of the centrist Yesh Atid party secured one of the two committee seats but Tally Goltiv of Netanyahu's Likud party lost, paving the way for another vote on the second seat within 30 days, Knesset Speaker, Amir Ohana, announced. The vote was viewed as a bellwether in talks between Netanyahu and the opposition over legal reforms and a test for his command over a hard-right coalition that controls 64 of the Knesset's



120 seats. Compromise talks were launched soon after Netanyahu suspended in March his government's contentious drive to overhaul the judiciary, which had sparked unprecedented protests as critics dubbed it a threat to Israel's democracy. But after the results were in, opposition leaders said talks were off as long as the nine-member panel, which also includes two ministers, three judges and two lawyers, was not complete.

Australia to stop Russia from building new embassy – PM

SYDNEY (Agencies): Anthony Albanese said he wants to terminate the lease agreement for the plot of land where the proposed embassy would be Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Thursday that he would introduce a bill to terminate the lease agreement for a plot of land in Canberra where Russia plans to build a new embassy building. "The government has received very clear security advice as to the risk presented by a new Russian presence so close to Parliament House," Albanese said. "We are acting quickly to ensure the lease site does not become a formal diplomatic presence." The PM added that he expected the legislation to pass both houses of the country's parliament, the House of Representatives and the Senate, later on Thursday. Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil also argued that "the principal problem" with the proposed building was its location. In 2022,



Australia's National Capital Authority (NCA) decided to revoke Russia's lease on a plot in the suburb of Yarralumla, which sits 500 meters from Parliament House. However, the Federal Court of Australia ruled late last month that the move was "invalid and of no effect," barring the government from stopping the Russian government's "quiet enjoyment of the land." The Russian Embas-

Environment activists smear paint on Monet work in Stockholm

Stockholm (Agencies): Environment activists on Wednesday smeared red paint and glued their hands to the protective glass on a Monet painting at Stockholm's National Museum, police and the museum said. "Two women around the ages of 25 and 30 were arrested," police said, as the organisation Aterstall Vatmarker (Restore Wetlands) claimed responsibility in an interview with AFP. The museum told AFP it was "not yet known" if the painting itself had been damaged. The artwork was "The Artist's Garden at Giverny", painted by French impressionist Claude Monet in 1900. The painting "is being examined by the museum's curators to see if there has been any damage", the museum said in a statement, while spokeswoman Hanna Tottmar said they hoped to "have more information" on Thursday. Aterstall Vatmarker posted a video on

Facebook where the two women, one a nurse and the other a nursing student, could be seen smearing the paint and gluing their hands to the glass. The two then shout: "The (climate) situation is acute" and "our health is threatened". In an interview with AFP, Aterstall Vatmarker spokesperson Helen Wahlgren said a climate catastrophe "is also a health crisis" with "millions of people already dying from the climate disaster". The organisation said "gorgeous gardens like those in Monet's painting will soon be a distant memory." Wahlgren accused the Swedish government of not respecting its international climate commitments. "We should lower our emissions by 31 percent. But our emissions are still increasing. It's outrageous." The museum said it was "naturally" opposed to actions that risk damaging works of art.

Red Cross: 90% of Syrians live below poverty line

NEW YORK (Agencies): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimates that about 90 per cent of Syrians live below the poverty line, Anadolu Agency reports. "Nearly 90 per cent of Syrians live below the poverty line, with more than 15 million needing humanitarian assistance, a trend that has been sustained over the past years," the ICRC said in a statement. "The risk of collapse of Syria's critical infrastructure is a pressing concern," it added. Syria has been mired in a vicious civil war since early 2011 when the Bashar Al-Assad regime cracked down on pro-democracy protests with unexpected ferocity. "The international community must confront the harsh reality that the current situation in Syria is untenable," Fabrizio Carboni, the ICRC's Regional Director for the Near and Middle East, said. "Failure to act will have dire consequences for all those involved and hinder any prospects for sustainable recovery," he added. The ICRC appealed to donor states for "an immediate international commitment to safeguard critical infrastructure and essential services."

Egypt to mummify shark that killed Russia tourist

CAIRO (Agencies): Egypt is working to mummify the shark that devoured a Russian tourist in the Red Sea city of Hurghada last week, Anadolu Agency reports. A 28-year-old tourist was attacked and dragged under the water by a tiger shark in Hurghada on Thursday. The shark was later caught and dragged to land. Some of the victim's body parts were recovered from inside the shark's stomach, while the rest were recovered by fishermen from the sea. The shark was handed to researchers at the Institute of Marine Sciences for mummification before being displayed at the museum, according to the local Shorouk newspaper. "Tiger sharks are the second most dangerous to humans, after the white sharks," Ashraf Seddik, a specialist in marine fisheries at the Institute of Marine Sciences, said.

EU says Google abused dominant positions in online ads, face digital ad business break up



BRUSSELS: The European Commission accused Google on Wednesday of abusing its dominance of the online ad market and recommended the US company sell part of its ad services to ensure fair competition. The EU executive invited Google to now respond to this preliminary finding, made after a two-year anti-trust probe, before a definitive finding was made. If the commission maintains its view after that, it could levy a fine of up to 10 percent of Google's annual global revenues. Google issued an immediate statement with its vice president for global ads, Dan Taylor, saying "we disagree" with the commission's announcement "and we will respond accordingly." He stressed Google was determined to "creating value" for advertisers in a "highly competitive" market and said "the commission's investigation focuses on a narrow aspect of our advertising business." Google is a subsidiary of US tech giant Alphabet, which reported worldwide revenues of \$76 billion in the last three months of 2022. Commission Vice President Margrethe Vestager, who spearheads the EU's anti-trust activities, said: "We are concerned that Google may have illegally distorted competition in the online advertising industry, also known as adtech." She said the commission had not yet made a final conclusion in the case, and was awaiting Google's response. "It is quite rare that we ask for a divestiture, and we have not asked for it yet," Vestager said.

New Zealand, Fiji sign defence agreement



SUVA (Agencies): New Zealand and Fiji have signed a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) to strengthen defence ties. The agreement is seen as a response to rising tension in the South Pacific. The SOFA was signed in Fiji by New Zealand Defence Minister Andrew Little and Fiji's Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration Pio Tikoduadua. An accompanying statement of intent said defence co-operation would focus on areas including military training, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR). Little said the agreement will allow the two countries' armed forces to co-operate on each other's territories as they seek to partner on addressing regional security threats including climate change. "The SOFA is a legal framework for the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) for closer co-operation within each other's territories," Little said.

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