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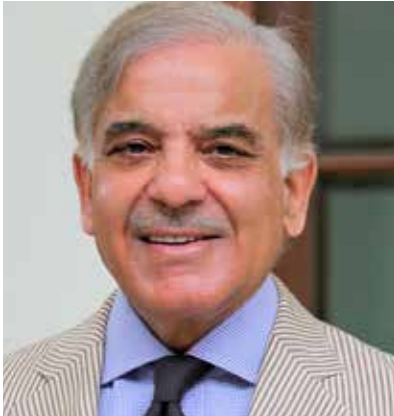
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Editor: Omer Rizwan

## PM calls on int'l community to ensure fair, judicious distribution of resources

PARIS (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has called upon the international community to collaborate and devise a comprehensive plan to ensure a fair, equitable, and judicious distribution of resources, aiming to foster sustainable peace and harmony worldwide. Speaking at the "New Global Financing Pact" summit held in Paris, he emphasized the importance of learning from the experiences of developed nations, particularly the progress made by countries in the North, in order to implement similar successful strategies in Pakistan. Sharif highlighted the interconnectedness of nations, stating that if one part of the world is in distress, it affects the entire global community. Drawing attention to the devastating impact of climate change, he recounted Pakistan's experience with catastrophic floods last year, which affected 33 million people, resulted in the loss of millions of acres of crops, claimed the



lives of 1,700 individuals, and led to the drowning of half a million animals. Sharif commended the resilience of the Pakistani people in the face of these challenges and expressed gratitude for the assistance provided by friendly countries around the world. While international financial institutions offered loans to aid the affected population, Sharif cautioned against

further burdening Pakistan's already fragile financial situation. He recounted how he personally took the United Nations Secretary-General to witness the aftermath of the floods, highlighting the immense devastation faced by cities and the dire circumstances experienced by displaced communities. The government established temporary camps to provide essentials such as food, medicine, water, and education, and Sharif expressed confidence that Pakistan would overcome the adverse effects of the floods with resilience. He urged the global community to generously extend support and assistance through a mechanism that prioritizes the most vulnerable and ensures the fulfillment of their basic needs, fostering economic justice and fairness. Sharif lauded French President Emmanuel Macron for organizing the summit to address these critical financing issues that affect humanity as a whole.

## No breakthrough at EU talks to ease Serbia, Kosovo tensions

Brussels (AFP/APP): The leaders of Serbia and Kosovo failed to agree Thursday on ways to ease tensions at talks with the EU in Brussels, the bloc's foreign policy chief said. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo's premier Albin Kurti were summoned for "crisis management" meetings after the EU and United States demanded the two sides calm the situation. But the two leaders did not meet face-to-face, and instead held separate talks with the EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell. The latest flare-up between the two sides has come over the detention last week of three Kosovo police officers by Serbia, after weeks of tension over disputed elections

in Serb-majority northern Kosovo. "After four hours meeting, I think the two leaders understand the severity of the situation," Borrell said. "But obviously, they are in different situations, different approaches, different interpretations." Borrell called on Serbia to release the three Kosovo police officers "immediately and unconditionally". The EU official said holding new municipal elections in northern Kosovo, where rioting by ethnic Serbs saw 30 NATO peacekeepers injured in late May, crucial to unwinding the current tensions But he conceded there was not yet agreement on holding a fresh vote. "We are still not there," Borrell said.

## All five on Titanic sub dead after 'catastrophic' implosion

Boston (AFP/APP): All five aboard a submersible missing near the wreck of the Titanic died after the vessel suffered a "catastrophic implosion" in the ocean depths, the US Coast Guard said Thursday. The somber announcement ended a multinational search-and-rescue operation that captivated the world since the small tourist craft went missing in the North Atlantic on Sunday. Rear Admiral John Mauger told reporters in Boston that analysis showed that debris, found on the seafloor 1,600 feet (500 meters) from the bow of the Titanic, was consistent with the implosion of the sub's pressure chamber. "On behalf of the United States Coast Guard and the entire unified command, I offer my deepest condolences to the families," Mauger said. On board were British explorer Hamish Harding, French expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet, Pakistani-British tycoon Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman, and Stockton Rush, CEO of the sub's operator OceanGate Expeditions. OceanGate said its "hearts are with these five souls and every member of their families during this tragic time." "These men were true explorers who shared a distinct spirit of adventure, and a deep passion for exploring and protecting the world's oceans," it said in a statement. "We grieve the loss of life and joy they brought to everyone they knew." The Coast Guard announced



earlier on Thursday that an underwater robot had discovered a "debris field." Mauger said that it turned out to be the sub's tail cone as well as additional debris. He declined to be drawn on whether remains of the men would be retrieved and said the process of mobilizing personnel and vessels from the scene would soon begin. Mauger added that unmanned robots would continue operations on the seafloor for now. "We'll collect as much information as we can," he said, adding that he hoped the discovery might provide "some solace during this difficult time" to families. The small sub named Titan disappeared on Sunday as it descended to the Titanic, which sits more than two miles (nearly four kilometers) below the ocean's surface and 400 miles off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada. OceanGate Expeditions charges \$250,000 for a seat on the sub. Harding was a billionaire and keen explorer with three Guinness Records to his name. Nargeolet was nicknamed "Mr Titanic" for his frequent dives at the site.

## US approves lab-grown chicken for sale

Washington (AFP/APP): The United States has granted its first ever approvals to two companies to sell chicken grown directly from animal cells, becoming only the second country to allow lab-grown meat to be offered to consumers. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved food safety systems at facilities of Upside Foods and Good Meat, a spokesperson for the agency told AFP Wednesday, with the companies adding the products would be available soon at select restaurants. Both Upside Foods and Good Meat were cleared on safety grounds by the Food and Drug Administration in November, and the USDA last week reviewed and approved their product labels to ensure they were not misleading. "This approval will fundamentally change how meat makes it to our table," said Uma Valeti, CEO and founder of Upside Foods, in a statement. "It's a giant step forward towards a more sustainable future — one that preserves choice and life." Josh Tetrick, CEO of Good Meat, the cell-cultured food division of Eat Just, added its "cultivated meat" was now "approved to sell to consumers in the world's largest economy." Producing the meat in large, high-quality volumes is expensive. But, following approval, Upside processed its first order, placed by three-Michelin-star Chef Dominique Crenn's restaurant Bar Crenn in San Francisco. Good Meat, meanwhile, started production of its first batch that will be sold to celebrity chef and philanthropist Jose Andres. Andres will sell the product at a yet-to-be-revealed restaurant in the capital Washington. Several start-ups are aiming to produce the so-called lab-grown meat, which would allow humans to consume animal protein without the associated environmental harms of farming or animal suffering. The products differ from plant-based substitutes such as soy burgers that mimic the texture and flavor of meat but do not contain any animal protein. Eat Just was the first to receive authorization to make artificial meat, in Singapore in 2020. While succeeding in the general lab-meat market has proven complicated, some companies have set their sights on pet food, whose consumers are less picky. Bond Pet Foods, a Colorado start-up, is creating animal protein from a microbial fermentation process to feed dogs.

## Modi led Yoga Day event in UN HQ New York

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies): With a large group of people protesting outside, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday led the International Yoga Day celebrations with UN diplomats, officials and members of the Indian diaspora at the world body's headquarters lawns in New York. The event created a Guinness World Record for participation of most nationalities at the event. This year's observance organized by the Permanent Mission of India to the UN in collaboration with the Secretariat, took place under the theme, Yoga for Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam (the world is one family). Protesters outside the UN building accused him of pursuing anti-minority policies to marginalize them and make India Hindu State. They raised anti-Modi slogans, calling him "butcher of Gujarat." PM Modi's critics have accused him of using yoga to distract from his poor human rights record and pursuit



of a form of Hindu nationalism that has grossly penalized India's minority groups, its Muslims especially. Modi is in the United States for talks with President Joe Biden that the White House sees as bolstering "one of the defining partnerships of our age." Modi has been to the United States five times since becoming prime minister in 2014, but the trip will be his first with the full diplomatic status of a state visit, despite concerns over what is seen as a deteriorating human rights situation under his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

## Interest rate hike heaps pressure on cash strapped Britons



London (AFP/APP): Millions of Britons are facing fresh mortgage misery after the Bank of England increased interest rates by an unexpected half-point, putting homeowners at risk of higher repayments on their loans during a cost-of-living crisis. The higher-than-expected hike to a 15-year peak of 5.0 percent was the 13th increase in a row, and will have a knock-

on effect on hard-pressed homeowners already hit by sharp hikes in the cost of food and fuel. It also heaped fresh pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, whose Conservative party faces an uphill battle to claw back ground on the main opposition Labour party before next year's election. Sunak has staked his reputation on halving inflation by the end of the year from the current 8.7 percent -- one of the highest rates in the G7. The British leader appealed to cash-strapped Britons, urging the public to grit their teeth, imploring: "We know this is hard. "But if we don't raise rates now, it could be worse later... I am totally, 100 percent, on it and it's going to be OK and we are going to get through this."

## Restaurant explosion kills 31 in northwest China

Beijing (AFP/APP): At least 31 people were killed when an explosion caused by a gas leak ripped through a restaurant in the northwestern Chinese city of Yinchuan, state media said Thursday. The blast occurred on the eve of the three-day Dragon Boat Festival holiday, when many in China go out and socialise with friends. Footage on state broadcaster CCTV showed more than a dozen firefighters working at the site as smoke poured out of a gaping hole in the restaurant's facade. Shards of glass and

other debris littered the darkened street, which is also home to a number of other eateries and entertainment venues. Nine people including the restaurant's "owner, shareholders and staff" were held by police following the explosion, CCTV said, adding that "their assets have been frozen". "A leak of liquefied petroleum gas caused an explosion during the operation of a barbecue restaurant," state news agency Xinhua said of the Wednesday evening blast, citing the regional Communist Party committee.

## Fresh rescues off Spain after fatal migrant shipwreck



Madrid (AFP/APP): Emergency services in Spain said Thursday they had saved at least 350 migrants in five separate vessels over the last 24 hours off the Canary Islands. These latest operations came the day after at least two people drowned attempting the crossing when another vessel sank around 160 kilometres (100 miles) off the islands. Spain's coastguard saved 53 migrants "in good condition" near the island of Lanzarote and another 61, including a mother and baby, near the island of Gran Canaria, local emergency services said in a tweet. The migrants found near Gran Canaria were all taken to hospital for

"mild conditions", it added. Spain's coastguard intercepted another boat early on Thursday with 54 migrants "in good condition" on board near Lanzarote, emergency services said. People on board another two vessels were rescued Thursday afternoon. The rescue operations came after a dinghy carrying migrants sank about 160 kilometres (100 miles) southeast of Gran Canaria. The Spanish coastguard found the bodies of a minor and later a man in the area. A Moroccan patrol boat rescued 24 people, according to Spain's coast guard, which said it did not know how many people were missing.

**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.



## United States Partners with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Enhance Counternarcotics Inspections and Develop Legal Crop Production

PESHAWAR (PR): During a ceremony in Islamabad on June 21, the United States delivered two vehicles to the Planning and Development Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Donated by the U.S. Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the vehicles will support Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's efforts to conduct counternarcotics field inspections for poppy reduction and monitor implementation of alternative crop projects in the Newly Merged Districts. U.S. Embassy's INL Director Lori Antolinez handed over a ceremonial key to symbolize the partnership. ODirector Antolinez recognized the collaboration between the



United States and Pakistan, saying "I am hopeful that this collaborative assistance will help Pakistan counter illegal crops while also promoting the development of profitable, legal crop production of numerous types of vegetables and flowers. Under the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance framework, we are advancing cooperation



in agriculture, clean energy, and water. The United States is committed to support Pakistan as it strengthens climate resilience, pursues energy transformation, and fosters inclusive economic growth." Director Antolinez also highlighted the 76 years of partnership between the United States and Pakistan.

## IMSciences Introduces Weekend Programs and Attractive Fee Waivers for Students



PESHAWAR (Staff Report): IMSciences, a renowned educational institution, has announced an exciting expansion of its academic offerings for aspiring professionals. Starting from September 2023, IMSciences will be offering MBA, MS, and PhD programs on Saturdays and Sundays, in addition to the existing classes held on normal working days. The introduction of weekend programs aims to provide greater flexibility to students who are unable to attend classes during the regular weekdays due to work commitments or other responsibilities. This move reflects IMSciences' commitment to accommodating the diverse needs of its students and enabling them to pursue high-

er education without compromising their professional or personal obligations. In addition to the expanded schedule, IMSciences has unveiled a significant fee relief package for all students, demonstrating its dedication to making quality education accessible to a wider range of individuals. As part of this relief package, all students enrolling in the MBA, MS, and PhD programs will benefit from a 25% inflationary relief in their tuition fees. Notably, IM-

Sciences has gone a step further to honor its alumni by offering an exclusive fee waiver of 50% for those who choose to pursue an MBA, MS, or PhD degree. This exceptional opportunity for alumni further showcases the institution's commitment to nurturing lifelong connections and fostering a strong alumni network. The fee waivers for both current students and alumni reflect IMSciences' understanding of the financial challenges that students may face while pursuing higher education. By implementing these measures, the institution aims to ensure that talented individuals have access to quality education and can contribute to society's growth and development.

## US delegation visits the University of Peshawar

PESHAWAR (Staff Report): Monica Davis, the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) of the U.S. Consulate General in Peshawar, recently paid a visit to the University of Peshawar, where she held a meeting with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Muhammad Idrees. The purpose of the visit was to foster stronger ties between the Consulate General and the academic community, promoting public diplomacy and enhancing understanding between nations. During the meeting, Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Idrees highlighted the importance of people-to-people contacts in nation-building and acknowledged the pivotal role that consulates and em-



bassies can play in strengthening these connections. He emphasized the significance of promoting public diplomacy to foster mutual understanding and collaboration between countries. As part of her visit, Monica Davis also had the opportunity to explore the Pashto Academy, where she was warmly welcomed by the director, Prof Dr Nasrullah Jan Wazir, and other faculty members. Davis expressed her admiration for the impressive collection at the Pashto cultural museum and the manuscript collection, appreciating the preservation and promotion of Pashto culture and heritage. Continuing her itinerary, Monica Davis then visited the Department of International Relations at the University of Peshawar. The esteemed guest was received with enthusiasm by Professor Dr. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi, the Chairman of the Department, and other faculty members. This visit was particularly noteworthy as it marked the first time in 13 years that such a distinguished guest had graced the University, specifically the New Academic Block. During her address at the Department of International Relations, Monica Davis shed light on the role and activities of the U.S. Consulate General, underscoring the potential benefits that students could derive from the various scholarships offered by the United States. Her emphasis on educational opportunities aimed to encourage academic exchange and cultural understanding between the two nations. Moreover, Monica Davis engaged in interactive sessions with the



students of the International Relations Department, providing them with valuable insights into the diplomatic sphere and fostering dialogue on international issues. The students had the opportunity to ask questions, share their perspectives, and gain a deeper understanding of the practical aspects of international relations. In response to the visit, Dr. Soherwordi expressed the urgent need for a closer relationship between foreign missions and academia, particularly regarding the understanding of foreign policies pertaining to South Asia and Afghanistan. Recognizing the importance of informed and engaged academic communities, he emphasized the significance of collaboration between diplomatic missions and universities in shaping foreign policies and regional dynamics. To acknowledge her visit and contributions, Monica Davis was presented with various shields as a token of appreciation. The awards symbolized the University's gratitude for her efforts in strengthening the ties between the academic community and the U.S. Consulate General. Overall, Monica Davis's visit to the University of Peshawar served as a platform for fostering meaningful connections, promoting public diplomacy, and enhancing educational opportunities between the United States and Pakistan. The engagement between the Consulate General and the academic community aimed to bridge the gap between theory and practice, while also fostering cultural understanding and collaboration in the realm of international relations.

## NADRA office to start working in Tehsil Purwa from Friday

PESHAWAR (APP): State Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Central Secretary Information PPP, Faisal Karim Kundi has said that NADRA office, a long standing demand of people, would start working in Tehsil Purwa, D I Khan from Friday. In a message issued on Thursday, he said that people party believed in service to masses and added NADRA office was a manifestation of strong commitment of party towards people's welfare. He said that main feature of Party politics was to serve people by



resolving their basic problems. Faisal Karim said that establishment of NADRA office in tehsil Purwas was long standing demand of area people that has been fulfilled to serve people who had to visit DI Khan for acquiring documents.

## Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Pakistan explores collaboration with University of Peshawar's Area Study Centre



PESHAWAR (Staff Report): Mr. Andreas Hergenroether, the newly appointed Resident Representative of Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Pakistan, visited Peshawar on Wednesday, to discuss recent activities and explore future collaborative opportunities with the Area Study Centre (Russia, China, and Central Asia) at the University of Peshawar. The meeting took place in the office of the Vice Chancellor, University of Peshawar, and witnessed the participation of key representatives from both institutions. Present at the meeting were Prof. Muhammad Idrees, Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar; Prof. Muhammad

Naeem, Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Humanities; Dr. Muhammad Shafi and Dr. Ahmed Farhan Saeed, Assistant Professors; Dr. Muhammad Ali Dinakhel, Research Associate; Mr. Sahar Gul, Librarian; and Mr. Kamran Ali, Est. Officer from the Area Study Centre. The participants engaged in fruitful discussions regarding recent research activities and explored potential avenues for joint collaboration between Hanns Seidel Foundation and the University of Peshawar's Area Study Centre. The meeting aimed to strengthen research partnerships, share expertise, and develop future projects of mutual interest.

## Retired Maj. Rasool Jan and E-Hujra join forces to address Bannu Gul's core issues

PESHAWAR (Staff Report): Retired Maj. Rasool Jan, former DG Intelligence NADRA of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Mr. Asif Qureshi, Chairman of e-Hujra, engaged in a highly productive meeting to discuss and strategize solutions for the core issues surrounding Bannu Gul. The meeting spanned an entire day and witnessed the remarkable professionalism and expertise of Retired Maj. Rasool Jan, who brought his extensive experience to the table. The discussions centered around the multifaceted challenges prevailing in the Bannu Gul region. Retired Maj. Rasool Jan's profound understanding of the complexities associated with these issues allowed for a comprehensive examination from various perspectives. His astute analysis and forward-thinking approach laid a strong foundation for exploring innovative strategies to ad-



dress the underlying problems. The meeting emphasized the significance of balanced and sustainable development in the Bannu Gul area. Retired Maj. Rasool Jan highlighted the importance of holistic approaches that encompass both immediate remedies and long-term developmental plans. His visionary recommendations have sparked a fresh perspective, inspiring e-Hujra to explore novel strategies aimed at fostering growth, prosperity, and improved living standards for the community.

## DC directs to ensure standard facilities to educational institutions

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Khalid Iqbal Thursday said that the provision of quality education and other facilities was top priority of the district administration and every possible step will be taken in that regard. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the District Steering Committee of the Education Department. Khalid Iqbal directed the Department of Education and Education Monitoring Authority to play their role in monitoring and ensuring the implementation of quality education in schools across the district. The meeting was briefed by Deputy Director of the Education Monitoring Authority, Ayeda Qureshi on the performance of last month and minutes of the previous Steering Committee meeting. The deputy commissioner issued instruc-

tions to the education department regarding the provision of facilities in the schools. He issued directives to District Education Officers (DEOs) male and female to improve education, provide essential facilities in the schools, and implement new teaching methods according to the demands of present-day students. The DC directed the appointment of administrative staff in schools, uninterrupted water and electricity supply, school maintenance, and resolution of boundary issues. Additional Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Planning, Abbas Afridi, District Education Officer Tanveer Ahmed, DMO Education Monitoring Authority, Ayeda Qureshi, District Accounts Office Representative and other officials from the Education Department attended the meeting.

## 4-day of Anti-Polio campaign achieved target: ADC

DIR LOWER (Agencies): Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Dir Lower Abdul Wali Khan presided over the fourth-catch-of-day evening review meeting of the ongoing Anti-Polio campaign in three Union Councils of Dir Lower district. In the meeting, Deputy Health Officer Dr. Wali Khan, Dr. Isfandiar representing WHO, Dr. Noor Hameed, Representative Police and Representative Education Department attended the meeting. NSTOP

Officer Dr. Ehsan gave a detailed briefing regarding the performance on the fourth/catch-of-day of the Anti-Polio campaign. Additional Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower reviewed the performance of the 4th/Catch-of-day of the anti-polio campaign in detail and lauded the polio-related departments for meeting the target of the 4th/catch-of-day. Besides, ADC also instructed other teams to complete their target well in time.

## Seminar held on 'Awareness of Climate Change

PESHAWAR (APP): Directorate of Counseling, Placement and Human Resource Development of the University of Agriculture Peshawar organized a daylong seminar titled "Awareness of Climate Change". The event was organized at an agriculture university with the cooperation of Weather Walay. Addressing the seminar as a Chief Guest Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht said that Pakistan is facing many problems due to climate change which include floods, drought and heat waves etc. He said that climate change is happening rapidly and problems in the world community would be increased

if timely steps were not taken to control it. He urged people to join hands and work in cohesion to plant more trees, focus on agriculture-related issues and understands the importance of water and its conservation. Weather Walay Chief Executive, Junaid Yamin presented the objectives of the seminar and future plans against climate change. Mashal Owais, Public and Cultural Executive Officer of Weather Walay and Syeda Simra Gilani, Media Coordination Executive briefed the participants about Climate Change Ambassadors. A question-answer session was also held in the end.







## PM witnesses MoU on \$3.48 bn C-5 nuclear power project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday witnessed the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Pakistan and China for a 1200 MW Chashma-5 (C-5) nuclear power project worth of \$3.48 billion here. President of China National Nuclear Corporation Overseas Ltd (CNOS) and Member Power, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) Muhammad Saeed Ur Rehman signed the MoU. Speaking on the occasion, Shehbaz Sharif said the nuclear power project was a great step forward towards economic cooper-



ation between the two countries. The prime minister said decision to start this project had been taken and main conditions were agreed during previous government of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif but the successive government put this project in the cold storage. He said keeping view the higher internation-

al inflation, the project cost would have been much higher than that determined in 2017-18 but the Chinese government not only obtained from raising the cost according to the inflation but also gave a discount of around Rs 30 billion. Vowing to kick start the project without delay, the prime minister said under the difficult economic situation, investment from China in this project to the tune of \$3.48 billion sent a clear message that Pakistan was a place where Chinese companies and investors continued to show their trust and faith.

## US Ambassador and Pakistani Finance Minister Discuss Bilateral Economic Relations

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): H.E. Mr. Donald Blome, the Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, paid a visit to Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, to discuss and strengthen the economic ties between the two countries. During the meeting, the Finance Minister expressed his appreciation for the longstanding and robust bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States, particularly in the areas of economics and trade. Minister Ishaq Dar highlighted the government's economic policies and priorities aimed at addressing the challenging economic environment and promoting stability and growth. He emphasized the importance of ongoing efforts to enhance bilateral relations and sought areas of mutual interest where both nations could collaborate further. The Finance Minister also briefed the US



Ambassador on the government's budgetary measures aimed at reducing the fiscal gap and fulfilling national and international financial obligations. Additionally, he provided an update on the progress of the ongoing talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), reaffirming the government's commitment to successfully complete the program. In response, H.E. Mr. Donald Blome expressed confidence in the economic sustainability initiatives and socio-economic uplift programs implemented by the Pakistani government.

## Azerbaijan Embassy celebrates 105th Anniversary of Azerbaijan Armed Forces

ISLAMABAD (Agencies):The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Islamabad hosted a grand reception to celebrate the 105th Anniversary of the Azerbaijan Armed Forces. Speaking at the reception, the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, said, "We celebrate the 105th anniversary of the establishment of the Azerbaijan Armed Forces. Undoubtedly, the peak of the warpath of our National Army during this period is the glorious Victory gained in the Patriotic War, Karabakh Victory. There has been no similar Victory in the centuries-old history of our nation". He said that on June 26, 1918, by the decision of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the first regular military unit – the Combined Azerbaijan Corps was created. The government set the task of creating an army of



25 thousand people. On August 1, 1918, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan was established. The Ambassador highlighted that the process of army building in Azerbaijan entered a qualitatively new stage under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev. He successfully continued the army-building policy, and continuous steps were taken toward increasing the military's professionalism, improving the soldiers' fighting spirit and moral-psychological training, and supplying our Armed Forces with the most modern weapons and equipment.

## Economic Empowerment of Women at the Heart of Development in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Agencies):The meeting of the General Assembly of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) was held at 3:00pm in the Conference Room of WPC in the Parliament House. The General Assembly meeting was presided by Honorable Dr. Shahida Rahmani, Secretary, WPC. The meeting commenced with a cake-cutting ceremony on the occasion of the 70th birth anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. Honorable Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf was invited as the chief guest in the ceremony. The theme for the General Assembly meeting of



WPC was "Economic Empowerment of Women." The meeting involved through briefings from the representatives of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI).

## Faysal Bank collaborates with PICG for Environment Social Governance (ESG)

ISLAMABAD (Agencies):Faysal Bank, one of the leading Islamic banks of Pakistan collaborates with the Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance (PICG) to reinforce that they care for the environmental, social, and governance (ESG). Climate change is a reality and Pakistan stands as a frontline state in that regard. It is but our collective responsibility of the private sector to play a stronger role by adopting sustainable practices to create an environmentally sustainable Pakistan for tomorrow. The change includes environmental concerns, social and financial inclusivity, health & well-being, equity, and human rights. All successful businesses today work within the guide-



lines as prescribed by Environmental Social Governance (ESG). Investors, regulators, litigators, and community representatives are increasingly active in the same. Faysal Bank, empowered by its Islamic ethos and essential core philosophy of equity and wellbeing as instructed in the Holy Quran, has come forward to contribute to this cause by agreeing to a collaborative framework with PICG.

## NA Speaker launches first-ever Summer Internship Program



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Wednesday inaugurated the Summer Internship Program for Young Citizens which aims to offer them a valuable opportunity to gain firsthand experience of the legislative procedures. During the commemoration of Yom-e-Benazir, the Speaker officially inaugurated the aforementioned Summer Internship Program, emphasizing that democracy necessitates collective efforts by elected parliamentary representatives to foster prosperity. He further asserted that democracy remains the most effective form of governance, and Pakistan, with its promising youth, is poised to embark on a progressive trajectory. In emphasizing the importance of connecting the younger generation with the Parliament, he stated, "The Parliament serves as a vital platform where political leaders tirelessly strive to shape the destiny of our nation." He went on to highlight the relentless struggle and ultimate sacrifice made by the late Shaheed Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto for the cause of democracy.

## IFAD and Govt of Pakistan invest in rural transformation



SKARDU (KhyberMail Newspaper) : With the goal to foster sustainable and inclusive rural development, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Government of Pakistan organised a two-day workshop in Ghanche, Gilgit-Baltistan recently (16-17 June 2023). Held on 16-17 June, the workshop reviewed and assessed the progress and impacts of ongoing IFAD/GoP-financed projects and discussed implementation challenges. Participants included Arnoud Hameleers, IFAD Country Director for Pakistan, the IFAD country team, government representatives, implementing partners and project management staff. Participants from across Pakistan identified how these interventions could be scaled-up and better integrate nutrition, youth, gender, as well as the impacts of climate change into project, aligned to IFAD's mainstreaming themes and national priorities.

## Int'l Widows Day to be marked tomorrow

ISLAMABAD (APP): International Widows' Day will be marked on Friday across the globe to address poverty and injustice faced by widows and their children in many countries. According to a report released here, the situation of widows in many countries was desolate. The first officially recognized International Widows' Day on June 23, 2011, was marked with a conference held at the United Nations (UN's) headquarters in New York. The plight of widows worldwide has been the foundation's focus since it was established in 1997.

## Pakistan Navy marks World Hydrography Day



KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Navy has observed World Hydrography Day (WHD) with enthusiasm and with an aim to create awareness on the importance of hydrography and its role towards blue economy and ultimately national growth. The WHD is celebrated worldwide on June 21 every year to appreciate the work done in the field of hydrography to support safe navigation at open seas, ports and other protected marine areas. Every year a specific theme related to contribution of hydrography in world maritime affairs is orchestrated by International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), said a news release on Wednesday. This year, the theme of WHD is "Hydrography – underpinning the digital twin of the ocean". Digital twin is a high resolution, near real time

virtual representation of the ocean which will help in informed decision making by policy makers/ scientists based on trustable predictions of the ocean's future behaviour. Pakistan Navy being the sole proprietor of the national hydrographic domain celebrates this day every year to underscore the significance of hydrography towards all marine and maritime related activities. Pakistan Navy is ever ready to continuously contribute towards oceanic research with ultimate goal to support blue economy.

## Quetta International Airport Witnesses Successful Completion of Pre-Hajj Operations

KARACHI (Staff Report): The Quetta International Airport has successfully concluded its pre-Hajj operations, facilitating the departure of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. A total of 58 flights were operated from the airport, enabling a significant number of pilgrims to embark on their sacred journey. During this period, a remarkable total of 7,675 pilgrims departed for Saudi Arabia from Quetta International Airport. Among them, 3,934 pilgrims embarked on their pilgrimage through 27 official Hajj flights, while 3,741 pilgrims undertook the obligatory Hajj via 31 private flights. The pre-Hajj operations at Quetta International Airport showcased a diverse range of airlines contributing to the smooth travel of pilgrims.

Notably, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) transported 2,645 private pilgrims across 19 flights. Flydubai accommodated 756 private pilgrims through 9 flights, while Air Arabia facilitated 212 private pilgrims via 2 flights. Serene Air, with one flight, successfully transported 128 private pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. The completion of pre-Hajj operations at Quetta International Airport marks a significant milestone in the pilgrimage preparations, ensuring that pilgrims can embark on their spiritual journey comfortably and with ease. The airport authorities, airline personnel, and relevant authorities worked tirelessly to ensure a seamless experience for the departing pilgrims.

## Dr. Ehsan assumes charge as Secretary Sindh Language Authority

HYDERABAD (APP):Eminent Sindhi Writer and Researcher Dr. Ehsan ul Haque Pathan (Ehsan Danish) on Thursday assumed charge as Secretary Sindh Language Authority. Dr. Ehsan assumed charge as Secretary Sindh Language Authority, said a circular issued by the spokesman.

After assuming charge Dr. Ehsan said this is a moment of immense pleasure for me to get an opportunity to serve my language and would work hard to accomplish the objectives with teamwork. Meanwhile, officers and staff of the institution welcomed the new Secretary.

## Pakistan rejects peace talks with TTP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday rejected holding peace talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan due to its involvement in killing civilians and security personnel in the country. "Pakistan will not negotiate with individuals who are responsible for the killing of Pakistani civilians and law enforcement officials," the Foreign Office spokesperson said at a weekly press briefing, referring to an earlier statement of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch was responding to queries regarding the statement of the spokesman for Afghanistan's Taliban government, Zabihullah Mujahid who offered mediation between the Pakistan government and TTP. On the life loss of Pakistanis in the capsized boat off the coast of Greece, she said 12

Pakistani nationals were among the 104 survivors, who were in good physical condition. The spokesperson said the Greek authorities had recovered 84 bodies, however, the number and identification of Pakistani nationals among the deceased and missing was unconfirmed at the moment. Relevant authorities have started collecting DNA samples from the families of those suspected to be on board. She said Pakistan's ambassador Aamar Aftab and his team at the mission in Greece were working round the clock for the recovery and identification of Pakistani nationals. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has spoken to his Greek counterpart to discuss arrangements for the recovery of the missing, identification of the bodies, and providing relief to the survivors, she added.

## Fitness Expert Urges Beginners To Prioritize Technique, Balanced Diet

ISLAMABAD (APP): Gyms serve multiple purposes, including weight loss and muscle gain, but newcomers should focus solely on weightlifting while neglecting proper nutrition. Talking to APP here on Thursday, Fitness Trainer Arsalan Mansoor highlighted that the key to successful weight loss lies in consuming a diet that is low in calories and carbohydrates whereas, individuals looking to gain muscle mass should increase their caloric intake. Arsalan underscored the various benefits of gym training, which include fitness improvement, obesity reduction, and cardiovascular health maintenance. He recommended that individuals aiming for weight loss adhere to a diet ranging from 1500 to 1800 calories, whereas those seeking weight gain should consume approximately 3000 to 3500 calories, with an emphasis on high protein and moderate carbohydrate intake. He cautioned against relying solely on internet advice, emphasizing that consulting a qualified fit-

ness trainer is irreplaceable. While discussing the topic of quick results, Arsalan warned against engaging in anabolic activities, as they can be harmful. He advised individuals to avoid such practices and instead consult a trainer for guidance on the proper use of food supplements when their dietary intake is insufficient. Arsalan particularly emphasized the significance of beginners focusing on maintaining proper form and angle during exercises, as heavy weightlifting without proper technique can lead to injuries. In response to a question, Arsalan suggested that cardio exercises are most effective when performed in the morning on an empty stomach. He explained that starting with cardio exercises depletes stamina while athletes should focus on calorie burning through weightlifting. Arsalan also stressed the importance of warming up before engaging in any physical activity. He highlighted that warming up helps prevent injuries, strains, and muscle pulls.



Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to lead election campaign: Javed Latif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif on Thursday said that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif would lead the election campaign. Talking to a private news channel, he said PML-N leaders would form the next government after winning elections in October adding that it would contest general elections without seat adjustment. In reply to a question about seat adjustment before contesting next elections, he said the

PML-N, could make seat adjustments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). To a question, he said that PML-N had a history to take hard decisions for changing the lifestyle of poor people. The minister said that his party had to face difficulties due to hard decisions. Commenting on Jamat-e-Islami's political role, he said JI members should speak and support Nawaz Sharif who had been struggling for the development and well-being of the people of Pakistan.

IHC seeks detail of cases against Sheikh Rasheed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday sought details from the Islamabad Police of the cases registered against former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed. Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri of the IHC heard the case filed by the Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed. The petitioner's lawyer, Abdul Razzaq Advocate, argued that the police had tortured the servants of his client during raid at

his house and also seized two vehicles. He prayed to the court to seek details of first information reports (FIRs) registered by the Capital Police against his client and also grant him protective bail. The court, after hearing the arguments, served notices to the Inspector General of Police Islamabad and Station House Officer of Kohsar Police Station to provide details of the cases and adjourned the case till June 27.

Authorities directed to improve facilities at Mayo Hospital: CM

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday said that the authorities had been tasked to take swift measures for improving the overall standard along with best facilities at Mayo Hospital. Talking to the media after visiting the hospital, he said the best medical faculty was available at the Mayo Hospital however there was a need to improve condition and facilities at the hospital. The caretaker CM said he had been visiting various public hospitals to check out the facilities. "I have assigned a task to bring about betterment in

the hospital within four months," he maintained. He directed to ensure sufficient stock of medicines at the hospital. The number of beds were also being increased for the treatment of children in the Children Hospital and latest equipments were being procured. Provision of best treatment facilities to the masses was a priority and all-out steps would be ensured in that regard, he added. To a question, Mohsin Naqvi said that Secretary C&W had been directed to undertake steps for the construction and repair of affected sections of Lady Willingdon Hospital.

Balochistan Home Minister meets Mir Shafiqur Rehmen

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Longove called on Mir Shafiqur Rehman Mengal on Thursday. Provincial Members of Assembly, Mir Zabab Riki, Younis Aziz Zehri, Sardad Aslam Bizenjo, Sardar Nasrullah Sasoli, IG Police Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, DIG Kalat Division Parvez Imrani, SSP Khuzdar Fahad Khosa and other senior officials were also present in the meeting. On this occasion, the minister said that it was the duty of all of us to end the

tribal conflicts and end the tension. Mir Shafiqur Rehman Mengal said it was a matter of honour for me that you all have come here while false allegations have been made against us. We have a political movement and we stand against oppression. Indiscriminate steps should be taken for peace and added that strict action should be taken against whoever was involved in extortion. The Home Minister said that there would be no compromise on the supremacy of law.

AJK PM terms budget as a historic: effective utilization of budget to turn AJK into a prosperous region

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq while terming the budget as historic, has said that traditions of the past seven decades have been broken in the current budget. While addressing the AJK Legislative Assembly, which meet in the State metropolis on Thursday for approving the budget 2023-24, the PM thanked the federal government for providing sufficient funds. He also appreciated the national security institutions' pivotal role in the economic revival of the country. Terming the current budget as the biggest ever budget in the history of Azad Kashmir, the PM said that the liberated territory could be transformed into a well-developed region provided the money allocated in the budget was spent and utilized in a proficient manner. He said that the process of sector-wise distribution of the budget will start in the first week of next month (July). Regarding the increase in salaries and pensions of government employees, the PM said that the official notification will be issued soon after the government receives the required funds from the federal government. In his address, the AJK PM lauded the role of the judiciary in running the government system efficiently. He said that High Courts have lent their full support to the government in its efforts to stop encroachment, milk adulteration and deforestation in the state. He said that providing good governance in the liberated territory (AJK) would rekindle the candle of hope on the other side of the Line of Control. Referring to Kashmiris' commitment to the noble cause, the AJK PM said that no amount of oppression can snatch away the dream of hope and freedom from the Kashmiri people. Expressing his pro-

found grief over the Greece boat disaster that claimed hundreds of innocent lives, the Chaudhry Anwar said that he was deeply saddened by the tragic incident. "Those involved in this illicit trade (human traffic) will be strictly dealt with as per the law of the land", he said. The AJK PM said that he was also grateful to the allies as well as opposition parties for their full cooperation and participation in the budget session. "Disagreement is the beauty of democracy, the honourable members of the house sitting on both sides of the aisle deserve praise for their role in ensuring political harmony", Chaudhry Anwar said adding as the leader of the house he would try his level best to serve the state and its people. He said the government's main focus was to increase revenue and it was not an easy task to govern people with different ideas. "I shall try to serve the state in a better way", he said. He said that the government would try to provide free electricity up to 300 units to the mosques. Chaudhry Anwar said that the government would fulfil its obligations regarding the establishment of Rehmatul Lilalameen (SAW) authority. He said the government would implement the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee. Terming the Thirteenth Amendment as a great achievement, he said that we must learn to give credit where it is due. The AJK PM also appreciated the senior minister Waqar Noor and Faisal Mumtaz Rathore for their valuable contribution to the budget preparation. "Access to information is the right of every citizen, any journalist or civil society member can get records from any office", the PM said adding that the Prime Minister's Office was open in case there was any problem.

The telefilm "Mera Dil Meri Marzi" will be shown on AAN TV on Eid UL ADHA

ISLAMABAD (Staff Report): Special project Eid telefilm "Mera Dil Meri Marzi" was held in Islamabad by ONTV. The famous producer Mera-juddin, Raheena Irshad AAN TV Programming Head, Tahawar Hussain, Head of operations and the cast of the project Nadia Afgan, Neelam Munir, Affan Waheed and the stars of director Danish Nawaz's also Showbiz attended the event, including many big names of the industry, like Imran Abbas and Asim Yar Towana. OnTV's upcoming project Mera Dil Meri Marzi is a romantic comedy telefilm that deals with a social issue and revolves around Shahnaz and her daughter Mishi, a women activist. She works for women's rights. After separating from her husband, men are not trustworthy of Shahnaz. There Mishi accidentally meets Sameer, who falls in love at first sight. Sameer has to go



through a lot to get Mishi. The housework has to be done from cooking to washing the clothes. Now it is to be

seen whether Sameer will find his love by meeting the challenges given by Mishi and Shahnaz or not.

IHC seeks comments from ECP in Fawad Chaudhry case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Thursday sought comments from Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in a petition challenging its show-cause notice to former minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq declared the petition as maintainable while announcing the decision. The court also rejected the request of Fawad Chaudhry against the proceeding of ECP and allowed the institution to continue its working. The IHC's bench, however, stopped the ECP from announcing its final decision in a contempt case. The written order issued by the court said that as per the lawyer of the petitioner, the Chief Election Commissioner had never granted authority to the secretary ECP for initiating contempt of court action.

President appoints Shahid Hussain as Rector LUMS

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): President Dr Arif Alvi approved the appointment of Shahid Hussain as Rector of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) for another five years. The President approved the appointment under Section 11(1) of LUMS Charter 1985. He also sanctioned the appointment of Saima Amin Khawaja as Trustee Board of Trustees LUMS under Section 13(1) of LUMS Charter 1985.

Another good pre-monsoon spell likely from Sunday

LAHORE (Agencies): The Met office on Thursday predicted another wet spell from Sunday in most parts of the province including the provincial capital. According to a spokesman of Pakistan Meteorological Department, moist currents are penetrating in upper and central parts of the country from Arabian sea and a westerly wave is likely to enter in upper parts of the country on 25th June. Under the influence of this weather, a good rain associated with gusty winds is expected during June 25 to 30 in most parts of the country. Director-General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Imran Qureshi has highlighted the findings of the Meteorological department regarding the influx of moist winds from the Arabian Sea into the upper and central regions of the country. Additionally, there is a potential for western winds to enter the upper regions of the country starting from June 25. He informed that between June 24 (night) and June 30, several cities including Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Murree, Gilgit, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mianwali, Sargodha, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Sialkot, Narowal, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sheikhupura, Faisalabad, Jhang, and Toba Tek Singh will experience intense winds and thunderstorms accompanied by rainfall. Some areas may also encounter heavy downpours. Imran Qureshi further expressed concern about the possibility of urban flooding in the foothill areas of Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Gujranwala on June 26 and 27 due to the anticipated heavy rainfall. There is a potential risk of flash floods in DG Khan on June 27, given the heavy precipitation forecasted.

WASA MD for redressing sewerage complaints

LAHORE (APP): The Water and Sanitation Agency Managing Director Ghufraan Ahmad has directed the authorities to redress sewerage complaints in surroundings of Eidgahs and Mosques during Eidul Azha days. He presided over the meeting in connection with Eid-ul-Azha preparations here on Thursday. The MD said that all adjoining areas of cattle markets should be kept clear as met department had predicted

rains. He further directed the authorities to strictly implement sewerage and drain de-silting schedule. Ghufraan Ahmad said that strict crack-down should be started against those wasting water and no negligence would be tolerated in revenue recovery. All directors should conduct survey of areas in WASA's jurisdiction and must redress complaint of open or broken manholes on immediate basis, he added.

Motorway Police striving to address road users concerns regarding heavy vehicles lane discipline

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) was working to resolve the concerns raised by road users about lack of lane discipline among heavy vehicles, which has been causing congestion on roads and posing danger to other motorists. An official of the National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) told APP on Thursday that heavy vehicles face a weight issue that damages the road which makes the extreme left lane bumpy and difficult to maintain. As a result, he said loaded trucks prefer to use the right lane to avoid damaging their vehicles and

causing accidents. He said that the Motorway Police had been trying to enforce lane discipline and ensure that transport goods vehicles remain on the extreme left lane. Despite their efforts, the problem persists, and the number of enforcement and issued challans [tickets] remains high, he maintained. To solve this issue, he said that it was essential to extend the grand truck roads up to three lanes on each side to accommodate the traffic load. He said that additionally, the extreme left lane should be made of concrete, which would be durable and not bumpy, ensuring safe travel for all road users.

WMC seminar in Geneva decries India's ruthless suppression of dissent in IIOJK

MIRPUR (Agencies): World Muslim Congress (WMC) organised a seminar on the sidelines of the 53rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council at Geneva late Wednesday, said a message released to the media here on Thursday. The seminar titled, "Why Freedom of Speech is Important", was attended and addressed by rights activists, law experts, journalists and academicians hailing from different parts of the world. Whereas the seminar was chaired and moderated by Altaf Hussain Wani the chairman KIIR and permanent representative World Muslim Congress to UN Geneva. Speakers, while referring to the ruthless suppression of dissent in the Indian-occupied Kashmir, said that the freedom of expression, a fundamental human right guaranteed under various international covenants including the UDHR, remained critically suppressed in the region. "The right to freedom of speech and expression no longer existed in Kashmir", they said, adding that the level of suppression in Kashmir could be gauged by the fact that no one in Kashmir dares to express his/her convictions and opinions freely. They said that since 5th August 2019, crackdown on independent journalists in Kashmir rapidly increased. "Journalists who reported critically against the Modi government's muscular policies towards Kashmiris have faced intimidation, harassment and long investigations". They pointed out that activities of local and foreign journalists were not allowed to perform their duties, because of fear of coverage focusing on inhuman siege, crackdowns on Kashmiris and human rights violations taking place in the region. In order to enable complete silence in Kashmir, they said that thousands of Kashmiris including politicians, human rights defenders, traders and intelligentsia and members of the civil society were booked under notorious laws and thrown behind bars. They said that a special media policy was introduced to clip the wings of free media and curtail the right to freedom of opinion and expression. They said that

raids on media houses, journalists and human rights activists were yet another tactic to create an environment of fear so that nobody dares to speak against the government policies. "In democratic societies, the right to freedom of expression is considered the fundamental right of individuals but in Kashmir, this basic human right has been trampled down under the jackboots", the speakers further said. They said that it has been a hallmark of the BJP's policy to suppress any and every dissenting voice that raises a finger against New Delhi's brutal policies towards Kashmir and its people. Seeking world attention towards the dire human rights situation in the region, the speakers said that it was high time that the world should take notice of the draconian policies of the Modi government which is depriving people of their right to freedom of opinion and expression. APHC leader Syed Faiz Naqashbandi, Ms Naila Altaf Kiani, TV anchor, Ms. Sabba Mousade, Human rights lawyer, Ms Varn Turn and others spoke on the occasion. Meanwhile, Kashmiri delegation led by Altaf Hussain Wani while highlighting the abysmal political and human rights situation in the Indian-occupied Kashmir has urged the world human rights bodies in particular the UN to play their due role to steer Kashmiris out of uncertainty and chaos that reign supreme in the region since India's apartheid regime stripped it of its special status. In their separate meetings with several diplomats, UN officials and representatives of NGOs, the Kashmiri delegates said that the human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) has alarmingly deteriorated since Hindu supremacist regime unilaterally changed the status of the disputed territory by revoking article 370 and 35 A of the Indian constitution that guaranteed special status to Kashmir. They said that after the passage of four years, there has been no change on the ground. "Bloodshed and violence continue unabated", they said.



## Yellen urges disaster clauses in World Bank's debt deals

PARIS (Agencies): US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Thursday the World Bank should add disaster clauses to debt agreements with poorer countries, speaking ahead of a summit in Paris that will discuss how to boost crisis financing for low-income nations. Such clauses could be part of a broader reform of the World Bank to free up more funds, Yellen told journalists in the French capital. "We would also like to see the World Bank



offer borrowers the option to add climate resilient debt clauses to their loan agreements. These clauses would help ease pressures on countries if a natural disaster strikes," she said. Yel-

len, whose country is the World Bank's biggest shareholder, added multilateral development banks should be reformed to become more efficient before shareholders think of injecting more money into them. "Even with the capital that the World Bank and the MDBs have there is clearly potential ...to increase financing capacity," she said, adding an additional 200 billion dollars could be unlocked over a decade.

## Netflix's US\$2.5bil Korean bet on K-Drama mania

SEOUL (Agencies): Netflix Inc promised to back and cultivate the Korean showrunners and studios behind viral shows like Squid Game, outlining how it plans to spend some of the US\$2.5 billion it's earmarked for K-drama. Co-chief executive officer Ted Sarandos said Thursday his company will bankroll training programmes for the next generation of auteurs and entertainers, both in front of and be-



hind the camera. Netflix will work with local organisations to identify and groom young talent, he added. Those initiatives underscore how Korean programmes like The Glory

have in the past years emerged as a surprise catalyst for Netflix, which needs hot original content to differentiate it from rivals such as Walt Disney Co and Apple Inc. About three-fifths of Netflix's users have watched a Korean show, and viewing time for those programmes has grown sixfold in just four years, he said. About 90% of the viewers for Korean romance-genre content hail from abroad, Sarandos said.

## Singapore fines DBS, Citi for Wirecard scandal breaches

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Singapore's financial regulator imposed penalties amounting to a total of S\$3.8 million (US\$2.8 million) on four financial institutions for breaches related to the Wirecard AG scandal. DBS Group Holdings Ltd, Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp as well as the local entities of Citigroup Inc and Swiss Life Holding AG were found to have inadequate money laundering and terrorism financing



controls in place when they dealt with parties linked to Wirecard, the Monetary Authority of Singapore said in a statement on Wednesday. The penalties amount to S\$400,000

on Citibank, Singapore Branch, S\$600,000 on OCBC Singapore, S\$200,000 on Swiss Life (Singapore) Pte., with the heaviest fine of S\$2.6 million imposed on DBS Bank, according to the statement. Among its breaches between July 2015 and February 2020, DBS failed to adequately establish the source of wealth of higher-risk customers and maintain up-to-date client due diligence and risk ratings.

## Australia gives Twitter 28 days to clean up 'toxicity and hate'

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia's internet safety watchdog today threatened to fine Twitter for failing to tackle online abuse, saying Elon Musk's takeover had coincided with a spike in "toxicity and hate". E-safety commissioner Julie Inman Grant – a former Twitter employee – said the platform was now responsible for one-in-three complaints about online hate speech reported in Australia. Inman Grant said Twitter had 28 days to show it was



serious about tackling the problem or face fines of A\$700,000 (US\$475,000) for every day it missed the deadline. Since Musk bought the platform in October 2022, he has slashed more than

80% of the global workforce, including many of the content moderators responsible for stamping out abuse. "Twitter appears to have dropped the ball on tackling hate," said Inman Grant, who worked on cyber safety at the company after 17 years at Microsoft. She said the watchdog was "far from being alone in its concern about increasing levels of toxicity and hate on Twitter, particularly targeting marginalised communities".

## Amazon duped consumers into enrolling in Prime, says US FTC

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US Federal Trade Commission on Wednesday accused Amazon.com of enrolling millions of consumers into its paid subscription Amazon Prime service without their consent and making it hard for them to cancel, the agency's latest action against the ecommerce giant in recent weeks. The FTC sued Amazon in federal court in Seattle, alleging that the company has "knowingly duped millions of con-



sumers into unknowingly enrolling in Amazon Prime." In a statement, Amazon called the FTC's claims "false on the facts and the law." Amazon has used "manipulative, coercive or de-

ceptive user-interface designs known as 'dark patterns' to trick consumers into enrolling in automatically renewing Prime subscriptions," the FTC said as it seeks civil penalties and a permanent injunction to prevent future violations. The lawsuit is one of several actions taken by President Joe Biden's administration intended to rein in the outsized market power of Big Tech firms as it tries to increase competition to protect consumers.

## BMW-China strong ties a 'win-win', says CEO

MUNICH (Agencies): BMW's strong ties with China are a "win-win" as the car industry shifts towards greener, more connected vehicles, said CEO Oliver Zipse after Chinese Premier Li Qiang visited the German carmaker's headquarters in Munich on Wednesday. Accompanied by a high-ranking delegation, Li met with Zipse and other company executives as part of a four-day visit to Germany – his first official trip abroad since becoming



premier – that included talks with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and other top politicians. "The BMW Group has deep and long-standing ties with China," said Zipse in a statement, noting

shared aims in areas like electric mobility, decarbonisation and intelligent connected vehicles. "Strong partnerships between BMW Group and Chinese partners will continue to deliver a win-win during the transformation of our industry," he added. Li had told the CEOs of several top German companies on Tuesday, including Mercedes-Benz, that a lack of cooperation between the two nations was a major risk.

## Toyota's luxury Alphard and Vellfire get a makeover

TOKYO (Agencies): Toyota Motor Corp has revamped its luxury Alphard and Vellfire vehicles that are popular among high rollers in Japan and elsewhere. While the interior and exterior remain largely unchanged from previous versions, which can seat six passengers, the fourth-generation models have a front grill and side silhouette reminiscent of the Lexus LM, which Toyota unveiled in April. Hybrid and gasoline-powered versions



will be available initially, and plug-in electric models will be introduced in the future, Toyota said Wednesday. The Alphard Executive Lounge starts at ¥5.4 million (US\$38,000) with the

option of a 2.5-litre hybrid engine. The Vellfire, which starts at ¥6.55 million, can be purchased with a 2.4-litre turbo-charged gasoline engine. The carmaker aims to sell 8,500 units a month – 70% Alphard and 30% Vellfire. These are the first new models Toyota has unveiled since its annual meeting at its headquarters in Aichi Prefecture last week. Chairman Akio Toyoda's reappointment was approved, albeit with less support than before.

## Mastercard launches global plan to recycle credit cards

LONDON (Agencies): Payments company Mastercard on Wednesday launched a global project to recycle credit and debit cards as part of a plan to save the billions of cards in circulation across the industry from landfill. Initially partnering with British lender HSBC Holdings Plc in eight branches in Britain, Mastercard said banks across the world, some of which have

launched local initiatives, would be able to join the programme and help build economies of scale. "We are inviting all card issuers around the world to partner with us, no matter what region they are in, and offer card recycling to their customers," said Ajay Bhalla, president of cyber and intelligence at Mastercard Inc. Under the plan, Mastercard will pro-

vide shredding machines to HSBC, each of which is capable of holding 10,000 cards, equivalent to 50kg of plastic. Once full, it will be transferred to a plastic recycling facility. Financial details about the plan were not disclosed. The pilot project, which will run for an initial six months, will allow customers to recycle any plastic card, including those from rivals.

## Saudi Arabia's merchandise imports drop 16.1% in April to \$15.4bn

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's merchandise imports decreased 16.1 percent to SR57.9 billion (\$15.4 billion) in April 2023 compared to SR69 billion in March 2023, according to the latest data released by the General Authority for Statistics. However, the Kingdom's merchandise imports increased by 1 percent in April 2023 compared to SR57.3 million in April 2022. According to the report, over-



all merchandise exports decreased 25.2 percent to SR103 billion in April 2023 compared to SR137.7 billion in the same month last year.

## SNB calls for new measures after Credit Suisse crash

ZURICH (Agencies): The Swiss National Bank (SNB) on Thursday said it was crucial to draw lessons from the Credit Suisse crisis that led to the bank's downfall and forced rescue by rival UBS and consider measures that would prevent such events in the future. "These measures need to strengthen banks' resilience in order to prevent a loss of confidence wherever possible, and ensure a broad range of effective options to stabilise, recover or wind down a systemically important bank in the event of a crisis," the central bank said in its 2023 financial stability report. It also



called for banks to be required in the future to prepare a minimum amount of assets that could be pledged for central banks. Switzerland's largest bank recently grew even bigger, following its rescue of embattled Credit Suisse in a takeover engineered by Swiss authorities in March and formalised by UBS on June 12.

## Dollar weakens as Powell's testimony offers little surprise

SINGAPORE (Agencies): The dollar languished near a one-month low against a basket of currencies on Thursday, after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell stuck to his usual messaging at his semi-annual testimony, offering little room for surprise. Sterling was perched near a one-year high ahead of the Bank of England's (BOE) interest rate decision later in the day, with Wednesday's hot inflation report likely to keep policymakers on their toes. In remarks to lawmakers on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, Powell said further US rate increases are "a pretty good guess" of where the Fed is heading if



the economy continues in its current direction. Those comments were in line with what the central bank said at its policy meeting last week. That sent the greenback down nearly 0.5% against a basket of six major peers in the previous session. The US dollar index last stood at 102.05 in early Asia trade, not far from its recent five-week low of 102.00.

## Musk meets Modi to discuss investment in India

NEW YORK (Agencies): Twitter owner and Tesla CEO Elon Musk said today he discussed potential "significant investments" in India after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the US. Musk, one of the world's richest men, said that Modi was "pushing us to make significant investments in India, which is something that we intend to do, and are trying to figure out the right timing". New Delhi has rolled out the red carpet for top global investors and companies – including tech giants like Google and Apple – in the last few years. Since the coronavirus



pandemic, many companies have expanded their presence in India as a way to cut their supply-chain dependence on China and tap into the South Asian nation's huge domestic market. Modi, who saw the tech billionaire shortly after arriving from India on a state visit, said it had been "great meeting" Musk in New York.

## Europe's car sales surge 18% on EV demand

LONDON (Agencies): Auto sales in Europe continued their upward trajectory in May, rising for the 10th month in a row, as demand for electric cars outpaced the broader market. New-car registrations increased more than 18% to 1.12 million vehicles, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association said Wednesday. Sales of battery-electric vehicles jumped 66% last month as carmakers benefited from improved supply of components, though some pockets of shortages remain. Tesla Inc has led the EV advance, more than doubling sales during the first five months of the year thanks in



part to aggressive price cuts. Other plug-in car lines, including SAIC Motor Corp's MG brand, also are popular with buyers, according to Felipe Munoz, an analyst at forecaster Jato Dynamics. "Consumers appear to be responding well to wider competitive offers and good deals presented by the two carmakers," he said.

## Sterling seesaws as inflation data pressures BOE

LONDON (Agencies): The pound seesawed on Wednesday, initially jumping after data showed UK inflation accelerated more than expected in May, then reversing gains, as concerns flared over the Bank of England's ability to protect the economy from stagnating. Sterling was up 0.1% on the day against the dollar at US\$1.281, having traded as high as US\$1.2803 right after the data. Against the euro, the pound was up 0.2% at 85.35 pence, compared with 85.50 pence right before the numbers. Official data showed consumer inflation rose by 8.7% year on year in May, showing no change from April's 8.7% rate, but above expectations for an increase of 8.4%. But the core rate, which excludes food, energy, alcohol and tobacco, rose by 7.1%, above expectations for a reading of



6.8%, keeping the BoE under pressure to deliver a big rate rise when it meets later this week, but not so large it tilts the economy into recession. "If you look at this in context, with the labour market and average earnings increasing 7.2% in April when core CPI was 6.8%, you've now got core CPI in at 7.1% – you're only going to see earnings increase further still and that's when you start to get those second- and third-round effects and that really gets embedded in the economy," TraderX strategist Michael Brown said.



Jamaica eye US ambush as Gold Cup kicks off

Los Angeles (AFP/APP): Jamaica coach Heimir Hallgrímsson is plotting an unlikely upset as the Reggae Boyz prepare to kick off their CONCACAF Gold Cup campaign against the United States on Saturday. The 16-team biennial championship for North America, Central America and the Caribbean gets under way at Soldier Field this weekend, with the defending champion US taking on Jamaica in Group A. Hallgrímsson, who was part of the Iceland coaching set-up that masterminded a stunning defeat of England at Euro 2016, took over as Jamaica coach last September. But so far the 56-year-old qualified dentist has struggled to reverse Jamaica's dismal international form, with the Reggae Boyz winless in seven games



since Hallgrímsson took over. The Icelandic coach though is bullish that the Gold Cup can mark the beginning of an upturn in Jamaica's footballing fortunes. "We don't fear them, we know they have a good squad and they are playing at home in front of their own fans," Hallgrímsson said of the United States. "The most important thing in a

tournament like this is not to lose the first game. A draw is always a good point from the first game so you are alive until the end of the group phase." Jamaica has a solid record in the Gold Cup but has struggled in games against the US in the tournament. The US beat Jamaica in the knockout rounds in 2021 and 2019, and also defeated the Reggae Boyz in the 2017 final. Jamaica though upset the US en route to the 2015 final, where they lost to Mexico. However with a team bolstered by Premier League attacking talent in the shape of Leon Bailey (Aston Villa), Michail Antonio (West Ham) and Demarai Gray (Everton), Hallgrímsson says Jamaica are ready to end their long winless streak.

Hope, Pooran fire West Indies to World Cup qualifying win over Nepal

Harare (AFP/APP): Shai Hope and Nicholas Pooran hit centuries to propel the West Indies to a convincing 101-run win over Nepal at the World Cup Qualifier in Harare on Thursday. Hope scored 132 while Pooran made a brisk 115 as the pair put on 216 for the fourth wicket to help the two-time champions post 339-7 after a bad start to the innings. Kyle Mayers fell for just one and Johnson Charles was out for nought as the West Indies slumped to 9-2. Opener Brandon King made 32 before he was bowled by leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane. "We were put on the back foot there," said Hope. "The key was absorbing as much pressure as possible and then find a way to transfer that pressure in the back end. "Pooran made it a lot easier for me. The aim was to take it as deep as possible give us the best chance towards the end." Hope and Pooran joined forces in the 16th over and took the game away from Nepal, who were left to rue a dropped catch off Pooran early in his innings. Wicketkeeper Aasif Sheikh put



down a Pooran edge off left-arm spinner Lalit Rajbanshi when the batsman was on just three. With Hope ticking along at a more sedate pace, Pooran took on the role of aggressor before both players reached their hundreds in the 40th over. Hope completed his 15th ODI ton off 107 balls before Pooran carved Gulsan Jha to the boundary a few deliveries later to bring up his second one-day

century off 81 balls -- four years after his first. Dipendra Singh Airee eventually removed Pooran for 115 with a terrific catch off his own bowling but Rovman Powell kept the runs flowing with a quick-fire 29 alongside Jason Holder's 16 not out. Hope holed out to long-off in the final over for 132 and Keemo Paul was bowled off the last ball as Rajbanshi finished with 3-52.

China's tennis star Wu Yibing sets sights on world top 30

BEIJING (Agencies): Chinese tennis player Wu Yibing has set his sights on qualifying into the world top 30 in the ATP rankings. Wu finished his maiden grass court event on June 15 as he was defeated by Hungary's Marton Fucsovics 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 in the 2nd round of the ATP Stuttgart Open. "I managed to adapt to the fast tempo of the grass court," Wu said in an interview with the Xinhua News Agency. "You have to be more aggressive and resilient playing on the grass court." The 23-year-old said he has a lot of room for improvement and he is aiming to squeeze into the world top 30 this year. "I've learned a lot from my coaching team, which will help take me to a new height. More games and better adversaries will help me improve quickly," said Wu, who beat John Isner in a thrilling three-set final at the Dallas Open to become the first man from China to win an ATP title. The victory in Dallas not only gave impetus to his professional career, but



also served as a motivation for young Chinese players, said Wu, currently ranked world No.64. "I'm trying to improve my world rankings along with the other Chinese male players. No Chinese mainland players have made it into the world top 100 prior to me and Zhang Zhizhen. It gave young Chinese players and parents a lot of confidence," he said. Wu said he be-

lieves that tennis will grow more popular in China. "I want to contribute to the development of tennis in China by winning more games and improving my world rankings. With better results, we can win more support and draw more youths to engage in tennis and enjoy the sport," he noted. In his spare time, Wu loves to play computer games and reading.

Chelsea owners buy French Ligue 1 club Strasbourg

Strasbourg (AFP/APP): The American owners of English Premier League giants Chelsea on Thursday sealed a deal to take control of French Ligue 1 outfit Strasbourg, the consortium announced. "This agreement marks a new chapter in the history of Strasbourg as the consortium is committed to accelerating sustainable investments in the growth of the club," the BlueCo consortium said in a statement. "(This includes) the first team and in the academy, in the continuity of the project implemented by Marc Keller, who will remain chairman of the club, supported by his current management team." The consortium led by American businessman Todd Boehly and US-based Clearlake Capital endured a torrid first year in charge of Chelsea. They sacked managers Thomas Tuchel and Graham Potter before a miserable end to the campaign under interim boss Frank Lam-



pard. Chelsea's 12th-place finish was their worst since 1994 despite a spend of more than £500 million (\$624 million) on new players in the new owners' first two transfer windows. They have since hired Mauricio Pochettino as their new coach. Boehly is also the co-owner of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team. Strasbourg endured their own struggles

last season, finishing just two places and five points above the relegation zone. A source told AFP that the US consortium has bought almost all of the Strasbourg club share. However, he was unable to reveal the full value of the deal. Strasbourg are the fifth Ligue 1 club to pass into American ownership after Marseille, Lyon, Toulouse and Le Havre.

Mourinho given four-match ban for insulting referee

LAUSANNE (Agencies): Jose Mourinho has been suspended for four European matches for insulting referee Anthony Taylor after Roma's Europa League final defeat by Sevilla, UEFA announced on Wednesday. The Portuguese confronted Taylor in a car park following Roma's penalty shoot-out loss after a 1-1 draw in Budapest. Mourinho has been banned from "the next four UEFA club compe-

tition matches in which he would otherwise participate, for directing abusive language at a match official," European football's governing body said. His team will play in the Europa League group stage next season. Roma have also been fined 50,000 euros (\$54,744) and banned from taking away fans to their next European match "for the lighting of fireworks, throwing of objects, acts of damage and

crowd disturbances." The Italian club were also fined 5,000 euros over the "improper conduct of their team" and ordered to "contact the Hungarian Football Federation within 30 days" to agree a settlement regarding damages caused by their supporters in the stadium. Taylor was harassed by Roma fans at Budapest airport with his family the day after the controversial final.

Sabalenka, Gauff crash out in Berlin

Berlin (AFP/APP): Top seed Aryna Sabalenka and US star Coco Gauff suffered setbacks in their Wimbledon build-ups on Thursday when they slumped to second-round losses at the Berlin WTA tournament. World number two Sabalenka was defeated 6-2, 7-6 (7/2) by Veronika Kudermetova whose Russian compatriot Ekaterina Alexandrova saw off seventh-ranked Gauff 6-4, 6-0. Alexandrova and Kudermetova will meet in Friday's quarter-finals, just five days after they fought out the final in 's-Hertogenbosch. Kudermetova had also defeated Sabalenka at the same stage in Berlin 12 months ago in three sets. On Thursday, world number 13 Kudermetova broke her Belarusian opponent three times in her 99-minute victory. Alexandrova, ranked at 22, successfully defended her 's-Hertogenbosch title in a dramatic three-set triumph over Kudermetova on Sunday. Her win over Gauff avenged her loss to the American teenager from two match points up in their only previous meeting at Dubai in 2021. After falling behind 3-1 in the first set, the 28-year-old Russian won 11 of the last 12 games to reach



the Berlin quarter-finals for the second time in her career. "Grass is not my favorite surface, but somehow I'm managing to play so well on it," said Alexandrova. "And maybe the score looks easy, but it's never like that because she played amazing. I needed to stay focused during every single point to keep it that way. I'm just hoping I can keep this form as long as I can." Greek sixth seed Maria Sakkari breezed past Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus 6-2, 6-1 while Marketa Vondrousova also made the last eight when German opponent Jule Niemeier retired with injury from their second round clash.

Pogacar makes winning return in Slovenian time-trial



Ljubljana (AFP/APP): Two-time Tour de France champion Tadej Pogacar made a winning return from injury on Thursday with a dominant time-trial victory at the Slovenian championships. The UAE Team Emirates rider was back in action for the first time since suffering a wrist injury in a nasty crash in April. Pogacar had no such problems in the 15.7km time trial near Lake Bled, beating second-placed Marko Pavlic by a massive five minutes and 14 seconds with a time of 29 minutes and 43 seconds. "The national championship is good preparation for me and an ideal test before the Tour de France," he told siol.net ahead of the race. The 24-year-old will also take part in the 156km road race on Sun-

day. "My arm is better, it's not quite there yet, but I don't feel any more discomfort in training," Pogacar said. "My injury bothers me a bit on technical aspects, but it doesn't bother my legs, and I was able to train well. "I gave it my all and I think everything went according to plan. For now, I just have to make sure I don't fall or hit a bone." Pogacar had been in scintillating form this year before his accident during the Liege-Bastogne-Liege, winning the Paris-Nice stage race and the Tour of Flanders, Fleche Wallonne and Amstel Gold Race one-day classics. He will be hoping to take back the Tour de France yellow jersey this year to add to his successes in 2020 and 2021, after losing to Dane Jonas Vingegaard 12 months ago.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: JUNE 23, 2023



– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.  
– **ARIES:** Though you can see an easy shortcut, you need to stick to the plan and keep yourself moving one step at a time. You're not crazy about the slow pace, but you know that it's for the best.  
– **TAURUS:** Take it easy. You deserve a break, and your energy is best spent relaxing today. You can recharge so much that you can run at full speed for quite a long time if that's what you need to do.  
– **GEMINI:** Don't be too surprised when folks misunderstand you today, even when you think you're speaking quite plainly. It's all about tiny signals that you don't even realize that you're sending!  
– **CANCER:** Try not to worry too much about any large or pressing issues that you can't do anything about just yet. There's lots of smaller stuff that you can affect in a positive way. One step at a time!  
– **LEO:** You are calculating the odds of success and trying to figure out just what you want to do next, and you should reach some interesting results!

It's a good time to stick to the plan, whatever it is.  
– **VIRGO:** Try not to make a big deal out of your find, but it is exciting when you spot something out of place that turns out to be worth more than you thought. It won't make you a millionaire, but it's fun..  
– **LIBRA:** You are using your senses to their utmost today and should find that you're spotting stuff that you'd never ordinarily notice. File it all away for later analysis. You've got plenty of time.  
– **SCORPIO:** You're focusing on the smallest details of your current plans or projects and finding all sorts of ways to improve on them. It's a good time to just accept that things need to change quickly  
– **SAGITTARIUS:** This isn't the time to think about yourself. You've got to focus on friends, family, and everyone else in your life. If you can help them with what they need, you'll get what you need even sooner.  
– **CAPRICORN:** You're in a good place to break new emotional ground with your partner or family, so sit them down or write out what you want. It's a good day to try something you've never tried before.  
– **ACQUARIUS:** Your friends and family aren't quite on the same page as you today, and while that's not a big deal (you don't have to be there all the time), it's still worth noting so you don't step on any toes.  
– **PISCES:** You need to work out some of this restless energy in selfless projects that help friends, family, or the community but not yourself. If you feel better about things, that's just a fringe benefit!



## Asian Group endorses Pakistan for UNSC non-permanent seat

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies): Pakistan has won the unanimous endorsement of the Asia Pacific Group for its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the term 2025-2026, with top Pakistani officials pledging to uphold the world body's Charter. Thanking the 55-member group for the support and confidence, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said in a tweet Pakistan was determined to make its contributions while upholding the principles of UN Charter. Pakistan will now be seeking election as this region's endorsed candidate. The election for the seat will be held by the General Assembly in June 2024 in New York. "The unanimous support of the Asia-Pacific Group for Pakistan's Security Council candida-

ture reflects the general recognition in the international community, including in the Asia-Pacific region, of Pakistan's positive role in upholding the fundamental purposes and principles of the UN Charter," the Pakistan envoy said in an interview with APP. Meanwhile, diplomats said that more than 20 countries made statements in the Asia Pacific Group meeting strongly supporting Pakistan's candidature. They include Bahrain, China, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Papua Guinea, Qatar, Singapore, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen. The ambassadors of China, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and other delegates applaud-

ed Pakistan's commitment to peace, security, development and global cooperation. Pakistan has been elected seven times to the UN Security Council, with the most recent term in 2013. Other occasions were in 1952-1953, 1968-1969, 1976-1977, 1983-1984, 1993-1994 and 2003-2004. Pakistan is also one of the countries which has had a diplomat, Muhammad Zafarulla Khan, serve a term as the President of the United Nations General Assembly in 1962. Pakistan has been a leading contributor to the UN peacekeeping operations in hotspots around the world. More than 200,000 Pakistani men and women have served in 46 UN missions across the world. Of them, 171 peacekeepers made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of international peace and security.

## Red Cross federation chief stepping down



Geneva (AFP/APP): The head of the Red Cross federation, the world's largest humanitarian network, is stepping down, a spokesman confirmed Thursday, following a row in Italy surrounding the Rome Pride event. Francesco Rocca is leaving his post as the head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) after the controversy in Italy, where since March he has led the right-wing government of the Lazio region, encompassing Rome. Earlier this month, the Lazio government withdrew its sponsorship of Rome Pride, saying the June 10 event was too political. Rocca said he decided to resign to avoid the possibility that his decisions taken as president of the Lazio region might be instrumentalised in a way that affects the reputation of the IFRC. In a letter to the 191 national societies and the IFRC secretariat, he said "with great sadness" that his decision to resign was a "very difficult one" reached after "some careful and painful reflections driven by my desire to protect our organisation and people we serve". Recent events related to Rome Pride have made him think "how every single decision or action taken by me, despite always being in line with our fundamental principles and values, could be instrumentalised in good or bad faith and risk to jeopardise the reputation of our beloved IFRC". He also said his growing engagements in Lazio were making it difficult to juggle the two jobs. The IFRC presidency is an unpaid, voluntary role, so presidents have typically had other careers or positions while serving in the post. Rocca will remain in charge at the Geneva-based IFRC until a successor is chosen. An IFRC spokesman told AFP: "He called for an extraordinary session of the general assembly, and at the end of this session he will resign." The date of the assembly should be decided within the coming weeks, he added. His resignation was first reported by Switzerland's ATS news agency.

## Punjab cabinet rejects agri tax on small land owners

LAHORE (Agencies): The 18th provincial cabinet meeting, presided over by Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, rejected proposal to impose agricultural income tax on owners of 5-acre land. The cabinet decided to maintain the stamp duty rate at one percent and approved amendments to the First Schedule of the Stamp Act 1899. Amendments to the Sales Tax on Services Act, 2012 were also approved, abolishing all taxes and duties on IT business, education, and training in Punjab. The cabinet approved the extension of contracts for employees of the hepatitis and infection control program, as well as the provincial TB control program. A significant decision was made to restore historical buildings and ancient gates across Punjab, including Lahore. The restoration of the 12 ancient gates of Lahore to their original grandeur was entrusted to the Director-General of the Walled City of Lahore Authority, by the CM. DG WCLA provided a briefing on the restoration of historical buildings.

## European airlines hit by 'greenwashing' complaint

PARIS (Agencies): European airlines have been hit by a consumer complaint filed with the EU's executive arm accusing the 17 companies of greenwashing, the practice of making misleading climate-related claims. The European Consumer Organisation, or BEUC, said Thursday the claims made by the airlines breach EU rules on unfair commercial practices. The BEUC called for a Europe-wide investigation and for airlines to "stop making claims that give consumers the impression that flying is sustainable". "We urge authorities to take the matter into their hands and crack down on this greenwashing practice seriously misleading consumers," BEUC deputy director general Ursula Pachl said in a statement. "Airlines must stop giving consumers the false impression that they are choosing a sustainable transport mode," Pachl said. The BEUC said 23 of its member organisations from 19 countries had joined the complaint to the European Commission. Greenwashing is when companies use deceptive claims to convince the public that its products or operations are environmentally friendly. The complaint targets Air Baltic, Air Dolomiti, Air France, Austrian, Brussels Airlines, Eurowings, Finnair, KLM, Lufthansa, Norwegian, Ryanair, SAS, SWISS, TAP, Volotea, Vueling and Wizz Air. The BEUC said airlines are misleading consumers by charging them more to contribute to the development of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), which are "not market-ready" and will only represent a minor share of a plane's fuel mix once they finally become widely avail-



able. The group also denounced claims that paying extra credits can "offset" or "compensate" for a flight's CO2 emissions. The BEUC said consumer protection authorities should ask airlines to reimburse customers who paid such extra "green" fees. Airlines for Europe (A4E), an industry association, said in a statement that companies "fully recognise the importance of transparent communications on sustainability". A4E said that while offsets currently play a role, "their significance will diminish as the industry bring in more fuel-efficient aircraft and invests in more SAF" to meet a target to of net-zero emissions by 2050. "We continuously learn and improve our sustainability communication, carefully reviewing all messaging to enhance transparency," A4E said. "We are dedicated to assessing what can be improved and made even more transparent to effectively communicate our efforts and progress in sustainability." An Air France-KLM spokesman said the Franco-Dutch group was "paying increased attention to the precision of these messages" and that it was the world's biggest buyer of sustainable aviation fuels last year. Germany's Lufthansa said it plans to slash its net emissions by half by 2030 compared to 2019 levels and has a "constant dialogue" with customers.

## Britain celebrates 'Windrush' anniversary after deportation scandal



London, June 22 (AFP/APP): Britain on Thursday celebrated the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush ship bringing workers from the West Indies, but with the bitter legacy of a wrongful deportation scandal still fresh. Known as the "Windrush generation", thousands of people came to the UK at the invitation of the British government between 1948 and the early 1970s to fill shortages of key workers following World War II. Mostly from Jamaica or Trinidad and Tobago, they received indefinite leave to remain, but many who did not apply for passports later found themselves targeted by immigration laws intended to create a "hostile environment" for illegal immigrants. Many lost jobs, homes, health care, pensions and benefits because they could not produce paperwork, while others were taken into custody or forced to return to the Caribbean. Five years after the scandal sparked outrage, many of those affected are still waiting for the promised compensation. - 'Immeasurable contribution' - The Empire Windrush, carrying several hundred migrants, arrived at the port of Tilbury, east of London, on

June 22, 1948. Three-quarters of a century later, the anniversary is a chance for the UK to "recognise and celebrate the immeasurable contribution that they, their children and their grandchildren have made to this country", King Charles III said. "Once in Britain, they worked hard, offering their skills to rebuild a country during peacetime and seeking opportunities to forge a better future for themselves and their families," he said in the foreword of a book accompanying a display of portraits. To mark the anniversary, Charles attended a service for young people and "Windrush pioneers" at St George's Chapel on the royal family's Windsor estate, west of London. "They are pioneers who paved the way for generations who came after them, not merely to survive but to thrive," the Bishop of Dover, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, told the congregation. For surviving members of the Windrush generation and their descendants, however, the scandal that erupted in 2018 remains an open wound. "It just felt like another trauma. It's just so unfair," said Yvonne Josiah, 61, who was born in London but whose mother came to the UK in the late 1950s.

## PM, UNSG discuss rehabilitation of Pakistan's flood victims



PARIS (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said he discussed with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres the current status of rehabilitation of Pakistan's flood victims and they agreed that the international community needed to deliver on its pledges

for climate justice. The PM, in a tweet, said: "In my meeting with the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of the Summit for New Global Financing Pact, we discussed the current status of rehabilitation of Pakistan's flood victims." "I thanked the Secretary General for his consistent and powerful advocacy of climate change and his call for helping the developing countries to cope with the challenge. We agreed that the international community needs to deliver on its pledges for climate justice. Pakistanis will never forget how the Secretary General came forward to plead the case of flood victims at the global forums after devastating floods in Pakistan," he added.

## Iran top diplomat rounds out Gulf tour with UAE visit



Dubai (AFP/APP): Iran's foreign minister on Thursday concluded a three-day tour of Gulf Arab neighbours with a visit to the United Arab Emirates, where he held talks with the country's president. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's visit to the UAE followed stops in Qatar, Kuwait and Oman – the latest in a flurry of diplomatic moves by Tehran as it seeks to reduce its isolation, improve its economy and project strength. On Thursday, he discussed "bilateral relations and ways to enhance cooperation" in a meeting with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi, the official WAM news agency reported. Amir-Abdollahian extended an invitation from President Ebrahim Raisi for Sheikh Mohammed to visit, Iran's foreign ministry said. He later met with his Emirati counterpart, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, who emphasised "the significance of establishing an international approach to multilateral action based on cooperation and partnership," WAM said. During the visit, Iran and the UAE also signed an agreement to expand air transport services between the two countries and increase trade and tourism opportunities, it added. Gulf Arab countries are seeking to ease tensions with Iran, fuelled in recent years by the conflicts in Yemen and Syria. In a dramatic shift, China brokered an agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia in March to restore ties after a years-long rupture. Iran's nuclear activities are also an issue of mutual concern, as Tehran seeks to revive a 2015 deal with major powers granting it sanctions relief in return for restrictions aimed at preventing it from acquiring a weapons capability – an ambition it has always denied. Iran said last week it had been engaged in indirect negotiations with the United States through Oman, with nuclear issues, US sanctions and a possible prisoner swap on the agenda. The following day, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, said he had met with diplomats from three European countries in Abu Dhabi to discuss a number of issues, including his country's nuclear activities. In 2018, the United States under then-president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear accord, prompting Iran to begin backing away from its own commitments a year later, including by stepping up its enrichment of uranium. The administration of US President Joe Biden launched talks to revive the deal in 2021, but the process has stalled amid on-off negotiations.

## 'Biden, Modi salute 'defining partnership'

Washington (Agencies): US President Joe Biden on Thursday hailed a "defining partnership" with India as he rolled out the red carpet for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sealing major defense and technology deals as Washington bets big on New Delhi as a counterweight to China. Modi is being feted with the pomp of a state visit, only the third of Biden's presidency, in a calculated show of full-throated US support, despite quiet unease over India's refusal to break with Russia

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