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## General Syed Asim Munir Presides Over Corps Commanders' Conference, Highlights Counterterrorism Efforts and Economic Revival Plan

Rawalpindi (Agencies): General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), chaired the 258th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at GHQ today. The conference paid a heartfelt tribute to the brave soldiers who have continuously made supreme sacrifices in defending their motherland against the threat of terrorism. During the conference, the participants received a detailed briefing on the current internal security environment. The presence of sanctuaries and freedom of movement enjoyed by the terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other similar groups in a neighboring country, as well as the availability of sophisticated weapons to these terrorists, were identified as significant factors impacting Pakistan's security. The forum extensively discussed the



army's operational preparedness and training aspects. COAS emphasized the importance of objective training, highlighting that it remains the cornerstone of their professionalism. He emphasized the need to remain constantly vigilant against any threats to national security. The participants were also informed about the government's plan for economic revival and the role of the army in uplifting various sectors such as agriculture, information technology, mining and minerals,

and defense production. These sectors are included under the purview of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The participants expressed their unwavering commitment to fully support the strategic initiatives planned by the Government of Pakistan to revive the economy. They pledged to provide technical and management support to ensure the overall welfare of the people of Pakistan. The Corps Commanders' Conference serves as a vital platform for high-level discussions and strategic planning to safeguard national security, counter terrorism, and contribute to the economic prosperity of the country. The conference reaffirmed the army's dedication to protecting the nation from threats and supporting the government's initiatives for economic growth and development.

## Turkiye President's upcoming visit to Qatar to boost cooperation, ties

ANKARA (Agencies): An upcoming visit to Qatar by Türkiye's President will help boost bilateral ties and cooperation, according to the Gulf nation's ambassador in Ankara, Anadolu Agency reports. "This visit is an important indicator of the solid relations that bind Türkiye and Qatar," Sheikh Mohammed bin Nasser bin Jassim Al-Thani told Anadolu ahead of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Qatar on Tuesday as part of a three-day Gulf tour. "Most likely, the visit will encompass several areas of coordination and joint cooperation," he added. Erdogan is also scheduled to visit Saudi Arabia on Monday and the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday. Bin Nasser said the agenda of Erdogan's visit to Doha would include international and regional issues, as well as means of expanding investments between the two countries. "This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries," the ambassador said. "These relations have developed and expanded to cover various economic, security, military, political and other fields," he added. The diplomat said that Türkiye and Qatar have many areas of joint cooperation. "The two sides are working constantly to expand these areas, and remove obstacles that may impede the achievement of the desired success," he added.

## Iran, UN officials discuss Afghanistan as Taliban invited to Moscow

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iran's Foreign Minister discussed the situation in Afghanistan with the UN's point man on the war-torn nation, as Russia has invited ruling Taliban officials to a meeting in Moscow, Anadolu Agency reports. Tehran's top diplomat, Hossein Amirabdollahian, met on Sunday with Feridun Sinirlioglu, the special coordinator of the US Secretary-General for the independent assessment of Afghanistan affairs, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Monday. Tehran is "ready" to advance regional initiatives on Afghanistan, Amirabdollahian told Sinirlioglu, emphasising the "central role" of the UN on the issue. The meeting came a day after Moscow invited Afghanistan's de facto Taliban rulers for a meeting on Afghanistan. Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan, Dmitry Zhirmov, on Saturday extended an invitation to the Taliban administration during a meeting with acting Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi.

## Five-nation group on Lebanon says to penalise those obstructing presidential election

AMMAN (Reuters): The five-nation group on Lebanon, which comprises the U.S., France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Egypt, said on Monday they had discussed several measures against politicians and groups who were obstructing the election of a new president. Last month parliament failed - for the 12th time - to fill the post, reserved for a Maronite Christian in Lebanon's sectarian system and vacant since the term of the Hezbollah-allied Michel Aoun ended in October. The meeting in Doha attended by Lebanon's key Western and Arab donors and allies said it was imperative a president was elected and urged Lebanon's leaders to overcome a deepening institutional paralysis in a country where one of the world's worst economic crises has been festering for years. "We discussed several options including taking measures against those who obstruct progress in this area," said the communique, without elaborating on the steps. The stand-off has played out along sectarian lines, with Christian parties supporting Jihad Azour, the IMF's Middle East director and an ex-finance minister, and Shi'ite factions Hezbollah and Amal against him. The stand-off has laid bare Lebanon's deep splits, with the heavily armed Iran-backed



Hezbollah deploying its political might against Azour's bid to fill the vacant presidency, while continuing to campaign for its ally - Suleiman Frangieh. Last week the European Parliament also blamed Hezbollah and Amal and their allies for resorting to what it said were unconstitutional tactics to prevent the conclusion of the vote and deepening the political deadlock. Lawmakers from Hezbollah and allies withdrew from the last session to obstruct a bid by the main Christian parties to elect Azour. Hezbollah and its allies have close ties to Syria and Iran, while their opponents in the Christian and Sunni Muslim communities traditionally look to the West and Sunni-led Gulf Arab states. Washington has also warned its administration was considering sanctions on Lebanese officials for their continued obstruction of the election of a new president and warned the paralysis could only worsen the country's political crisis.

## Unsung heroes of Religious Ministry overcome odds to deliver flawless Hajj arrangements

ISLAMABAD (APP):The unsung heroes of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony deserve accolades for accomplishing a remarkable and enchanting feat in successfully organizing the Hajj arrangements, despite facing personal challenges, time limitations, and inadequate support from the local Pak Hajj mission. Under the guidance of Director Moavineen Sajjad Haider Yaldram, a team of over 1,800 Seasonal Duty Staff (SDS), Moavineen diligently fulfilled their responsibilities in different departments such as transportation, accommodation, lost and found, wheelchair assistance, help centre, and monitoring at the main control office in Makkah and Madinah. Additionally, the ministry ensured that the pilgrims received extensive medical support throughout their journey. Over 50 accomplished Pakistani women, with diverse professional backgrounds, diligently supported and served Pakistani hajj pilgrims in Saudi Arabia as part of the contingent of Moavineen. Their efforts showcased the increasing empowerment and recognition of Pakistani women in significant roles,



contributing to a stronger representation of the nation in Hajj affairs. A committed team of more than 137 doctors and paramedics provided quality medical services to pilgrims. The Ministry staff collaborated closely with Saudi authorities and hotel establishments to allocate accommodations that effectively meet the diverse requirements and preferences of the pilgrims. Their unwavering commitment, supported by personnel from departments like the Pakistan Army, police, and high-ranking government officers, played a crucial role in providing comfort to pilgrims. Serving as Moavineen and Haram guides, they navigated the challenges of scorching heat, efficiently managing transportation, meals, and accommodation while offering comprehensive support to Pakistani pilgrims.

## Pakistan's Commitment to Achieving SDGs Unwavering: Romina Khurshid Alam, Convener SDGs

Islamabad (Agencies): Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Member of the National Assembly/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister/Convener of the National Parliamentary Taskforce on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has reiterated Pakistan's dedication to fulfilling all SDGs despite challenges. She emphasized the urgent need for collective action to combat climate change and safeguard the planet for future generations. Ms. Khurshid Alam made these remarks while representing Pakistan at the 'Fourth Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' in New York. During her speech, the Honorable Convener stressed the significance of collective efforts in addressing climate change. She highlighted the unanimous Resolution passed by the National Assembly on June 23, 2023, which acknowledged the support provided by the United Nations and its agencies in Pakistan's fight against climate change. The resolution also called for climate justice and sufficient resources to



tackle climate-induced challenges. Ms. Khurshid Alam urged conference participants to leverage their collective experiences and expertise to establish a consortium focused on disaster risk reduction strategies for the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to the conference, the Honorable Convener will present Pakistan's case at other prestigious forums organized at the United Nations. She aims to reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to the SDGs during the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. She will highlight the government's policies focused on education, poverty reduction, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth, including initiatives such as the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the Prime Minister's Youth Business & Agriculture Loan Scheme.

## Morocco says Israel recognises its sovereignty over Western Sahara

Morocco said, on Monday, that Israel has recognised its sovereignty over the disputed territory of Western Sahara and is mulling opening a consulate there, Reuters reports. A statement from Morocco's Royal Palace said Israel's position was expressed in a letter to King Mohammed VI from Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. The Algerian-backed Polisario Front demands an independent state in Western Sahara. In 2020, then-US President Donald Trump recognised Morocco's claim to the territory in return for its partial upgrade of relations with Israel. The Israeli position "will be sent to the United Nations, regional and international organisations ... as well as all the States Israel has diplomatic relations with," the statement from Morocco's Royal Palace quotes the letter as saying.



As part of this recognition, Israel mulls "the opening of a consulate in the city of Dakhla," the statement said. Israel's position on Western Sahara is "clear-cut" and comes as part of a momentum in Morocco's favour, after Washington and Madrid, in addition to other European capitals supported its autonomy plan for the territory, a senior government official told Reuters. The Israeli recognition will not affect Morocco's "principles" in defending the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he added.

## Trilateral Working Group Meeting Finalizes Route for Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railways Project

Islamabad (Agencies): The Ministry of Railways in Islamabad hosted a successful trilateral Working Group Meeting of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan on the UAP Railways project. Led by Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, Secretary/Chairman of Pakistan Railways, the Pakistani delegation engaged with Alhaj Bakhtulrehman Sharaft, Director General and CEO of Afghanistan Railways Authority, and Mr. Dekhkanov D.T, Head of the Transport Department of the Ministry of Investment, Industry, and Trade of Uzbekistan. During the meeting, the working group reached a consensus on the route for the UAP project. The signing ceremony for the Joint Protocol is scheduled to take place on July 18, 2023. The primary objective of the UAP project is to establish a vital rail link connecting Uzbekistan railways with Pakistan railways via the Termiz-Mazar e Sharif-Logar-Kharlachi route. The implementation of the UAP railway project holds immense significance as it will facilitate regional, transit, and bilateral trade among the participating countries. Additionally, it will strengthen people-to-people connections

across the entire region. The railway line will support both passenger and freight services, contributing to regional trade growth and economic development. Furthermore, the parties agreed on a comprehensive roadmap for conducting technical studies, identifying financing sources, and addressing other critical aspects to ensure the timely implementation of the project. The expertise and professionalism demonstrated by the experts from the three railway authorities were highly appreciated in achieving consensus on the final route and the modalities for its implementation. The UAP Railways project represents a significant milestone in regional connectivity, fostering closer ties between Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. It promises to enhance trade, boost economic cooperation, and create new avenues for collaboration in the region. The successful conclusion of the trilateral Working Group Meeting paves the way for the next phase of the project, bringing the participating countries closer to achieving their shared vision of enhanced connectivity and economic prosperity.

**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.

## Rescue 1122 completes preparations for Muharram: DG

PESHAWAR (APP): Director General (DG) Dr Khateer Ahmed on Monday said that Rescue 1122 had completed all the preparations to provide facilities to the mourners during Muharram. In a statement issued here, he said, “All the district emergency officers have been directed to cancel the leaves of all staff during Muharram to ensure optimum rescuers’ availability to cope with any emergency situation.” He said that during Muharram, more than three

thousand rescue personnel would perform duty across the province while 78 ambulances, 20 fire vehicles over 300 ambulances, and other operational vehicles and personnel would also be deployed for emergency services. He said that Emergency Medical Response Unit (EMS) and rescue personnel would remain alert along with the mourning processions and medical camps would be set up at different places for the mourners. The DG said, “Additional medicines

and other necessary supplies have been provided to all District Emergency Offices and DEOs have been instructed to remain present at their duty stations throughout Muharram and refrain from leaving the station without prior permission from the competent authority.”He said, “Rescue staff members have been directed to wear proper uniforms and badges and follow the code of conduct and ethics while performing duties.”

## Bid to smuggle drug to Punjab foiled; 4800 grams hashish recovered

PESHAWAR (APP): In a successful crackdown against drug smuggling, the Mardan Excise Police on Monday foiled a bid to smuggle huge quantity of drug from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab. According to the spokesman, the Excise police on a tip-off conducted a raid

on Charsadda Peshawar GT Road near Khyalid bridge and intercepted a vehicle number BA-3453. During search of the vehicle, the police recovered 4800 grams of hashish and arrested an accused from the spot and started further investigation after registering a case.

## ACC extends interim bail of four PTI leaders

PESHAWAR (APP): A judge of the Anti-Corruption Court on Monday extended the interim bail of the four local leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) till July 26 in a corruption case. All four accused namely Fazl Shakur, Abdul Salam,

Malik Shaukat, and Iftikhar Mashwani had submitted an application for extension in the interim bail. The judge Babar Ali after considering the applications of the petitioners granted a nine-day extension in the interim bail period.

## EX PTI MPA Shah Faisal arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): Former member of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Shah Faisal was arrested by Hangu police on Monday in connection with the 9th May rioting following the arrest of the party chairman in the Al-Qadir Trust case. Shah Faisal was wanted by the Police for his alleged role in the 9th May riots. Despite evading arrest for more than two months, he was apprehended under

the 3MPO (Maintenance of Public Order) act, the police added. The Hangu police had been actively pursuing Shah Faisal since the incident on May 9, where his presence was allegedly linked to the unrest. Shah Faisal’s arrest is significant as he is the brother of the late provincial assembly member Farid Khan, who was tragically killed by terrorists in 2013. Shah Faisal was elected twice to the provincial legislature from Hangu.

## MBA Students’ Spring Get-Together Celebrates Academic Excellence at The BRAINS Institute

Peshawar (Staff Report): The BRAINS Institute, a prestigious educational establishment in Peshawar, hosted an extraordinary event on July 14 to commemorate the Spring get-together of their esteemed MBA students. The gathering took place at The BRAINS Institute’s Phase 3 Chowk campus, where students, faculty, and distinguished guests assembled to celebrate outstanding academic achievements and foster a strong sense of camaraderie among the future leaders in healthcare and hospital management. The event was graced by eminent personalities, including Professor Dr. Arshad Javed, the former Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Farukh Jamil, Secretary of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and Dr. Khalid Masood, former Head of the Department at PIMS (Islamabad). Dr. Khalid Masood, widely recognized for his contributions to the field, commended Rector Mr. Zafrullah Khan for his efforts in nurturing, inspiring, and empowering healthcare and hospital management graduates for both public and private sector hospitals in the region. The Spring get-together provided an excellent platform for MBA students to showcase their academic accomplishments, exchange knowledge, and establish robust networks within the industry. The event featured interactive sessions, panel discussions, and presentations by accomplished professionals, offering students valuable insights into the healthcare landscape. Mr. Zafrullah Khan, Rector of The BRAINS Institute, expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the esteemed guests for their presence and for acknowledging the Institute’s commitment to producing highly skilled healthcare and hospital management professionals. He emphasized the Institute’s dedication



to providing quality education and preparing students to excel in their careers while making meaningful contributions to society. The BRAINS Institute remains steadfast in its mission to foster a dynamic learning environment that blends academic rigor with practical experiences. Through events like the Spring get-together, the Institute aims to inspire students and connect them with influential figures in the healthcare industry, equipping them to make significant contributions to the regional healthcare sector. About The BRAINS Institute: The BRAINS Institute is a renowned educational institution in Peshawar, offering a diverse range of programs, including healthcare and hospital management. With a strong focus on academic excellence and professional development, the Institute equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the healthcare industry.

## Met Office predicts hot, humid weather in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Monday predicted hot and humid weather in most parts of the province. However, scattered rain, wind-thunderstorms are likely to occur in Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Battagram, Torghar, Kohistan, Shangla, Chitral, Upper & Lower Dir, Swat and Kurram districts. During the last 24 hours,

weather remained partly cloudy/humid in most districts of the province. However, rain wind-thunderstorm occurred at isolated places in Swat, Dir, Chitral and Abbottabad districts. Rain recorded (in mm): Malam Jabba 15, Kakul 14, Dir and Drosh 03 (each), Mirkhani 02. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khy-

ber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar City 37/28, Chitral 33/21, Timergara 36/24, Dir 32/20, Mirkhani 40/18, Kalam 26/13, Drosh 35/21, Saidu Sharif 33/23, Pattan 38/26, Malam Jabba 21/14, Takht Bhai 36/28, Kakul 29/19, Balakot 34/19, Parachinar 28/12, Bannu 38/27, Cherat 30/19, D.I. Khan 39/28. The highest temperature recorded in the province was 40 C in Mirkhani.

## Pervez Khattak ready to announce his political party

PESHAWAR (APP): Pervez Khattak, former senior member and president of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was likely to soon announce the foundation of his own political party. According to recent political and media reports,

Khattak has been meeting with significant political players in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, including former PTI members who have previously been elected to assemblies. The media reports said that Khattak has also held meetings with political figures from PTI who allegedly did not vote for the party in the Senate election, besides those ignored for party ticket during the last general election. Khattak is expected to make the formal announcement of his new political party with the name of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf Parliamentarian in a press conference. Khattak has also chosen the party flag with half white and half green color. While Khattak’s political goals have shifted, his two

sons, who remain affiliated with the PTI, have stated their determination to follow their father’s path in terms of their own political future. Their choice is subject to Khattak’s upcoming announcement. Liaquat Khattak, Pervez Khattak’s brother and former KP assembly member, had left the party earlier in 2021 and joined the PPP. Later, in 2022, he jumped to the JUI-F. Khattak revealed his exit from the PTI in a phone call with the media on Sunday. He stressed that even if his efforts to join a new party fail, he will not revert to his previous political allegiance. Khattak was terminated from PTI membership after failing to answer a notice about allegedly trying to break away PTI members in KP.

## KP Governor refutes ransom demands

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Monday strongly refuted media reports that claimed militants have demanded ransom money from him. Governor categorically stated that these reports are entirely unfolded and false. The Governor emphasized that neither he received any letter nor a phone call related to any ransom demands. In a statement released from the Governor House, Ghulam Ali clarified that the only

truth in these reports is the fact that the claim of militants demanding a ransom from him is entirely unfolded. He urged the public to disregard the false information circulating on news channels, newspapers, and social media platforms. It is worth mentioning that mainstream media and social media platforms had been abuzz with news alleging that Governor Ghulam Ali had received a ransom letter and phone call from the militants.

## Meeting reviews security plan, arrangements for Muharram

PESHAWAR (APP): A high-level meeting regarding Muharram-ul-Harram was held at Civil Secretariat Peshawar under the chairmanship of caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Monday. The meeting discussed in detail the proposed security plan and other arrangements to maintain law and order during the month of Muharram. Besides, Caretaker Ministers Masood Shah and Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhel, Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, Commandant Frontier Constabulary Muazzam Jah Ansari, Senior Member board of Revenue Ikramullah Khan, Principal Secretary to the

Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, administrative secretaries of concerned departments and other concerned civil and military officials attended the meeting. Chief Secretary Na-deem Aslam Chaudhry and Divisional Commissioners and Regional Police Officers also participated in the meeting through video link. The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the plan drawn up to maintain law and order during Muharram and was informed that SOPs regarding meetings and processions of the month of Muharram have been provided to all the stakeholders. Police, FC and personnel of Pakistan Army will be deployed for security.

## Trash Bee,an inspiring start up promoting plastic waste recycling in environment friendly manner

PESHAWAR (APP): Trash Bee, a small production unit set up with the idea of promoting reuse of plastic waste through environmentally sustainable mode of recycling has been serving as an inspiring model for apprising the young generation about much needed green skills to drive environmental change in the country. Launched by a young engineer, Arsalan Ayaz, the Trash Bee’s main objective is promoting practice of recycling of plastic waste in an environment friendly and holistic manner. “Most of the recycling units in the country are carrying routine practice of recycling plastic along with contaminants which pollutes air and environments and creates health problems for humans,” observed Arsalan while talking to a group of journalist during a field trip arranged by Institute of Urbanization. At Trash Bee, he added, the focus was given to promoting green skills to drive environmental change and create a sus-

tainable world. The workers at Trash Bee sort the collected plastic scrape to ensure all contaminants have been removed. Once sorted and cleaned, plastic is shredded into flakes and melted to form pellets before finally being molded into new products. “We have also installed a filter at the furnace to make the emission less pollutant and less harmful for humans and environment,” Arsalan told newsmen. The objective of Trash Bee was the same of earning money, but in an environmental friendly manner, ensuring that the practice was not harmful for humans, he remarked. The starts up is in its initial stages but also is making a contribution through donation from its meager earning to varsities for carrying out research and development in proper disposal of plastic waste. Quoting a figure of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Arsalan said Pakistan generated approximately 20 million tons of solid waste annually,

of which 5 to 10 percent was plastic waste. Plastic pollution not only affects the environment but also human health, as plastic waste can release harmful chemicals into the soil and water, and be ingested by animals, which can then enter the food chain. “Through proper recycling, we can treat to some extent some amount of plastic waste and can also transform this resource as a source of income and creation of livelihood,” he opined. Arsalan also disclosed that Trash Bee was also producing wooden cutlery through use of bamboo wood to discourage utilization of plastic. The cutlery of bamboo wood was totally environmentally friendly, durable and is also disposable in waste dumps, he claims. After cutlery, Trash Bee will also produce additional house hold items made of bamboo wood to introduce a new and environmental friendly source of raw material which can be used instead of hazardous plastic. “While realiz-

ing severity of environmental degradation in Pakistan and its impact on people of the country, it is need of the hour to embrace green skills and convince our coming generation to become a catalyst for a greener and brighter future,” suggested Dr. Ejaz Ahmad, Senior Fellow Institute of Urbanism. According to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is also binding on our government to include the target of upgrading infrastructure and retrofitting industries to make them sustainable with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies, he continued. IoU is also striving for ‘Building of a Sustainable Future’ and in connection with world ‘Youth Skills Day’ to be observed on July 15, is promoting the concept of green skills for educating the young generation to unlock their green potential and empower themselves with sustainable skills, Dr. Ejaz added.



## France announces support to Afghan refugees in Iran, Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government of France has announced a financial aid worth EUR 3 million to support UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency for its critical programmes for Afghans in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan. The funding will enable the agency to intensify the provision of lifesaving assistance and protection for some of the most vulnerable refugees and their local host communities, said a press release issued here on Monday. In Pakistan, EUR 2 million will enable UNHCR to boost Primary and secondary level education, strengthen skills and vocational training, and reinforce access to public health care in host communities in 2023. A particular fo-

cus of the Government of France’s support will be on supporting women and girls. This funding comes in addition to another contribution of EUR 2 million for 2022 activities, which has already delivered results in the area of increasing girls’ access to education and expanding skills training for women. In Iran, France has allocated EUR 1 million to support UNHCR’s programmes in 2023. This contribution will help strengthen ongoing efforts to provide lifesaving assistance to Afghans and host communities, including access to essential healthcare, education, and protection services. This new funding is in addition to a similar contribution of EUR 1 million for UNHCR Iran in

2022. UNHCR deeply appreciated France for their unwavering support in addressing one of the world’s most enduring refugee crises. This funding represents France’s recognition of the urgent need to alleviate the suffering of millions of Afghans affected by displacement while emphasizing the importance of international solidarity and responsibility--sharing in finding solutions to their plight. French Ambassador to Iran, Nicolas Roche, noted that, “by contributing to UNHCR’s work in Iran for the second year in a row, we are committed to supporting the Afghan people driven out of their country following the 2021 developments in Afghanistan.

## Pakistan’s first judicial protection unit established

ISLAMABAD (APP): In response to the growing need for improved security measures, the security division of Islamabad police has been revamped along with the setting up of the first Judicial Protection Unit to enhance judges’ security. Spearheaded by the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Security Division underwent a comprehensive reorganization to fortify the security of judges’ offices, court premises, and residences. This development comes as a result of special directives from Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, and the dedicated efforts of Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan, reflecting the government’s commitment to safe-

guarding judicial authorities. The newly formed Judicial Protection Unit will be placed under the vigilant supervision of the SSP Security Division, a police spokesman said. To ensure enhanced surveillance, a standard operating procedure (SOP) has been issued, along with the installation of over 500 high-tech security cameras within court premises. These cameras are integrated with the advanced surveillance system of the Safe City Islamabad project, allowing for real-time monitoring of court premises. Recognizing the importance of adequate personnel, the Ministry of Interior has received a request for the recruitment of 550 individuals to further bolster the security of residences and courts.

## PM Shehbaz telephones Sri Lanka president, discuss economic situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif telephoned Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Monday and discussed with him matters relating to the current economic situation of both the countries. He thanked the Sri Lankan president for supporting Pakistan with regard to the country’s agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). “You have played role of a true friend and a well wisher of Pakistan, and I thank you on behalf of the people of my country,” the prime minister told the Lankan president. He paid

tributes to Sri Lanka for its role in promoting regional peace and development. He also hoped that both Pakistan and Sri Lanka would come out of the economic crisis very soon. The Sri Lankan president congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for reaching the staff level agreement with the IMF. He also thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for expressing good wishes for his country. The Lankan president appreciated the struggle and efforts by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during the difficult economic situation in Pakistan.

## 20 held during search operations in DIKhan

Dera Ismail Khan (APP): The district police claimed to have arrested 20 accused and recovered drugs, arms and ammunition from them during search operations in different areas of the district. According to a police spokesman, following the instructions of District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani the police conducted search and strike operations in different areas in the limits of Paharpur, Daraban, Gomal University and Shaheed Nawab Khan police stations. During the operations, a team from Gomal University police station led by SHO Malik Sajid checked 35 houses. The police arrested four accused including Sakhta Mir son of Jan Mir, Inayat Ullah son of Khuda Bakhsh, Mushtaq son of Khuda Bakhsh and Umar Farooq son of Hakeem Jan. The police also recovered two pistols, one rifle and 14 cartridges from their possession. Meanwhile, the Gomal University police also arrested three suspects and registered a case against Shahjahan son of Alah Jan under National Action Plan. Similarly, the Shaheed Nawab Khan

Police station team led by SDPO Paharpur Circle along with SHO Khanzada Khan during snap checking recovered 500-gram hashish from Daood son of Gulzaman, one 12-bore rifle along with five cartridges from Salahuddin son of Alam Din, one 30-bore pistol along with five cartridges from Mustafa son of Ahmad Zan. The district police also claimed to have arrested two thieves involved in multiple theft cases recovering three stolen motorcycles from them in the limits of Paharpur Police Station. SHO Atta Ullah Khan conducted a successful operation and arrested two alleged thieves including Shaukat Ali son of Muhammad Nawaz and Muhammad Arslan son of Ghulam Abbas residents of Saim Nala who were wanted to police in several cases. The police also recovered three stolen motorcycles from them while further investigation was underway. Meanwhile SHO Daraban police station Abdul Ghaffar Khan, during the search and strike operation checked around 30 houses and 25 vehicles and motorcycles.

## ACS for preparing feasibility to develop boating club at Ahmad Pur canal

MULTAN (APP): Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) South Punjab Capt (R), Saqib Zafar, directed the irrigation department to prepare a feasibility report for developing a boating club at Ahmad Pur Canal in order to promote sports of boating. He said that new opportunities for sports and entertainment were being searched in South Punjab. He expressed these views while talking to citizens at his office here on Monday. Saqib said that boating competitions will be started after the establishment of a boating club. Players of other countries will also be invited and boating will also be

made an international event in the style of the Cholistan Desert Jeep Rally. The other water sports will also get a boost from this project. ACS South Punjab said that rail restaurants were being established in Multan, DG Khan, and Bahawalpur and work was underway to establish rail restaurants at Ghanta Ghar in Multan and Freed Gate in Bahawalpur. He said that there was a lack of a gymkhana-style club for common citizens in Multan and a club equipped with sports and a restaurant for the citizens and their families was also under consideration.

## Nine farmers booked over water pilfering

SARGODHA (APP): The irrigation task force caught nine farmers on the charge of water theft from canals in the district, here on Monday. According to official sources, teams of irrigation department conducted raids in various areas of the district and caught nine farmers, identified as Sanaullah, Muhammad Ashraf, Abdul Rehman, Umar Hayyat, Ramzan, Tariq and others, on the charge of stealing water from main canals. The police registered cases against water pilferers.

## NAB holds seminar with trainee Police officials

QUETTA (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (Balochistan) on Monday organized a seminar at Police Training College, Saria Road. The main objective of the seminar titled “Eradication of Corruption is must for a prosperous Pakistan” was to spread awareness and anti-corruption principles among the participants of the Police Training College. Deputy Commandant Aurangzeb represented the Police Training College whereas NAB Balochistan was represented by Director Dr Muhammad Rashad and Deputy Director Khurram Shahzad. The participants of the seminar provided useful information about the negative impact of corruption on society and the steps taken so far in that regard to eradicate the menace.

## Three pesticides dealers booked

SARGODHA (APP): Three dealers were caught for selling counterfeit pesticides in the district, here on Monday. According to the official sources, a team of agriculture department raided at various areas of Tehsil Sahiwal and caught three pesticides dealers for selling sub-standard pesticides at their shops. Police registered cases against them.

## Quetta’s dwellers prized Green Bus Service

QUETTA (APP): Residents of Quetta prized the Balochistan government’s project of state-run ‘Green Bus Service’ to provide a decent transportation facility which would also reduce huge traffic congestion in the city. Quetta city was in dire need of public transport facilities as most of the roads cannot sustain the pressure of traffic, leading to congestion and environmental problems, Aziz Ullah Nasar said while talking to APP. the green bus service would provide decent transport facility to the locals and reduced the traffic congestion issue in Quetta which is getting worse with every coming day due to increasing population, he added. “Traffic jam is a big issue in Quetta where people waste hours due to rush in the morning, afternoon, and evening on the roads.” Aziz urged the provincial government to take maximum efforts to avoid traffic jams and other traffic problems in the city. The Balochistan Government on Monday formally launched the ‘Green Bus Service’ project to provide the best and most affordable public transport to the commuters of Quetta. The Green Buses would be run from Baleli to Saria in the first phase which would be expanded across the city.

## Modi regime terminates three more Kashmiri employees in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): In an ongoing spree of terminating Kashmiri employees from government services, the Modi regime has sacked three more employees including the Public Relations Officer (PRO) at Kashmir University in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). According to Kashmir Media Service (KMS), “The other two employees

who have been terminated from their job include an officer from the Revenue Department and a Police Constable.” Interestingly, all three employees were sacked on the allegation of supporting the Kashmiris’ right to self-determination, pledged by the United Nations (UN) under many resolutions on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, it added.

## Speeding dumper rams into five vehicles near Sowam bridge

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a road accident here on Monday, a speeding dumper rammed into five vehicles near Sowam Bridge on G.T. Road. According to Rescue-1122 spokesman, the incident took place near Lahore High Court (LHC) building, where a speeding dumper ran over five vehicles including four cars and a Suzuki pickup. As a result, a man namely

Munir, 39 years lost his life on the spot due to a head injury, while four others namely Ramish, 23, Umer 27, Masood 61, and a female 35 years old sustained wounds. The body and the injured were rushed to the hospital, he informed. The spokesman said the driver of the dumper lost control due to the failure of the brake.

## 13 held, 104 kg drugs recovered during seven operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country on Monday, managed to arrest 13 accused besides recovering over 104 kg of drugs. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, in an operation at Islamabad International Airport, 152 drug-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of four suspects, residents of Bahawalnagar and Pakpattan. The accused were going to Bangkok (Thailand) via flight no TG-350. In another operation, 10 kg hashish was recovered from the accused resident of Balochistan arrested near HD Hotel Jacobabad in Sukkur. In the third operation, two accused including a woman, resident of Karachi traveling in a rickshaw were rounded up near Etihad Town, Kemari Karachi on recovery of seven kg charras. In fourth operation at Bacha Khan In-

ternational Airport, 102 Ice-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Doha-bound passenger, a resident of Khyber, going on flight no PK-285. In the fifth operation, ANF recovered 12 kg charras concealed in the toolbox of a rickshaw intercepted near Charsadda Road in Peshawar. An accused resident of Mardan was also rounded up during the operation. The spokesman informed that in the sixth operation, 39.4 kg opium, 25.2 kg charras, 8 kg prohibited chemicals and 2 kg Ice drug were recovered from a tractor near GT Road Kamoki Gujranwala. An accused resident of Rawalpindi was netted during the operation. The spokesman informed that in the sixth operation, 39.4 kg opium, 25.2 kg charras, 8 kg prohibited chemicals and 2 kg Ice drug were recovered from a tractor near GT Road Kamoki Gujranwala.

## Naqvi expresses satisfaction over healthcare facilities being provided at RIC

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Monday expressed satisfaction with the medical facilities being provided at Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (RIC). During his visit, the CM in detail inspected the hospital’s emergency, CT scan, X-ray room, Fluoroscopic, and other departments of the institute. He directed the RIC administration to open the VIP ward for the general public and ensure the availability of medicines at the institute. The CM interacted with the admitted patients and inquired about Angiography and Angioplasty treatment and other facilities being provided to them. The patients uttered

pleasure over the treatment facilities at the RIC. On a Twitter handle, he said that state-of-the-art heart treatment facilities were provided to the patients at the RIC. During my recent visit to the Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, I was impressed by how effectively the management and doctors handled the large influx of patients. Despite the heavy workload, there were no complaints from any patients regarding the care they received. However, it was evident that certain areas required improvement. Recognizing this, the Secretary of Health had been assigned to address these gaps and enhance the overall quality of services, he tweeted.

## FBISE to announce matriculation result on Tuesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal board of Intermediate and Secondary education (FBISE) Islamabad will announce the results of matriculation exams 2023 on Tuesday (Tomorrow) July 18 at 2 pm. According to a circular issued by the Secretary Federal Board Dr Bashir Khan Yousafzai,

“Education Minister Rana Tanveer will be the chief guest of the event to be held at FBISE. ““The position-holder students along with their parents will also participate in the result of the first annual examination of the Secondary school Certificate (SSC), he added.

## PSF seeks applications from Young Pakistani Science Students for participating in IJSO

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) has invited applications from young Pakistani science students to participate in the 20th International Junior Science Olympiad (IJSO) to be held in December. The IJSO, scheduled to be held from December 1-10 in Bangkok, Thailand is a science competition for students under 16 years of age on December 31. Talking to APP, a senior official informed, “IJSO is aimed at promoting interest in science among school students, fostering problem-solving, critical thinking, and experimentation.” About the application process, the official informed, “Interested students (boys and girls) under 16 years of age on December 31, and who have passed SSC-I level/IX class or equivalent school education, may send their applications on the prescribed Proforma available on the website of PSF: www.psf.gov.pk.” “The applicant must be a regular science student in

a public or private sector (Government recognized) institution with proficiency in written and spoken English,” he added. The official informed, “Only shortlisted candidates based on educational credentials will be called for a test and interview for final selection. Six students will be selected for the event while the decision of the panel of Scientists/Experts will be final in that regard.” “PSF will cover the expenses, including registration, visa fee, and air travel of selected students while the accommodation and local hospitality will be provided by the organizers,” he said. “The students appearing in tests or interviews will not be provided any TA/DA. The last date for the receipt of applications is June 22.” “The incomplete applications received after the closing date will not be entertained. “ “The intended applicants can contact at rehanaba-tool2005@yahoo.com for any IJSO-related queries,” he concluded.

## Two policemen injured during exchange of fire in Katcha area

DG Khan (APP): Two constables and an outlaw here on Monday got injured during exchange of fire between the accused and police in the Katcha area. Other unidentified accused succeeded to escape the scene by crossing the river, the police said. The police on tip-off condoned off the

area to arrest the criminals. The exchange of fire continued for at least an hour, the police said. The injured policemen Constables Mushtaq and Qazi Shahbaz were immediately shifted to the hospital. The District Police Officer (DPO) Muzzafargarh termed the incident as a ‘routine matter’.

## Govt launches crackdown against illegal loan application: Amin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Amin-ul-Haque Monday said in a decisive move to combat fraudulent loan applications, the government initiated a crackdown against illegal loan providers. In a statement, he said, that Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Major General (r) Hafeezur Rehman directed immediately to take swift action on the illegal loan applications. Under the orders issued, 43 loan applications had already been blocked, said Amin-ul-Haque. The targeted companies, operating within the lending industry, were registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, he added. Highlighting the severity of the issue, Amin-ul-Haque shed light on the involvement of mafia groups operating through social media platforms, particularly Facebook. These unscrupulous en-

tities have resorted to blackmailing innocent individuals, exploiting their financial vulnerabilities. To raise awareness and safeguard the public, a comprehensive public awareness campaign has been launched. The citizens are urged to report any suspicious loan applications or incidents involving the loan mafia groups to the PTA, the Federal Investigation Agency’s (FIA) Cybercrime wing, or their local police stations. The collaborative efforts of various law enforcement agencies aimed to address the increasing cybercrime wave in the country. To ensure effective coordination, the minister has a direct contact with the Director-General of FIA, providing regular briefings on the progress of the operation. Amin emphasized the need for proactive measures, rather than waiting for complaints to accumulate, against those involved in fraudulent loan schemes.

## Meeting held to review arrangements for Muharram

DG Khan (APP): A meeting was held under the chairman ship of Commissioner Dr Nasir Mehmood and Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sajjad Hussain here on Monday to review the arrangements for Muharram across the district. The meeting was attended by deputy commissioners and district police officers from across the region including DG Khan Muzaffargarh and Rajanpur and discussed briefly about protective measures taken to save the holy gatherings from any uncalled-for activity. Commissioner directed the concerned staff to hold the best cleanliness arrangement with lighting at the processional routes. He instructed Water and Sanitation Au-

thority (WASA) to ensure none of the drainages would be left without cover to avoid leakage. He said that Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras would be installed at entry points of the processions and public meetings with video recording of the programs would be conducted to closely watch proceedings of the events. RPO said foolproof security arrangements would be ensured at checkpoints of inter-provincial roads. He said a four-tier security would be erected around the public meetings and processions on the occasion. He issued instructions to the administration to further improve the security arrangements and said that no lapse in security matters will be tolerated.

## AIOU offers Matric, FA programs for int’l students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University(AIOU) has offered admissions in Matric and intermediate programs in the first phase of the autumn semester of 2023 for Overseas Pakistani and international students. According to the university, the last date to apply for these programs is August 15, 2023, and students can only apply online. AIOU is the only university in the country providing educational opportunities for Pakistanis living all over the world.

AIOU is offering more than 40 educational programs for international students from the semester autumn 2021 by using the latest online technologies. In the last semester, more than 460 students enrolled from 36 countries including Australia, Russia, South Korea, Japan, China, America, United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, France, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, South Africa, Iran, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Iraq, Oman, and others.

## ECP dismisses baseless claims about EMS software

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) spokesperson on Monday refuted all rumours circulating in the media regarding the Electronic Management System (EMS). According to the spokesperson, the EMS software was functioning perfectly, and there were no issues with its operations. The spokesperson emphasized that the reason behind the delay in EMS training lied with the data entry operators who were

scheduled to participate. These operators are responsible for data entry, validation, transmission, and accuracy, and they have been assigned duties until July 20, 2023. The spokesperson firmly stated that such claims held no validity and urged the public not to be swayed by misinformation. The election commission urged all stakeholders to rely on accurate information from official sources and avoid being misled by false reports.

## Tank police devise security plan for Muharram, Ashura processions

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police of Tank have devised a comprehensive security plan to maintain peace during the month of Muharram, especially on the 9th and 10th of Muharram. According to the plan which was chalked out under the command of District Police Officer (DPO) Waqar Ahmed, the district had been divided into three sectors where around 1500 officers and jawans had been deployed to perform duties. The police spokesman said services of security forces would also be availed along with the integrated intelligence network. Besides, he said elite force, Special Forces had also been deployed to perform security duties. Quoting the DPO, the spokesman said the display and carrying of all types of arms, ammunition and weapons would

be banned under Section 144 of the Penal Code. Similarly, he said that provocative speeches and wall chalking inciting sectarian hatred were also prohibited and the DPO added that legal action would be taken against the violators. In this regard, he said several meetings were held with elders and religious leaders of all schools of thought in the district and issued instructions to them to cooperate and ensure compliance. He also said that heavy deployment had been made at the entry and exit routes of the district besides initiating a verification process for the tenants residing on the routes of the mourning procession. He said the suspicious persons and miscreants were being closely monitored and the search and strike operations had been intensified.

## Green bus service, a continuation of people-friendly initiatives of Balochistan govt: Farah

QUETTA (APP): The Spokesperson of the Balochistan government Farah Azeem Shah on Monday said that the establishment of the green bus service was a continuation of the people-friendly initiatives of Chief Minister (CM) Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo. Talking to APP, she said, “Starting the green bus service will make it easier

for the people of all age groups especially, women, students, and senior citizens, to reach work timely with the provision of convenient travel facilities.” “Quetta’s residents have welcomed the starting of a modern air-conditioned bus service to reduce traffic pressure in the city, which is a sign of confidence in the policies

of the people-friendly government.” Farah Azeem Shah said, “A large number of people will directly benefit from the state-owned public bus transport project after the issuance of health cards with the efforts of the team of Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and the members of a coalition government.

## Motorcyclist killed in road mishap

FAISALABAD (APP): A motorcyclist was killed in a road mishap in the area of Khurarianwala police station. A police spokesman said here on Monday that 23-year-old Talha Maqsood was riding a motorcycle when his two-wheeler slipped near Shareenwala Stop on Sheikhpura Road. He fell down on the road and received serious head injuries. He died on-the-spot before provision of any medical assistance. Rescue-1122 handed over the body to the area police, he added.

## Two held, valuables recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police in an operation against criminal elements on Monday, busted a gang and arrested two thieves besides recovering Rs 600,000 cash, 48 grams of gold ornaments, weapons, and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad Police arrested two thieves namely Umar Farooq and Abbas Ahmed, who were allegedly involved in various crimes of heinous nature. He informed that the police team led by SHO Sadiqabad Police Station on the directives of SP Rawal, Faisal Saleem conducted a raid and managed to net the criminals.

## Fake doctor booked

SARGODHA (APP): A man was booked for impersonating himself as a doctor, here on Monday. According to official sources, a team of Health Department, headed by Deputy District Health Officer Dr Irfan Ahmad, raided a clinic in Chak No 58-NB, where Khair Muhammad had been practising as a dental surgeon for a long time. However, he had no valid medical degree, diploma or a certificate, and a licence. The team sealed the clinic under the Punjab Healthcare Commission laws and registered a case against the fake doctor and started proceedings.

## Two teenagers drown in canal

SIALKOT (APP): Two teenagers are feared to have drowned in Upper Chenab Canal, Khambra-wala, tehsil Sambrial, here on Monday. According to the Rescue spokesperson, 18-year-old Fahad and 15-year-old Rahat were feared to have drowned in the canal while bathing there in a bid to beat the scorching heat. Rescue-1122 divers launched a search operation to find the bodies.

## IRSA releases 319,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 319,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 357,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1514.77 feet and was 116.77 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 176,700 cusecs and 180,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1205.65 feet, which was 155.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 51,300 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 215,200, 166,500, 139,100 and 77,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 45,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 55,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

## Muharram Reporting Cell established at CPO

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon on Monday established a Central Muharram Reporting Cell at the Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi to monitor the law and order situation as well security arrangements during the first 15 days of Muharram-ul-Haram in the overall province. According to a spokesman for Sindh Police, the Central Muharram Reporting Cell can be contacted by phone numbers 02199212064-5, 02199213081, fax

number 02199213836, WhatsApp number 0335314556, and at email address igpoperationsroom@gmail.com. IGP Sindh has deputed three deputy superintendents of police (DSPs) to supervise the cell. The cell would remain operational round-the-clock in three shifts. The deputed officers would collect the information related with the events of Muharram or any eventuality etc. and would share such information with the competent authority well in time.

## Banking Mohtasib provides Rs 3b relief to customers during four years

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Banking Mohtasib has provided the monitoring relief worth over Rs 3 billion during April 2019 to July 2023 to the banking customers by disposing of a total of 106,486 cases. The performance of the institution was discussed as Banking Mohtasib Muhammad Kamran Shehzad paid a farewell call on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr here. The Mohtasib apprised the president about the steps taken by him for providing financial relief to the banking

customers by disposing of a large number of cases during his tenure. He highlighted that the institution provided financial relief amounting to Rs 2.3 billion to the banking customers during 13 years (2005 and 2018) whereas during his tenure (April 2019- 17th July 2023) he had provided over 3 billion rupees to the banking customers. President Alvi deeply appreciated the efforts made by Banking Mohtasib for providing over Rs. 3 billion financial relief to the people.

## Registered voters cross 126m figure: ECP reports

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday issued a report that revealed the number of registered voters in the country had reached over 126 million, as of June 30, 2023. The ECP also released the percentage of voters in terms of age, according to which, the highest number of voters remained within the age group of 26 to 35 years. According to the report, the ratio of male and female voters in Pakistan stood at 54.02 per cent and 45.98 per cent respectively. The total number of registered

voters in Islamabad was over one million while Punjab topped with 71.60 million voters. The number of registered voters in Balochistan is over 5.27 million of which 2.96 million are male and 2.31 million are female. The number of registered voters in K-P is over 21.62 million of which 11.79 million are male while 9.82 million are female. In Punjab, the largest province of the country population-wise, the number of registered voters is 71.60 million, of which 38.41 million are men and 33.19 million are women.

## 170 Fulbright Scholarship students to depart for USA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) Monday announced that 170 accomplished Pakistanis had been awarded the prestigious ‘Fulbright Scholarship’ to study and conduct advanced research at leading U.S. universities. The flagship academic exchange program of the U.S. Government, the Fulbright Program, enabled students from around the world to attend universities across the United States, said a press release issued here on Monday. The 2023 cohort gathered for a two-day pre-departure orientation to prepare for their educational journey and learn about the American culture, life on campus, and opportunities for exchange students in the United States. U.S. Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, William Ostick congratulated the students on securing the scholarship and advised them to connect

with fellow students and learn from each other’s experiences. “In the United States, the students will be cultural ambassadors, strengthening ties between the peoples of Pakistan and the United States. They will connect with Americans eager to learn more about Pakistan. And when return, the student can help explain America – its people, its values, and its character their communities,” he added. This year’s 170 participants belong to 44 public and private universities. Among these are 129 Master’s and 41 PhD students and 7 Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) fellows. Women represent 61 percent of this year’s departing cohort. The recipients will begin their educational journey this fall at 81 U.S. universities in various disciplines, including engineering, energy management, and social sciences.

## Shehbaz-led government saved country from default: Ahsan Iqbal

SIALKOT (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said that working day and night under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the incumbent government saved the country from default and revived the development projects, which were stopped by the previous government. Addressing a public gathering after laying the foundation-stone of Sialkot Cantt to Jassar Cantt Road at Phalora on late Sunday night, he said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had always accomplished development projects and tried its best to place the country in the list of developed countries. The minister said some generals, who have retired, and some former judges, imposed Imran

Khan on the people of Pakistan under a conspiracy. He said Pakistan had become one of the five fastest growing economies in the world under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, but the keys to development were snatched from Nawaz Sharif and handed it to a man who had not the experience of even running a union council in his life. That person (Imran Khan) experimented with every sector of the country and destroyed its economy. He said that in the year 2018, the journey towards development was stopped through a conspiracy and the politics of hatred was started in Pakistan. Ahsan Iqbal said that 15 months ago, when the coalition government was formed through constitutional means, it had to bear the brunt of Imran Khan’s incompetence.

## China's youth unemployment to worsen after record high

BEIJING (Agencies): China's youth unemployment rate hit a record in June — marking a third consecutive month above 20% — and the government warned the situation may get even worse as new graduates start looking for work. The jobless rate for people aged between 16 and 24 was 21.3% last month, the National Bureau of Statistics said Monday. That's the highest on record in data that goes back to 2018, and NBS spokesman Fu Linghui



said the number for July would likely be higher still. Young people are finishing their studies and looking for jobs, adding to upward pressure on the unemployment rate, Fu told a

press briefing Monday. The government has said it expects a record of nearly 12 million students to graduate from colleges and universities this year. Youth unemployment has been at high levels for more than a year as Covid disruptions and a property slump add to existing structural problems in the labour market. The flagging recovery in the world's second-biggest economy is now likely making employers reluctant to hire.

## Rate hikes hit UK wealth but young people could gain

LONDON (Agencies): The jump in interest rates has wiped more than £2 trillion off household wealth in Britain over the last year due to the fall in house prices and the value of bonds which has hit pensions, a report published on Monday showed. But the Resolution Foundation think-tank said younger people could benefit from the partial reversal of the decades-long climb in the value of household wealth. The Bank of England has raised borrowing costs 13 times in a row since December 2021,



taking its base rate from 0.1% to 5%, and it is expected to keep on raising rates to bring down the highest inflation among Group of Seven nations. "The future path of interest rates is very uncertain," Ian Mulheim, re-

search associate at the Resolution Foundation, said. "The current surge could be a blip, or herald a new era for the UK. Either way, policymakers should focus more on whether and how to insulate households from wild swings in their fortunes from these forces well beyond their control." The Resolution Foundation said £2.1 trillion (US\$2.75 trillion) had been lost in terms of household wealth over the last year after an unprecedented surge in recent decades which took wealth to £17.5 trillion in 2021.

## Global debt dominates as G20 finance chiefs meet

GANDHINAGAR (Agencies): G20 finance ministers and central bank chiefs opened talks Monday on debt restructuring deals, multilateral bank reform and finance to tackle climate change, as they aim to bolster a sagging global economy. Indian finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, chair and host of the summit in Gandhinagar, began by telling finance leaders of "the responsibility we have... to steer the global economy towards strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth". Key on the two-day



agenda will be "facilitating consensus to intractable issues associated with rising indebtedness", Sitharaman said earlier on Monday, speaking to reporters alongside US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. Talks will

also focus on "critical global issues such as strengthening the multilateral development banks and taking coordinated climate action", Sitharaman added. Yellen said: "The world is looking to the G20 to make progress on key challenges like climate change and pandemics as part of our work to strengthen the global economy." She also cited work to tackle debt distress among the world's poorest countries, noting debt restructuring progress in Zambia, which she had discussed when visiting Beijing this month.

## Indonesia eyes 5% growth despite China's grim outlook

JAKARTA (Agencies): Indonesia finance minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said she was optimistic about the 5% economic growth target this year despite the darkening global outlook, especially from China. "We are optimistic for 2023 because we see the figures on the first half," Indrawati said on Sunday in an interview with Bloomberg Television's Haslinda Amin ahead of the G-20 finance chiefs' meetings in India. Southeast Asia's largest economy flashed another round of



warning signs on Monday, with exports plunging 21% in June due to the sharp drop in global commodity prices. More worryingly, soft domestic demand pushed imports down 18% last month, lower than

all the forecasts in a Bloomberg survey of economists. "The second half, there is a positive side from our own side, explicitly on household consumption," Indrawati said, adding that elections next year will spur the economy thanks to extra spending from the government as well as political parties. Her comments came as finance chiefs from the world's largest economies grapple with the risk of a global recession, brought about by high interest rates and still-elevated inflation.

## Vietnam's big LNG bet may not ease power crisis

HANOI (Agencies): Vietnam received its first shipment of liquefied natural gas this month, a milestone for the energy-hungry country, but various hurdles mean it could take years for imported gas to ease the country's long-running power shortages. Disagreement over pricing, plant construction delays and lack of supply contracts are dogging the Southeast Asian manufacturing hub's adoption of LNG, hampering its ambitions to make imported gas a major fuel, in-



dustrial insiders say. Vietnam's urgent need to boost its electricity supply, laid bare by recent rolling blackouts, has raised concerns among foreign investors about whether Vietnam can

remain a reliable option to diversify manufacturing away from China. Half the businesses in a June poll by the European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam said the power crisis had hurt investment plans. Some were considering alternatives or pausing spending on factories. Failure to execute its LNG plans would mark another blow to Hanoi's climate goals, which include imported and domestic gas as a transition fuel to reduce coal reliance.

## Musk told to focus on Tesla as EV rivals pounce

NEW YORK (Agencies): Right on cue, Tesla Inc sceptics are pushing back after this year's sizzling US\$500 billion rally. Rival automakers pouncing on booming demand for electric vehicles pose the biggest challenge for Tesla over the next two years just as Elon Musk appears distracted thanks to his high-profile ventures, from social media and space travel to artificial intelligence. So say respondents to the latest Markets Live Pulse survey. Out of 630 global MLIV Pulse contributors, 54% flagged the heightened risk of industry competition while 26% picked the behaviour and



decisions of its mercurial chief as a key concern for Tesla shareholders. "Musk is just such an unpredictable person, that I would count it among one of the top risks for Tesla," Matthew Tuttle, chief executive officer of Tuttle Capital Management, said in an interview. As profit margins thin, some 67% of survey partici-

pants said the billionaire executive should focus more on the carmaker. Their warning comes in the wake of a seemingly improbable 128% Tesla rally this year, fuelled by renewed investor appetite for the tech mega caps and Musk's prediction that the era of fully autonomous vehicles is nigh. Even though Tesla currently enjoys a sizable lead over other companies, be it an established carmaker or a startup, a big part of its remarkably high market valuation rests on the assumption that it will be able to maintain this dominance in a future where EVs are more commonplace.

## Moscow seizes shares of Danone and Carlsberg's subsidiaries

MOSCOW (Agencies): The Russian state has taken control of French yoghurt maker Danone's Russian subsidiary along with beer company Carlsberg's stake in a local brewer, according to a decree signed by President Vladimir Putin on Sunday. The decree said that foreign-owned stakes in Danone Russia and Baltika Breweries were being put under the "temporary management" of government property agency Rosimushchestvo. It comes af-

ter the Russian subsidiaries of Germany's Uniper and Finland's Fortum were taken under state control in April. The Kremlin warned at the time it could seize more Western assets on what it said was a temporary basis in retaliation for foreign moves against Russian companies abroad after Moscow sent thousands of its troops into Ukraine last year. Carlsberg said in a statement late on Sunday it had "not received any official information from the Russian

authorities regarding the presidential decree or the consequences for Baltika Breweries". It added that the prospects for full disposal of its business in Russia were now highly uncertain. Carlsberg said in June it had signed an agreement to sell its Russian business, subject to regulatory approvals. Danone said in a statement that it was investigating the issue, adding that the Kremlin's decision would have no impact on its financial guidance for 2023.

## India, Indonesia plan local currency trade, payments links

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Indonesia and India are planning to settle bilateral transactions in local currencies and link up their fast payments systems to spur cross-border fund transfers, according to a senior Indian government official. India's finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her Indonesian counterpart Sri Mulyani Indrawati discussed the proposals ahead of meetings among the Group of Twenty countries in India, said the official who asked not to be identified as the plans are not public. The talks are advanced and an announcement could come once officials complete formalities, the official added. The proposed agreements with Indonesia



come as India inked similar pacts with the UAE over the weekend, which will see more trades done in rupees and dirhams and allows for domestic credit cards in processing retail transactions. Indrawati later confirmed the bilateral meeting, saying both sides discussed efforts to strengthen trade and investment cooperation between the two countries.

## S'pore home sales hit 6-month low on limited supply

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Singapore's home sales slumped last month to the lowest since December as a lack of sizable launches and the government's latest cooling measures kept potential buyers at bay. Purchases of new private apartments fell to 278 units in June, from 1,038 the previous month, Urban Redevelopment Authority figures showed Monday. That's the lowest since December 2022, when 170 homes were sold after tight supply curbed demand. The dip in sales suggests that Singapore's red-hot property market may finally start to moderate after the nation largely defied a global slowdown from Canada to China. Private home prices fell for the first time in



three years in the second quarter on the back of the latest property curbs. Analysts expect the Singapore market to pick up as the supply of homes rises. After only one 17-unit launch last month, new home sales will likely rebound in July owing to a few large development launches such as Lentor Hills Residences and The Myst, according to Christine Sun, senior vice president of research and analytics at OrangeTee & Tie.

## Dollar gains after steep losses as US policy peak looms

SYDNEY (Agencies): A bruised dollar took respite on Monday after suffering its worst weekly drop of the year, as traders waited on economic data and policy decisions before selling it down any further. The euro, which jumped 2.4% last week to a 16-month high, held just below that peak at US\$1.1223. The yen, also up 2.4% last week, held at 138.56 per dollar. Chinese growth data landed a little above low expectations on Monday, but without sparking much currency market response as traders had already priced in a sluggish quarter and are waiting to see if the government steps up stimulus to promote spending. The Australian and New Zealand dollars



pulled back slightly, with the Aussie last at US\$0.6821 – off last week's peak of US\$0.6895 – and the kiwi down 0.2% at US\$0.6355 after hitting a five-month high of US\$0.6412 on Friday. "The data suggests that China's post-Covid boom is clearly over," said Commonwealth Bank of Australia strategist Carol Kong. "But markets already had low expectations, and reaction from here is fairly limited."

## Asian shares slip as China data underwhelms

SYDNEY (Agencies): Asian shares slipped on Monday as a mixed bag of Chinese economic data was not as bad as some feared, but still fanned market impatience with the lack of major fiscal stimulus from Beijing. China reported economic growth of 0.8% in the second quarter, above the 0.5% forecasted, while the annual pace slowed more than expected to 6.3%. Industrial output topped forecasts with a rise of 4.4%, while retail sales missed by a tick at 3.1%. That followed figures out over the weekend showed China's new home prices were unchanged in June, the weakest result this year. "The data

suggests that China's post-Covid boom is clearly over. The higher-frequency indicators are up from May's numbers, but still paint a picture of a bleak and faltering recovery and at the same time youth unemployment is hitting record highs," said CBA economist Carol Kong. "Markets have already adjusted lower their expectations (for stimulus), and our base case is that there won't be a substantial package." Chinese blue chips were down 1.0%, while the yuan was a fraction lower. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.2%, though that follows a 5.6% rally last week.

## China's frail Q2 GDP growth spurs stimulus call

BEIJING (Agencies): China's economy grew at a frail pace in the second quarter, although the annual figure was flattered by base effects, data showed on Monday, with overall momentum faltering rapidly due to weakening demand at home and abroad. Gross domestic product grew just 0.8% in April-June from the previous quarter, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics showed, versus analysts' expectations in a Reuters poll for a 0.5% increase and compared with a 2.2% expansion in

the first quarter. On a year-on-year basis, GDP expanded 6.3% in the second quarter, accelerating from 4.5% in the first three months of the year, but the rate was below the forecast for growth of 7.3%. The annual pace was the quickest since the second quarter of 2021, but the reading was heavily skewed by economic pains caused by stringent Covid-19 lockdowns in Shanghai and other major cities last year. "China's Q2 GDP growth surprised on the downside, with the headline reading at 6.3%.

## Microsoft signs agreement to keep 'Call of Duty' on PlayStation

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Microsoft has signed an agreement to keep "Call of Duty" on PlayStation following the acquisition of Activision Blizzard, Microsoft Gaming CEO Phil Spencer said in a tweet today. A deal to keep "Call of Duty" on PlayStation could further ease concerns surrounding the acquisition's impact on competition. Speaking on the agreement, Microsoft president Brad Smith said in a tweet,

"Even after we cross the finish line for this deal's approval, we will remain focused on ensuring that Call of Duty remains available on more platforms and for more consumers than ever before." The FTC had argued the deal would hurt consumers whether they played video games on consoles or had subscriptions because Microsoft would have an incentive to shut out rivals like Sony Group.

The Open Championship: Emotional Smith hands Claret Jug back to R&A at Royal Liverpool

Cameron Smith was “holding back tears” as he handed the Claret Jug back to the R&A on Monday after arriving at Royal Liverpool for the Open Championship. The Australian won last year’s Open at St Andrews and is trying to emulate Ireland’s Pádraig Harrington, the last to win successive titles in 2006-07. “I didn’t think I’d ever have to give it back, it was a sad moment, crept up on me a little bit,” he told BBC Sport. “Once you have something as great as that you don’t want to let go of it.” Smith scorched round the Old Course in a bogey-free eight-under-par 64 to win the 150th Open Championship by one shot from American Cameron Young,



with Northern Ireland’s Rory McIlroy in third. And the laid back 29-year-old joked that he has been telling his friends: “It’ll only be a week and we’ll be drinking out of [the Claret Jug] again. “Hopefully it’s another week like last year and I’m back with the trophy.” Smith, who has been in England “for a few weeks”, comes into

The Open in decent form, having won the most recent LIV Golf event at Centurion Golf Club. And while he says he’s still as much in the dark as anyone about how the proposed merger between LIV Golf’s funders - Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund - and the PGA Tour will develop, he’s keen to keep his focus on the golf. “LIV aside, I’m determined to try my best every week and just try and be a better golfer than I was last week,” he said. “I think as a golfer, I think I’m actually a better golfer now than I was last year. “But I’ve never tried too much to worry about what people thought of me and I think LIV was really well received in Australia.

Wimbledon 2023: Novak Djokovic fined for smashing racquet in men’s final

Novak Djokovic has been fined £6,117 for smashing his racquet against the net post during the Wimbledon men’s singles final. The incident occurred in the fifth set of his loss to Spain’s Carlos Alcaraz when the 36-year-old Serb’s serve was broken in the third game. Umpire Fergus Murphy immediately issued Djokovic a warning for a code violation for the transgression. The money will be deducted from his runner-up cheque of £1.175m. Djokovic’s frustration had built up in the decisive set of an enthralling contest on Sun-

day, having missed a simple chance at the net for a break to go 2-0 up. In the very next game Alcaraz backed up the hold by breaking the serve of the seven-time Wimbledon champion, which prompted the emotional outburst from Djokovic and brought boos from a section of the Centre Court crowd. World number one Alcaraz took full advantage of the break to seal a 1-6 7-6 (8-6) 6-1 3-6 6-4 victory after four hours and 42 minutes. The 20-year-old’s victory at the All England Club denied Djokovic a 24th grand slam title.

England coach Steve Borthwick cuts duo from World Cup training squad

England have cut Bath flanker Sam Underhill and Sale prop Bevan Rodd from their World Cup training squad. Coach Steve Borthwick has trimmed the party from 41 to 39 players as England step up their preparations for September’s tournament in France. Underhill was one of the stars of England’s run to the 2019 final but has endured an injury-hit few years since. Rodd’s exit leaves loose-head Joe Marler in a good position to make the final squad of 33, named on 7 August. Marler last played for England 18 months ago but made himself available after assurances from Borthwick he was in the running for the final 33. The squad assembled at their Bagshot training base on Mon-



day following a warm-weather training camp in Italy last week. Ollie Chessum, Ollie Lawrence, Mako and Billy Vunipola and Jack Walker will also join the camp to continue their rehabilitation from injury. England’s first warm-up match for the tournament is against Wales in Cardiff on 5 August, the first of four summer fixtures.

The Ashes 2023: England’s Moeen Ali looking for fan who cured finger injury

England spinner Moeen Ali wants to find the fan who helped him cure the cut finger that was affecting his bowling at the beginning of the Ashes series. Moeen, 36, revealed over the weekend an NHS worker had sent him a gel made of honey that healed the wound. He wants to write back to her, but has misplaced the original letter. “I can’t remember who it is,” Moeen told BBC Sport. “If the lady sees this, please get in contact because I really want to write back to say thank you.” Moeen came out of Test retirement to play in this series after England’s regular first-choice spinner Jack Leach suffered a stress fracture in his back. In the first Test at Edgbaston,



the nasty gash on his spinning finger restricted Moeen’s bowling on a final day when England were beaten by two wickets. He was left out of the second Test at Lord’s but returned to play a key role in the third-Test win at Headingley. “I got home after the Edgbaston Test and a few days later I got a letter from a lady who said her husband is a

big fan of mine,” Moeen explained. “They were watching and saw the gash on my finger and thought the Medihoney would really help me. I tried it and it really healed my finger straight away. “It’s amazing that someone had written to me about this. The only thing I’m really gutted about - I put the letter on the table in my house thinking after the series I will reply, now I can’t find the letter.” Moeen’s return to the England team now involves batting at number three for the fourth Test at Old Trafford. With regular number three Ollie Pope injured, England employed Harry Brook in the first-drop position for the first innings at Headingley.

Lionel Messi: Inter Miami unveil Argentina forward to sold-out crowd

New signing Lionel Messi has been officially presented to cheering crowds at Inter Miami’s DRV PNK Stadium. A sold-out crowd of about 20,000 waited through downpours and lightning to see the seven-time Ballon d’Or winner given a number 10 shirt. In a brief address in Spanish, Messi, 36, thanked supporters and said he had the “same desire” he always has. The World Cup-winning Argentina forward joins the Major League Soccer (MLS) club on a deal until the end of 2025. He will be reunited with defensive midfielder Sergio Busquets - with whom he played at Barcelona - who has also signed for Miami until 2025. Busquets, too, was formally unveiled during Sunday night’s event. Messi

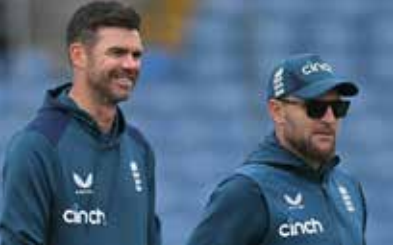


entered the pitch via a huge catwalk and was introduced as “America’s number 10, the world’s best number 10”. Seven-time Super Bowl winner Tom Brady and four-time NBA champion Stephen Curry also welcomed him to the United States in video messages. “I really want to start training, to compete,” Messi said. “I have the same desire that I always had to

compete, to want to win, to help the club continue to grow. “I am very happy to have chosen to come to play in this city with my family, to choose this project and I have no doubt that we are going to enjoy it a lot. “We are going to have a good time and very good things are going to happen.” Don Garber, commissioner of Major League Soccer, said someone of Messi’s status choosing to play in the league was a “transformational moment”, and he hoped the signing would “shout to the world that this is a soccer nation”. Garber added: “It’s been so many years of developing this league into becoming a player on the global stage, so it’s a very momentous night for us.”

The Ashes: James Anderson replaces Ollie Robinson for England in fourth Test

England have recalled James Anderson in place of Ollie Robinson for the must-win fourth Ashes Test against Australia at Old Trafford. Anderson, 40, comes in on his home ground after being rested for the third-Test victory at Headingley. Robinson struggled with back spasms in Leeds, but was considered fit to play in Manchester. Australia lead the series 2-1, so England must win to have a chance of regaining the Ashes. England: Ben Duckett, Zak Crawley, Moeen Ali, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (c), Jonny Bairstow (wk), Chris Woakes, Mark Wood, Stuart Broad, James Anderson. Moeen Ali has been confirmed to bat at number three after being promoted up the order for the second innings of the dra-



matic three-wicket win at Headingley. Harry Brook, who batted at three in the first innings of that match, remains in the number-five position where he scored a match-winning 75 in the second innings. Anderson, England’s all-time leading wicket-taker, struggled in the first two Tests of the series, both of which England lost. After returning from a groin injury suffered playing for Lancashire, he

managed only three wickets against the Australians on unresponsive surfaces at Edgbaston and Lord’s. Anderson now returns for what could be his last Test at Old Trafford, hoping to break a run that has seen him not play in a win against Australia since 2015. Indeed, England have not beaten Australia on this ground since 1981 - the visitors retained the Ashes with victory in Manchester four years ago. The weather could play an important role across the week. The forecast is mixed for the Test and England were forced to train indoors on Monday morning. Australia are yet to name their team, with questions surrounding under-pressure opener David Warner and their all-rounder’s position.

Scary high-speed crash, described as ‘one of ... if not, the biggest’ in Formula E, leaves multiple cars unable to continue

High-speed racing is accustomed to high-speed collisions, such is the nature of the sport. But rarely have we seen a crash as dramatic as what took place on Saturday during the first of Formula E’s double-header of races in Rome. On turn six of the ninth lap, Jaguar driver Sam Bird – leading the race at the time – appeared to lose control of the back of his car before colliding with the barrier to spin his car into the middle of the track. This, as it turned out, was a particularly bad bit of luck for Bird who was unable to move in the middle of the track on a blind corner where cars travel at extremely high speeds. 2016/17 Formula E drivers champion Lucas di Grassi later called the corner “probably the most dangerous on this track.” In the immediate aftermath, multiple cars made slight contact with Bird’s car, in particular Envision Racing’s Sebastien



Buemi who hit the back of the Jaguar car, launching Buemi up and into the wall at an angle before he landed back down. While other drivers were able to narrowly avoid a serious collision, while still making contact, the same could not be said about Maserati MSG Racing’s Edoardo Mortara who drove straight into the side of Bird’s car. The race was immediately red flagged and delayed for 45 minutes. In total, six drivers could not continue in Saturday’s race because of their involvement in the crash. The frustration of the driv-

ers involved was evident to hear, particularly from Buemi. “For f\*\*k sake! When is this luck going to f\*\*king stop? For f\*\*k sake! What the f\*\*k is that?” Buemi could be heard saying to his team on his radio. “Guys, I’m so sorry but I couldn’t do anything.” Thankfully, no driver sustained any serious injuries and all able to walk away. One of the drivers whose race ended prematurely, di Grassi, expressed his relief at just being able to walk away with no injuries. “I am very happy all the drivers are safe,” di Grassi said. “I had zero problem physically and the car had minor damage compared to what could have been, so in one way, we have been lucky today that nothing more serious happened. “Thanks to the FIA and Formula E Safety requirements, also, not only for the car but also for the track – although that corner is probably the most dangerous on this track.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: JULY 18, 2023



– It’s a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.  
– **ARIES:** Your romantic energy is peaking, so make the most of it! Whether you’re finally asking out your latest crush or enjoying a second honeymoon, it feels just right and can’t be denied.  
– **TAURUS:** You know what’s right and might be shocked to see how many people are confused about it. Speak up early and strongly. You need to lead the way so they can arrive at the same judgment.  
– **GEMINI:** Keep your discussions light today. Save the big, emotional issues for another time. If you manage to keep people talking, they can push past some of the obstacles that are holding them back.  
– **CANCER:** A naughty impulse takes over at some point. It could be anything from skipping out of work early to playing a practical joke on your partner. It’s all fun and you feel yourself opening up a bit more.  
– **LEO:** You have all the confidence you need and should easily be able to swing major deals or just stand up for what-

ever you believe to be right. Your good energy amazes others and sways them to your cause.  
– **VIRGO:** Let others take the spotlight today. You have enough to do as it is! You should get your fair share of attention pretty soon, but right now you need to focus on the nitty-gritty.  
– **LIBRA:** You’re feeling more social than ever, which is saying a lot! Open up and see if your friends are ready to go a bit early, or just find a way to involve yourself in whatever is going on around you.  
– **SCORPIO:** Your ego is feeling a little bent out of shape because you haven’t been getting the praise you deserve. But if you’re patient, you’ll get what’s coming to you. Just try to smile and relax.  
– **SAGITTARIUS:** You’re building some serious goodwill with customers and neighbors just by being yourself! Direct some of that positive energy outward and you’ll see amazing things start to happen.  
– **CAPRICORN:** Your work life may take over your mind a bit today thanks to one major problem that seems insurmountable. Just try to cope with it. The solution won’t come for a little while longer yet.  
– **ACQUARIUS:** You pull away from a social entanglement that hasn’t been working out for you and find that your independence is a delight! It’s a good day to explore new options and broaden your horizons.  
– **PISCES:** Your daydreaming might reach epic proportions in both duration and content! You need to make something of it, but now is not the best time to get started on new projects, so just take notes.

## Thousands evacuated as typhoon pummels southern China, Vietnam

BEIJING (APP): A quarter million people were evacuated in southern China and Vietnam before a major typhoon roared ashore late Monday, bringing fierce winds and rain and forcing the cancellation of hundreds of flights and trains. The China Meteorological Administration said typhoon Talim, the fourth typhoon of the year, made landfall on the coast of Guangdong province at around 10:20 pm (1420 GMT), bearing maximum winds of 136.8 kilometers (85 miles) per hour. Storm surges and lashing rains also hammered the southern coastline from



Guangdong to Hainan provinces on Monday night, it said. The forecaster had issued an orange alert, the second-highest warning in a four-tier colour-coded system. Nearly 230,000 people in Guangdong

were evacuated to safety before the storm's landfall, including more than 8,000 fish-farm workers who were brought ashore, according to state news agency Xinhua. Local authorities also ordered the closure of dozens of coastal tourist destinations, it added. The meteorological administration said the storm was moving to the northwest at a speed of about 20 kilometers per hour and could rake across the Guangxi region early Tuesday. Talim could lose speed by Tuesday morning and "weaken and dissipate over northern Vietnam" on Wednesday, it said.

## UK inks deal to join 'anti-China' trade bloc

- The CPTPP was initially designed to counter Beijing's influence in the Indo-Pacific region

LONDON (Agencies): The UK has formally signed an accession protocol to join major Indo-Pacific trading bloc the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). The treaty was inked on Sunday by UK Business and Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch in Auckland, New Zealand, following 21 months of talks on British membership. The agreement is now set to be inspected by the UK Parliament and existing CPTPP members, and could come into force in the second half of next year, according to reports. Speaking to Sky News following the signing of the treaty, Badenoch described the deal as the biggest trade agreement for the UK since Brexit and proof that the nation is "looking outwards towards the world." "We have a seat at the table in the fastest-growing region, countries are queuing up [to join]... I'm really excited that we've brought home the biggest trade deal since we left the European Union," she stated. Badenoch said the deal would "open up huge opportunities and unparalleled access to a market of over 500 million people." The 11-member CPTPP includes Canada, Mexico, Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia, among others, and the bloc's total GDP following the UK's accession is estimated at \$15.7 trillion. However, some analysts argue that the agreement is largely "cosmetic" for the UK, which itself estimates that the CPTPP is worth just 0.08% of its GDP. "Ministers also need to set out how this will help the economy and what support will be given to businesses to access any export opportunities," the UK shadow secretary of state for international trade, Nick Thomas-Symonds, told Sky News. The CPTPP grew from the now-defunct Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which was created by the US to counter Beijing's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

## Taiwan Not A Country; US Makes Another U-Turn As Tensions Simmer Between Taipei & Beijing

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US State Department suddenly dropped the word 'country' from its travel advisory notice for Taiwan when China's aggression against Taiwan became the major driver of tensions with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The website now features a "Taiwan international travel information" page instead of the "country information page" for Taiwan that the travel advisory previously pointed users to. When contacted by Taiwan News to comment on the latest development, the spokesperson of the American Institute in Taiwan, considered the de facto embassy in the self-ruled island state, said that US policy on Taiwan remains unchanged without giving more specific details. The spokesperson stated that the US state department updates its factsheets and webpages frequently, reflecting "longstanding, strong, bipartisan US support for Taiwan, in line with our One-China policy." The US has been arming Taiwan to bolster its military capability in the face of rising Chinese aggression and intimidation in recent years. China claims Taiwan as a renegade Chinese territory with "secessionist" forces ruling the island. The last couple of years have seen Beijing asserting this more strongly, vowing to unite Taiwan with the Chinese mainland, with force if necessary.

## Plane crashes into hangar in Poland, killing five: minister

Warsaw (AFP/APP): A small plane crashed into a hangar at an airfield near Warsaw on Monday, killing five people, officials said. "We have at least seven injured and five dead," Health Minister Adam Niedzielski wrote on Twitter. Niedzielski said four helicopters and 10 ambulances were dispatched to the site of the accident in the village of Chrcynno, 47 kilometres (29 miles) from Warsaw. The local fire department said the incident happened at the airfield in Chrcynno and posted a photo on Facebook showing the tail of the plane sticking out of a hangar. A local police spokeswoman Joanna



Wielocha said police were called at 1740 GMT to destine an accident. Polish media said the plane that crashed was a Cessna 208. There were people in the hangar who had been sheltering from bad weather, PAP news agency quoted fire brigade spokeswoman Monika Nowakowska-Brynda as saying.

## US, Japan, South Korea Conduct Trilateral Missile Defense Drills After North Korea's ICBM Launch

Seoul (Agencies): The naval forces of Japan, South Korea, and the United States came together on July 16 for a rare joint missile defense drill in the Sea of Japan, reflecting the strengthening of security collaboration among the three nations against North Korea's persistent provocations. In a statement, the US Indo-Pacific Command emphasized that the exercise not only strengthens the interoperability among the combined forces but also showcases the robust trilateral relationship between the United States and its allied nations – Japan and the Re-

public of Korea. The drill, featuring three Aegis-equipped destroyers – the South's ROKS Yulgok Yi I, the US' USS John Finn, and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's JS Maya – was focused on practicing the detection and tracking of a computer-simulated ballistic missile target, as well as sharing related information. According to a South Korean Navy official, this exercise provided a valuable opportunity to bolster the military's ability to respond effectively to ballistic missiles while fostering enhanced security cooperation between the three nations.

## Senior doctors in England announce more strikes, rejecting pay deal

- Britain's inflation rate has been elevated for well over a year, peaking above 11 percent in October and most recently at 8.7 percent in May — the highest of all major developed economies.

LONDON: Senior doctors in England will hold two days of strikes in August, their union the British Medical Association (BMA) said on Monday, dismissing a 6 percent pay rise announced by the government last week as a "savage" real-term wage cut. Consultant-level doctors in Britain's publicly funded National Health Service (NHS) will strike on Aug. 24 and 25, adding to previously announced strikes on July 20 and 21 and underscoring the failure of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's bid to fully end months of industrial action across public services. Sunak last week described recent public sector pay increases as a final settlement, warning they would cost billions, require budget cuts elsewhere, and



would not be subject to further negotiation. While teaching unions paused strikes and recommended accepting their deal, doctors' unions were unimpressed after what they say have been years of pay erosion for their members. "The government has once again imposed a savage real terms pay cut on consultants," said Vishal Sharma, the BMA's consultants committee chair. "In the face of a government intent on devaluing consultants' expertise and their lack of regard for the impact this is having on the NHS, we have been left with no choice."

## Moscow Reports Ukrainian Terrorist Attack on Crimean Bridge

MOSCOW (Agencies): Moscow has announced that the Crimean Bridge was the target of a terrorist drone attack conducted by Ukraine, according to the National Antiterrorist Committee (NAK). The attack took place at approximately 3 am local time and involved two unmanned sea vehicles, causing damage to the road section of the bridge. Tragically, two adults lost their lives, and one child was injured in the incident, as confirmed by the NAK. Law enforcement agencies are currently investigating the matter. Media outlets have reported that a section of the Crimean Bridge has been destroyed, and another part sustained damage during what is being referred to as an "emergency" event. Russia's Ministry of Transport has acknowledged that the road surface on one of the tracks has been affected, but it has refuted claims of more exten-

sive destruction. The ministry stated that the bridge's span structures remain intact on their supports. Various photos and videos shared by Telegram channels Baza and Mash depict significant damage to the crucial link connecting the Crimean Peninsula to mainland Russia, with one span noticeably lower than the others. As a result of the incident, traffic on the Crimean Bridge was temporarily halted, with the Crimean Governor, Sergey Aksyonov, declaring an unspecified emergency. It has been reported that a married couple from the Belgorod region lost their lives, and their daughter was injured. The injured child has been admitted to a hospital and is currently receiving intensive care, according to RIA Novosti. While Ukraine has not confirmed its involvement in the incident, Kiev officials have expressed approval.

## 'Mysterious Disease' Triggers Health Checks on Flights from Egypt

Moscow (Agencies): Russia has implemented stricter health checks for individuals arriving from Egypt, following reports of an outbreak of an unidentified illness in the traditionally popular tourist destination. The Russian health watchdog, Rospotrebnadzor, announced the measures on Monday. Egypt's Ministry of Health and Population reported around 250 cases of the illness in the Qena governorate, located in Upper Egypt. All patients exhibited mild to moderate symptoms, and none required hospitalization. The disease does not appear to have a consistent pattern, although most affected individuals reportedly experienced symptoms such as fever, joint pains, and fatigue lasting between three to five days. The ministry did not provide a specific diagnosis but noted that the symptoms are common to various illnesses, including

the common cold, flu, and gastroenteritis. Rospotrebnadzor stated that it is collaborating with Egyptian authorities to assess the situation and suggested that the disease may be Dengue fever, a mosquito-borne viral disease commonly found in tropical regions. While Dengue typically causes mild illness, it can sometimes progress to more severe forms, such as hemorrhagic fever and shock. Russian tourists planning to visit Egypt have been advised to take additional precautions. However, the health watchdog did not issue a travel advisory against visiting the country entirely. "To prevent infectious and parasitic diseases transmitted by insects, it is necessary to take precautions, such as wearing clothing that covers the skin, using insect repellents and insecticides, and keeping doors and windows closed while indoors," stated Rospotrebnadzor.

## US President Biden invites Israel Prime Minister to Washington

WASHINGTON (Agencies): US President Joe Biden has invited Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, to Washington for an official visit, a statement from the Prime Minister's office said on Monday, Reuters reports. The move marks a shift in US – Israeli relations as most Israeli prime ministers had already received an invitation to the White House this far into their terms. The two leaders shared a "long and warm" conversation, the Israeli statement said, focused on curbing threats from Iran and its proxies and strengthening the alliance between the two countries. Netanyahu told the US President he would try to form a "broad public consensus" on controversial legislation in Israel that would see its highest court stripped of much of its powers.

## Attacks and displacement spread in Sudan Darfur

Khartoum (Agencies): The paramilitary force battling the Army in Sudan has taken control of a town in South Darfur, triggering clashes, looting and a new wave of displacement, conflict monitors and a witness said on Monday, Reuters reports. Clashes between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Army around the town of Kas had caused up to 5,000 households to flee, some of them from camps for displaced people, according to a tracking system run by the International Organisation for Migration. The war that erupted between the Army and the RSF in the capital, Khartoum, has led to a surge of ethnically-charged violence and displacement in Darfur; the RSF's powerbase and a region already suffering from long-running conflict.

## Australian High Commissioner Calls on Chairman of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Australian High Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Neil Hawkins, paid a visit to the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Mr. Mohsin Dawar, at his office in the Parliament House. The meeting focused on areas of mutual interest between the two countries and provided an opportunity for the officials to exchange views on political, security, and economic matters in Pakistan. During the meeting, H.E. Mr. Neil Hawkins briefed the Chairman on Australia's efforts to support Pakistan's development in various sectors, including water security, women's education, and family planning. The Australian High Commissioner emphasized Australia's commitment to assisting Pakistan in these critical areas. In response, Mr. Mohsin Dawar expressed his appreciation for Australia's contributions to Pakistan and highlighted the challenges faced by youth, particularly women, in accessing education and employment opportunities.

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