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Editor: Omer Rizwan

China Rolls Over \$600m Loan to Pakistan: PM Shehbaz

Islamabad (Agencies): China has rolled over a \$600 million loan to Pakistan, helping shore up the country's foreign exchange reserves on the back of an IMF deal, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Tuesday. This was in addition to over \$5 billion in loans that longtime ally China has rolled over for Pakistan in the last three months, the prime minister said last week, helping Pakistan avert a default as negotiations to secure the IMF bailout dragged on. Pakistan secured a last-gasp \$3bn IMF bailout on June 30, which later disbursed an initial upfront installment of about \$1.2 bn. A further \$2 bn of financial support from Saudi Arabia and \$1bn from the UAE after the IMF pact has helped steady the economy, according to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. The State Bank of Pakistan said the current account



recorded a surplus of \$334 million in June. In a tweet, Dar shared some figures of the current account and said "that's how Pakistan didn't default". Launching the Prime Minister's Youth Sports Initiative in Islamabad today, the prime minister said the Exim Bank of China provided the roll over, increasing the country's foreign exchange reserves by \$600m. "Our foreign exchange reserves are increasing but we want to do it not through loans but generating our income," he was quoted as saying by

Radio Pakistan. "It is possible as our youth has the potential to excel and take the country forward in the fields of sports, information technology, industries and agriculture." Paying tribute to athletes for bringing glory to Pakistan through their performances, the prime minister said that Rs5bn had been allocated in the budget to promote sports. He also said if provided with the opportunity after the elections, his party would provide more resources for education, skills development and the promotion of sports. According to Radio Pakistan, the Prime Minister's Youth Sports Initiative encompasses the establishment of the Sports Endowment Fund, the country's first sports university in Islamabad, the Elite Sportsperson Development Program and measures for the promotion of traditional as well as e-sports.

UN appeals for urgent funds to deliver life-saving aid to drought-stricken Somalia

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), on Tuesday, appealed for urgent humanitarian funds to assist drought-stricken Somalia, where half of the country's population is at risk of losing vital life-saving assistance due to funding shortages, Anadolu Agency reports. The OCHA said the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for this year is only 30.5 per cent funded (\$793 million) as of mid-year, requiring \$2.6 billion to meet the needs of 7.6 million Somalis. "Given the immense humanitarian needs, additional funds are urgently needed to deliver life-saving assistance," the organisation said in a statement. The situation in the Horn of Africa country will worsen if emergency assistance does not reach all people in need, particularly in agro-pastoral areas of Hiraaan, urban and displacement sites in Belet Weyne and pastoral areas of central Somalia, according to the organisation. Somalia is the region's most drought-affected country, displacing millions and killing an estimated 43,000 people. The devastating effects of the country's worst drought in 40 years are now accompanied by floods. Earlier this month, two girls drowned in floodwaters east of Jowhar, the administrative capital of the central state of Hirshabele. Floods have displaced 9,600 people in several villages in Balcad, a town 40 kilometres (24 miles) from the capital, Mogadishu. According to the OCHA, 11 villages in South West State were inundated earlier this month, displacing 14,400 people and washing away crops, as rains continue to fall in northern and southern coastal areas of the country.

Ukraine cargo insurance policy suspended after Russia quits grain deal - Marsh

A cargo insurance facility providing cover for Ukraine grain shipments via a safe sea corridor has been suspended after Russia quit the United Nations-backed agreement, broker Marsh said on Tuesday. Moscow has withdrawn from the year-old grain export deal in a move the United Nations said risked creating hunger around the world, Reuters reports. The marine cargo and war facility provided cover up to \$50 million per cargo and was led by Lloyd's of London insurer, Ascot, together with other underwriters. "It is currently on pause; it is suspended effectively due to the agreement not being extended," said David Roe, head of UK cargo at Marsh, which acted as the facility's broker.

Israel Herzog to face tensions on Washington visit

A handful of Democratic lawmakers are weighing staying away when Israeli President, Isaac Herzog, addresses Congress this week, citing issues that include the human rights record of Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu's government, Reuters reports. Herzog, who as head of state plays a largely ceremonial role, begins his two-day Washington visit on Tuesday when he meets US President, Joe Biden, before addressing a joint meeting of Congress on Wednesday. Ties between the two countries are strained over Israeli settlement expansion on the Occupied West Bank as well as a judicial overhaul pursued by Netanyahu's right-wing government and assailed for months by Israeli protesters. Herzog will also meet Vice President, Kamala Harris, Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, and National Security Adviser, Jake



Sullivan, a senior administration official said. Biden and Herzog will discuss deepening Israel's regional integration, buoyed by several accords with its Arab neighbours in recent years, and a shared commitment to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, the official said. "They will also discuss the urgent need to preserve the path for a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," the official said. Biden and Herzog last met at the White House in October. Netanyahu returned to power in December.

Tunisia receives four T-6C training aircraft from the US

TUNIS (Agencies): The Tunisian defense ministry said on Tuesday it had received four T-6C training aircraft from the United States, as part of cooperation to renew its fleet of training aircraft for the air force. Last month, four Tunisian soldiers died after a military aircraft crashed into the sea, an accident that President Kais Saied attributed to an aging military fleet. The US Ambassador in Tunisia, Joey R. Hood, said his country was committed to supporting the defense ministry's efforts to enhance the air



force's ability to meet security challenges and humanitarian needs. Imed Memich, the defense minister, said the new aircraft would provide the air force with advanced training capabilities.

Kosovo acquires Turkish Bayraktar drones amid ongoing tensions in north

ANKARA (Agencies): Kosovo has purchased a batch of Turkish Bayraktar drones in a bid to bolster and modernise its defence capabilities, amid recent tensions in the country's north with ongoing threats from Serbia. In a Facebook post by Kosovo's Prime Minister, Albin Kurt, on Sunday, in which he is seen assessing a newly-acquired Bayraktar TB2 drone, he stated that Pristina has added an unspecified number of the UAVs "to the arsenal of our army, which we bought as a government from Türkiye!" It comes amid efforts by the Kosovar government to bolster the country's defence capabilities, with Kurt stating that "In two years of governance, we have increased the number of soldiers by over 80 per cent and the budget for the army by over 100 per cent." He added that officers have completed the necessary training to operate the drones. The Republic, which proclaimed independence from Serbia 15



years ago but remains unrecognised by dozens of countries, is reportedly attempting to bolster its military with the aim of attaining 5,000 regular soldiers and 3,000 reservists, who would serve alongside the over 4,500 NATO peacekeepers within the country. Those attempts come at a time when tensions have been increasingly brewing in the north of Kosovo inn recent months, resulting in a direct clash between ethnic Serb protestors and soldiers from NATO's KFOR unit over the appointment of three elected ethnic Albanian mayors in the Serb-dominated north.

Pakistan Army Announces Promotions of Senior Officers

Rawalpindi (Staff Report): The Pakistan Army has announced the promotion of 30 officers from the rank of Brigadier to Major General under the SB 1 promotion category. These promotions reflect the exceptional skills, professionalism, and dedication of these officers in serving the nation. Among the promoted officers are five from the Armoured Corps (AC), including Brigadier Shahzad Khan, Brigadier Zulfiqar Bhatti, Brigadier Abubakar, Brigadier Ali Iqbal, and Brigadier Kamran Saleem. Four officers from the Artillery (Arty) branch have also been promoted, namely Brigadier Imran Arif, Brigadier Yasir Nawaz, Brigadier Sajid Ameen, and Brigadier Shamraiz. Additionally, Brigadier Kamran has been promoted from the Air Defence (AD) branch. In the Infantry (Inf) branch, twelve officers have been promoted, including Brigadier Anjum Riaz from the Northern Light Infantry (NLI), Brigadier Inthikhab from Punjab, Brigadier Shahid Amir Afsar from Punjab, Brigadier Nisar Ul Haq from Frontier Force (FF), Brigadier Jawad Riaz from Balochistan, Brigadier Waseem Haider from Ba-

lochistan, Brigadier Naik nam Baig from Punjab, Brigadier Umer Farid from Punjab, Brigadier Imran Khan Babar from Sindh, Brigadier Jawad Tariq from FF, Brigadier Mazhar Nazir from FF, and Brigadier Atif bin Akram from Punjab. However, no promotions were announced from the Ordnance (Ord), Army Service Corps (ASC), or Corps of Military Intelligence (CMI) branches. In the Health Services (HCA) branch, two officers were promoted: Brigadier Sibtain Rafique and Brigadier Muhammad Fiaz Malik, both from the General Duty Medical Officer category. Four officers from the Army Medical Corps (AMC) were also promoted. They are Brigadier Sohail Ilyas (Surgical Specialist), Brigadier Syed Mukarram Hussain (Surgical Specialist), Brigadier Fuad Siddique (Medical Specialist), and Brigadier Zeeshan Ahmed (Pediatrician). These promotions recognize the exceptional contributions and leadership demonstrated by the officers throughout their careers. The Pakistan Army commends their commitment to the nation and wishes them continued success in their new roles as Major Generals.

Saudi Aramco CEO joins board of directors at BlackRock

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's corporate leadership is reinforcing its position in international boardrooms, with Amin Nasser, CEO of the Saudi Arabian Oil Co., joining the board of the world's largest asset manager BlackRock Inc. According to an announcement by the US-based monolith on Monday, Nasser will join the board as an independent director replacing Bader Al-Saad, director general and chairman of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. The release further said that Nasser oversaw the successful listing of Aramco, the largest initial public offering in history, and would bring the board the perspective of a CEO at the helm of some of the most important business trends globally. Nasser has been instrumental in steering the growth of Saudi Aramco, including leading the company's entry into the global debt and capital markets with its first bond issuance in 2019. According to BlackRock, one-third of its directors have been newly

elected over the past five years, reflecting the company's commitment to continually evolving and benefiting from fresh insights. "Bader's international investment experience has been instrumental to BlackRock's success, and I sincerely thank him for his dedication to the firm," said Laurence Fink, chairman and CEO of BlackRock, while thanking Bader Al-Saad for serving the company's board. Fink added: "The wisdom and guidance that he has given the board throughout his tenure has been crucial to our growth in the Gulf region and globally." BlackRock has also evinced interest in participating in Saudi Arabia's growth story. In June, Rachel Lord, head of the Asia-Pacific region at the company, stated that the firm had invested more than \$15 billion in natural gas pipelines in the Kingdom. In a statement to Reuters, she added that the Kingdom is a very appealing destination with "a strong set of investment opportunities to come."

Syria struggles to contain wildfires as temperatures rise

DAMASCUS: Firefighters were battling on Tuesday to extinguish multiple wildfires raging across the central Syrian countryside, local civil defense officials said, as temperatures reached 40 degrees Celsius in parts of the country. One fire broke out on public farmland in the central province of Hama, where firefighting teams were working to stop it spreading to surrounding areas, the head of the local forest protection center, Amjad Hammad, told state news agency SANA. Another was raging across agricultural zones in the adjacent province of Homs, the head of civil defense there told SANA, saying civil defense teams were struggling to contain it due to "the mountainous and rugged terrain." Local outlet Sham FM reported that families from the village of Al-Marana had fled their homes as the wildfire approached. The state news agency said temperatures were up to six degrees Celsius higher than average across the country on Tuesday, with active gusts and "very hot clouds." They hit 40C (104F) at the ancient city of



Palmyra, in the province of Homs, and touched 39C in the capital Damascus, where chronic power cuts have made it hard for families to stay cool. One group of women in the capital charged tiny electric fans with portable batteries and regularly dunked their feet in cool water to make up for the lack of air conditioning. "We move the couches here, pour water on the ground and direct the fans toward the ground, then we feel like we are in the Maldives," said one of them, Mounira Wassouf. Erratic rainfall and rising heat are among the suspected impacts of climate change already affecting Syria. They have shrunk Syria's wheat crop in recent years down some 75 percent from around 4 million tons annually pre-war.

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.

KP police stand strong against terrorism: kill 156 terrorists, POs in last six months: IGP told

PESHAWAR (APP): Stand strong against terrorism, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police have killed 156 terrorists and proclaimed offenders (POs) besides arresting 434 terrorists including 26 hardcore terrorists carrying head money during the last six months in the province. As many as 144 police officers were also martyred and 224 were injured in the line of duty during the said period, says a press release. Besides arresting 1,474 narcotics sellers and 36,923

and recovering 7414 arms, 179,873 rounds in 8004 search and strike operations under the national action plan, the police also arrested 42,910 suspects during 28,657 snap checking. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Gandapor said that anti-state elements and professional criminals would be dealt with iron hands under the country's laws. In a statement here, the IGP said that hurdles in the way of established peace

would not be tolerated and reiterated that provision of people welfare services and protection of life and properties would be ensured to people at their doorsteps. The high-level meeting presided over by IGP here at the central police office reviewed the law and order situation in the province. During the meeting, a comprehensive report about the occurrence of crimes and measures taken for its prevention and police performance came under discussion.

Over 9,000 patients treated at BKMC Swabi during six months

PESHAWAR (APP): The administration of Bacha Khan Medical Complex-MTI Swabi, an affiliated teaching institute of Gajju Khan Medical College (GKMC-MTI), on Monday, released a 6-month progress report on Institutional Based Private Practice Data (IBPP). In the first six months of the current year, 9,585 patients availed IBPP services from 3 PM to 8 PM. Among them, 3,969 patients consulted medical specialists, 2,414 patients received orthopaedic

treatment, and others sought consultation with different specialists. The data further indicates that during these six months, more 269 CT scans, 290 ECGs, 1,741 X-rays, and 821 ultrasounds were performed. Additionally, over 3,000 laboratory tests were carried out during IBPP timings. BKMC-MTI has 20 specialist doctors available from 3 to 8 PM, in addition to regular OPD timings, to facilitate the public. It is worth mentioning here that the hospital de-

creases the free, procedural charges in IBPP, though the services provided were supervised and provided by dedicated Professionals and specialists, aiming to provide the best possible healthcare services in reasonable charges. Medical Director Dr. Shahid Nasir Khalid expressed satisfaction over the progress of IBPP. He highlighted the ongoing efforts to ensure the availability of consultants not only during the morning OPD but also during the IBPP timings.

UoP's Department of Journalism plays key role in KP's uplift: Feroze Jamal

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister of Information, Auqaf, Hajj, Religious and

Minority Affairs, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel on Monday said that the Department of Journalism, University of Peshawar has played key role in the development of the province. He expressed these views on the occasion of his visit to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at University of Peshawar here. Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar, Dr Muhammad Idris, Chairman Journalism Department Dr. Faizullah Jan, Assistant

Professor Journalism Bakht Zaman, Assistant Professor Journalism Syed Irfan Ashraf and others were also present on this occasion. The caretaker minister said that the profession of journalism plays a huge responsibility in the uplifting of society and the country. The caretaker setup is trying its best to promote peace, prosperity and development in the province without borrowing a single penny. We consider politics as worship, he added.

ATC Sends 33 Accused Of May 9Vandalism On Judicial Remand

PESHAWAR (APP): The judge of the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Tuesday sent 33 suspects arrested in May 9,10 vandalism cases to jail on 14-day judicial remand. The accused were involved in vandalism and arson in different areas of Peshawar

on May 9 and 10. They were booked by Khan Raziq police station and Faqirabad police station. The interim bail application of the accused was rejected by the ATC court the other day and they were arrested from the courtroom.

Drive Against Power Theft Continues In Tank

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The drive against power theft and defaulters continued at various parts of Tank district for the third consecutive day. According to the district administration, Assistant Commissioner Aminullah Khan along with officials of the Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) and police is leading the operation during which several persons were arrested for using illegal connections (Kunda). The AC said that the crack-

down against Kunda mafia would continue indiscriminately to prevent losses and in this regard, no compromise would be made, he added. He said effective measures were being taken to improve the power supply system and eradication of power theft was among the top priorities. He urged people to ensure timely payment of their monthly bills to get a smooth power supply and strengthen the financial position of the power company.

Attack on Frontier Corps Convoy in Peshawar's Hayatabad: Six Personnel Injured

Peshawar (Staff Report/Agencies): A convoy of the Peshawar Frontier Corps (FC) came under attack in Peshawar's Hayatabad area on Tuesday, resulting in injuries to six FC personnel, according to the police. The incident occurred in Hayatabad's phase 6 as the paramilitary convoy was moving through the area, stated Cantt SP Waqas Rafi, who spoke to the media near the blast site shortly after the attack. Footage from the scene showed a crowd gathered on the road where the blast reportedly took place. The remnants of a charred vehicle were visible in the distance. Peshawar SSP (Operations) Haroon Rasheed later confirmed that an "explosive-laden vehicle" was used in the attack. He added that a search operation was underway, with further investigation into the matter ongoing. SP Rafi, during his media briefing, mentioned that the

police were collecting more details and looking into the incident. The area has been cordoned off for security purposes. "We will thoroughly investigate this matter, and the perpetrators responsible for the incident will be identified," he assured. SP Rafi earlier informed Dawn.com that the incident appeared to be a "suicide blast" and stated that a bomb disposal squad was examining the scene to determine the nature of the incident. Both officials confirmed that six individuals, all of whom were FC personnel, sustained injuries in the blast. The SSP added that the injured were being treated at the Combined Military Hospital, while two wounded individuals were admitted to the Hayatabad Medical Complex, where they were reported to be in stable condition, according to Medical Director Professor Shehzad Akbar Khan.

NP leadership asked to avoid giving preference to 'parachuters' over diehard workers

PESHAWAR (APP): President Awami National Party (ANP) Bhanu Mari Ward, Sohail Khan has stressed upon the party leadership to maintain its decades-old legacy of rewarding diehard workers on different posts instead of facilitating those who come through the use of parachutes. In a joint press statement issued here on Tuesday, Sohail Khan and other office bearers including GS Shahid Khan, SVP Allauddin and VP Atif Khan said if ANP leadership wanted to save the

party from fragmentation, it has to maintain its policy of according preference to stalwarts and old associates who spent their whole lives for the cause of the party and its leadership. They said the step-motherly treatment of ANP leadership with its old and diehard worker Adnan Jalil is a test case and is not acceptable to party workers. They also mentioned the example of Haji Sher Rehman who after being ignored by the party leadership in elections for Mayor of Peshawar, parted ways

Seminar highlights adverse effects of illegal mining on environment

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Director COMSATS University Abbottabad Campus Professor Dr Muhammad Maroof Shah Monday underlined the need to strengthen institutions responsible for enforcing laws and improve monitoring mechanisms to lessen the negative impact of illegal mining on the environment. He expressed these views while addressing a day-long seminar titled "The role of geosciences in the mining industry" organized by the Varsity here. The director asserted that illegal mining in Pakistan has caused significant environmental degradation and imbalances, affecting natural resources, including minerals like coal, copper, gold, and precious stones. He further pointed out that the adverse effects of illegal mining include deforestation, water pollution, land degradation, air pollution, disruption of wildlife and ecosystems, and social implications. To mitigate the detrimental

effects of illegal mining on the environment, Professor Dr Maroof Shah stressed the importance of empowering law enforcement agencies, enhancing monitoring procedures, and promoting sustainable mining practices. He called for stringent regulations, effective governance, and public awareness campaigns to protect the environment and communities affected by illegal mining activities. Experts from the mining industry and academic institutions attending the seminar acknowledged the crucial role of Geo-Sciences in Pakistan's mining sector. They highlighted that Geo-Sciences provide valuable insights and technical skills essential for responsible mining practices. The speakers also emphasized the need to learn from the experiences of other countries instead of reinventing the wheel, to effectively restore health and safety standards in Pakistan's mining industry.

District admin imposes section 144, bans entry of 24 religious scholars during Muharram

ABBOTTABAD (APP): In a move to uphold peace and tranquility during the holy month of Muharram, the Abbottabad District Administration has enforced Section 144 and prohibited several activities. This measure aims to maintain a peaceful environment and ensure the safety of residents and visitors throughout the district. As part of this directive, 24 religious scholars and speakers from other districts have been banned from entering Abbottabad during the Muharram period. The decision was made to prevent any potential disturbances and maintain

the sanctity of the occasion. The directive, issued by Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad, states that the restriction will remain in effect for one month. Any violation of the order will be dealt with according to the law, emphasizing the seriousness of adhering to the imposed regulations. Among the prohibited activities during Muharram in the district are the display of arms and ammunition, double riding on motorcycles, tinted windows in vehicles, and standing on the roofs of buildings during Muharram processions.

Policeman injured in attack on police checkpost

TANK (APP): The armed terrorists on Monday attacked at Nasran checkpost last night leaving a policeman injured. According to police spokesman, the terrorists attacked the checkpost with hand grenades and modern weapons. As a result, police constable Rizwan got injured. The police team also retaliated forcefully however, the terrorist managed to escape from the scene getting advantage of the darkness. As soon as the incident was reported, SP Investigation Tank Nasir Khan, DSP Rural

Chan Shah, Shaheed Mureed Akbar Police Station SHO Abdul Alee, and Gul-e-Imam Police Station SHO Rehmat Khan along with the heavy contingent reached the site and started search for the terrorists. The injured policeman was shifted to DHQ hospital Tank. District Police Officer (DPO) Waqar Ahmad along with DSP Headquarters Abdul Rasheed Khan, City Police station SHO Aftab Alam Baloch and other officers visited the DHQ hospital to inquire after the health of injured constable.

KP's tourism sector can earn billions of dollars

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tourism sector has the potential to earn billions of Dollars by exploring new diverse tourist attractions. Tourism is an important contributor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's economy and job creation, and the number of domestic tourists travelling to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa keeps growing rapidly. In order to tap this potential, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has embarked upon a strategic project to explore and develop tourism in merged areas. This project is striving to establish multiple tourism infrastructures in seven merged districts and six merged

sub-divisions. A comprehensive survey has already been conducted to identify major tourism development initiatives in these areas. Under the administrative supervision of Secretary Tourism Shahid Sohail Khan, a Project Management Unit (PMU) has been established to materialize the goal of tourism promotion in the merged areas. With an objective to undertake cost cuttings, a state-of-the-art level lean structured PMU Unit oversees all developmental projects through active interaction with all stakeholders, duly executed by the relevant provincial engineering departments.

ECP announces by-elections schedule in various village councils of Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday made an announcement regarding the upcoming by-elections in various village councils of district Abbottabad, appointing Director Building Control Galyat Development Authority (GDA) Adnan Ibrar as Returning Officer (RO). The electoral process of by-polls in vil-

lage councils of district Abbottabad including Palak, Bagnoter, Baldheri, Bandha Peer Khan, and Nathiagali has been started. The citizens of the Constituencies will have the opportunity to participate in the democratic process and exercise their right to vote. Interested candidates can submit their nomination papers starting today.



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An educated, healthy & empowered woman sitting at the decision-making table epitomizes a peaceful and progressive society, Shahida Rahmani

Islamabad – 18 July 2023 : (Khyber Mail): In a groundbreaking display of unity, Political Parties come together at the “Roundtable of Political Parties on Women’s Manifesto 2023”, organised by federal Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in collaboration with the UN Women. During the two-day conference, participants will engage in dynamic discussions to identify key issues concerning women’s empowerment and gender equality. The objective is to ensure that these issues are given top priority and integrated into the core principles of their respective election manifestos. In her inaugural address, Ms. Shahida Rehmani, Secretary of the WPC, highlighted the upcoming general election in Pakistan



and stressed the need to deliberate on the challenges and opportunities for women. She emphasized that women have played significant roles in Pakistan’s political landscape, including having the honor of the first female Prime Minister in the Muslim world. However, more concerted efforts are required to ensure a fair, equitable, and

inclusive Pakistan for all citizens. Ms. Rehmani underscored that the political participation of all segments of society is indispensable for a truly inclusive and representative democracy. Thus, election manifestoes hold paramount importance as they reflect our democratic values and collective vision for the future.

PIMS’s emergency block project to be extended

ISLAMABAD (APP): The administration of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has decided to expand the new emergency block project of the hospital with the addition of one more floor to ensure the provision of best emergency services to citizens. According to ED PIMS spokesperson Dr. Mubashir Mush-taq Daha, the decision was made on the direction of the Planning Commission of Pakistan as with this new plan further 75 beds would be added to the project. He said that after ap-

proval from the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination, the documents of the projects had been sent to the Planning Commission for allocation of funds. He said that with the addition of 75 beds, the total number of beds would be 239 in the new emergency block of the hospital with state-of-the-art facilities including a laboratory, operation theatre, and x-ray facility. He said that the new emergency block project would be completed next year.

Zong 4G celebrates 15 years of pioneering excellence in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zong 4G, Pakistan’s leading telecom giant, marks a momentous milestone as it celebrates 15 years of unwavering excellence in the country’s digital landscape. Guided by the motto “Let’s Get Digital,” Zong 4G has revolutionized the nation’s connectivity through its widest 4G network and cutting-edge technology, leaving an indelible mark on Pakistan’s technological future. For over a decade and a half, Zong 4G has been at the forefront of technological advancement, pioneering the introduction of 3G and 4G networks and successfully testing 5G. The company’s commit-

ment to technological progress has transformed the way Pakistan connects and communicates, propelling the nation’s digital revolution said a news release. Investing significantly in expanding its network infrastructure, Zong 4G has erected over 14,000 towers nationwide, extending its services to even the remotest corners of the country. With a massive investment of over USD 3 billion, millions of Pakistanis now have access to affordable and best-in-class telecommunications services, bridging the digital divide and empowering individuals, businesses, and communities alike.

U.S. backs Recharge Pakistan Project to enhance country’s climate resilience

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, is pleased to support Recharge Pakistan, a project to enhance Pakistan’s resilience to climate change by improving water systems and investing in green infrastructure. The USAID contributed \$5 million in funding to support this project, and this week the Green Climate Fund (GCF) board approved an additional \$66 million in grant funding to support the project, a news release said. The Coca-Cola Foundation contributed \$5 million, and the World Wildlife Fund contributed \$1.8 million. Over-

all, this \$77.8 million partnership is the largest-ever investment in an ecosystem-based approach to building Pakistan’s climate resilience. “The U.S. government considers the Recharge Pakistan Project a game changer for flood mitigation and the creation of economic opportunities in areas faced with recurring water insecurity. Partnering with GCF, the Coca-Cola Foundation, and World Wildlife Fund will help Pakistan tackle the negative impacts of climate change and align seamlessly with the U. S.-Pakistan Green Alliance framework,” said U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome.

Islamabad Police launches crackdown against rash PSV drivers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Division) has decided to expedite efforts against heavy/PSV (Public Service Vehicle) drivers who have been operating their vehicles in a hazardous and overloaded manner while repeatedly violating traffic laws. The police have cancelled route permits for drivers with multiple violations and are urging citizens to report complaints to Islamabad Capital Police Helpline 15. This special crackdown aims to safeguard lives and property, and Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad, Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, is leading the effort to ensure public safety. Citizens have been urged to report their complaints to Islamabad Capital Police Helpline 15. “We will collectively ensure the protection of people’s lives and property. Strict legal action will be taken against drivers who endanger the lives and property of citizens, and they will be arrested and their route permits cancelled after multiple violations besides impounding vehicles at police stations,” said Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad, Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer. According to the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer, Dr. Akbar Nasir

Khan, further stringent legal action has been decided against PSV vehicles that violate traffic laws, especially heavy public service vehicles that are operated in an overloaded and dangerous manner. Under this operation, those drivers who repeatedly violate traffic laws will have their route permits cancelled after multiple violations and they will be arrested at police stations. In addition to this, Islamabad Capital Police has formed a special squad to further strengthen the enforcement of this legal action. The squad is tasked with carrying out operations on various roads and intersections of Islamabad and taking legal action against PSV vehicles that are violating traffic laws. Severe legal action is also being taken against vehicles operating without fitness certificates. Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad, Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, is overseeing this special campaign. Citizens can register their complaints by calling Islamabad Capital Police Helpline 15. Chief Traffic Officer stated that it is our duty to protect the lives of citizens, and we are taking all necessary steps to address the issues faced by the public.

AEDB formally merged with PPIB

ISLAMABAD (APP): Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB) has formally merged with Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) Upon promulgation of the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (Amendment) Act, 2023 notified through the Gazette of Pakistan, Extraordinary, Part-1, as an Act No. XXVI of 2023 dated 10th June 2023, AEDB has merged with PPIB, consequently, the Alternative Energy Development Board Act, 2010 (Act XIV of 2010) stands repealed/ dissolved henceforth, said a statement issued here on Monday. “We are confident that this merger will pave the way to enhance operational efficiency and facilitation of investors by extending a true one-window facility for smooth and seamless development and processing of power projects of all technologies including Alternative and Renewable Energy (ARE) projects by PPIB as a one entity on behalf of the Government of Pakistan,” it further said.

NEPRA celebrates women leadership

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), the country’s sole regulator, under the theme “Power with Equality” on Monday gathered at NEPRA Headquarters and celebrated the remarkable rise of Women Leadership in Pakistan and acknowledging their contributions in shattering stereotypes, overcoming barriers, and emerging as powerful agents of change. The ceremony was attended by Chairman NEPRA, Mr. Tauseef H. Farooqi, female employees from various organizations including NEPRA, said a press release. The event was graced by Syedah Huma Batool, the first ever female Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of an airline in Pakistan by the name of Alvir Airways. Mr. Farooqi in his opening remarks reiterated NEPRA’s commitment towards women empowerment and shed light on progress made by his organization in providing gender inclusive environment in Pakistan’s power sector under its power with equality and power with prosperity drives.

FBL appoints new Chairman of Board of Directors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mian Mohammad Younis has been appointed as the Chairman of the Board of Directors Faysal Bank Limited, in its board meeting held here on Monday. With a professional career spanning over four decades in the Ministry of Finance, Banking, and Financial Sector reforms, Younis brings an extensive knowledge of Corporate Sector Governance and financial markets. Younis has also served on the Board of Directors of Meezan Bank Limited, as the Chairman of the Board Audit Committee and was also a member of the Board Risk Management Committee. He has been part of the Board of Directors at Faysal Bank Limited for more than nine years where he has been the Chairman of Board Audit and Corporate Governance Committee in addition to being a member of other key committees. He has played a key role in the planning and implementation of the corporate governance, audit, and controls framework at Faysal Bank.

Summit Bank Limited Announces Name Change To Bank Makramah Limited

KARACHI: Summit Bank Limited is pleased to announce that the State Bank of Pakistan has granted its consent to change Summit Bank’s name to Bank Makramah Limited (abbreviated as BML). This will become effective subject to other regulatory and corporate approvals. This name change follows the recent acquisition of a controlling stake in Summit Bank by prominent UAE investor, H.E. Nasser Abdulla Hussain Lootah. H.E. Nasser Abdulla Hussain Lootah’s vision for Bank Makramah Limited (BML) is to develop it into a leading Islamic bank, providing exceptional financial services and innovative products in line with Islamic principles. The name change from Summit

Bank Limited to Bank Makramah Limited (BML) signifies the bank’s commitment to embracing Islamic finance principles and delivering innovative and ethical financial services to its valued customers. Bank Makramah Limited (BML) is in the process of developing a comprehensive plan to transition into a full-fledged Islamic bank. The bank’s transformation will involve a complete overhaul of its operations, introduction of Shari-ah-compliant financial solutions, and adherence to Islamic banking practices. Bank Makramah Limited (BML) remains committed to serving its customers and ensuring a seamless transition throughout this transformative phase.

NA Special Committee directs employee regularization

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Special Committee of the National Assembly for Affected Employees deliberated on the regularization of employees across multiple government departments, issued directives for regularization, administered show-cause notices, and mandated the retraction of specific letters. Chaired by Professor Dr Qadir Mandokhel assessed the performance of officials, leading to discussions on the necessity of government intervention. The committee was informed by the officers of port Qasim Authority that they have regularized the services of 48 contract employees as per the committee’s directives. They further stated that the remaining 29 employees would also be regularized in the near

future. Secretary Ghufuran Memon expressed their intention to seek guidance from the Establishment Division regarding the allocation of jobs in the Son quota. They assured the committee that they would promptly follow the instructions provided by the establishment division and submit a report accordingly. The committee was informed by the officers of State and Frontier regions that they have a regular workforce of 25,000 levies officers, while 5,222 levies officers are still awaiting regularization. In response, the committee instructed the relevant authorities to regularize the employment of the remaining 5,222 employees by 1 PM on Tuesday and submit a report on the matter.

Mishal, Organic Pakistan sign MOU to work on agro-economy, climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Organic Pakistan and Mishal Pakistan on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), decided to work together to address critical issues related to agro-economy, climate change, and food security. The collaboration of organizations will involve the exchange of updated and timely data, media training, capacity-building workshops, and the creation of knowledge resources to foster public discourse and develop key opinion-makers, said a press release issued here. Organic Pakistan, a pioneering organization dedicated to promoting organic agriculture and sustainable practices, and Mishal Pakistan, a leading institution in

the development sector specializing in research and communication strategies, are thrilled to announce a collaborative partnership aimed at revolutionizing the agriculture landscape in Pakistan and enhancing the country’s international rankings. The MOU sets the framework for joint initiatives, including the development of key opinion-makers, advocacy campaigns, and the sharing of resources and expertise. Both organizations are committed to creating knowledge resources through seminars, interactive workshops, and thematic reports to promote public awareness and understanding of sustainable agriculture practices and related subjects.

SECP amends regulations for election of independent directors

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has amended regulations for the election of independent directors and female directors. To address practical difficulties faced by the listed companies in the election of directors, and to promote diversity in the boards of the companies, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has introduced amendments to the Listed Companies (Code of Corporate Governance) Regulations, 2019 and the Companies (Postal Ballot) Regulations, 2018, said a press release issued here on Monday. The notified amendments aim to facilitate listed companies in meeting their regulatory requirements relating to the election of independent and female

directors on their boards. The new regulations will also strengthen the corporate governance framework by introducing the concept of voting in categories on a proportionate basis. Under the category voting, a three-tier voting structure for listed companies is being prescribed whereby votes shall be cast separately for the three categories of directors i.e. female, independent and others. The division of maximum votes available to each member for a category shall be in proportion to the number of seats of directors under such category. Furthermore, number of votes for each category shall be counted separately. For the female director, the seat shall be fixed to one; and for the independent director, it shall be two or one-third, whichever is higher.

Senate secretariat media directorate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources was held here at Parliament House on Tuesday with Senator Syed Muhammad Sabir Shah in Chair. The Senate Committee was briefed about the affectees of Tarbela Dam and payment made to affectees so far. Officials apprised that 82,109 acres land were acquired for tarbela dam and 96,000 people were affected in result of acquisition. However, affectees were paid compensation and the owners of 04 kanal agriculture land and 16 kanals barani land were also offered state land in Punjab and Sindh after the payment of compensation amount, officials stated. They further added that around 60,000 acres land was allocated by Government of Pakistan, of which, 30,000 acres was provided by Punjab and 10,000 acres was provided by Sindh. Representative



of affectees maintained that 449 affectees have not paid any compensation. However officials informed that around 450 affectees moved to the Peshawar High Court and court in its verdict, directed the WAPDA to consider the eligibility of affectees and eventually one affectee was found eligible. Senator Syed Muhammad Sabir Shah was of view that affectees of Tarbela dam have surrender their lands for the larger interest of the country and they should be compensated at every cost. He formed a Sub-Committee to consider the eligibility of 449 affectees and nominated Senator Dr. Muhammad Humayun Mohmand as the convener.

Honor of Pakistan, NUTECH is among the most advanced universities in the world

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s National University of Technology Islamabad has been selected as one of the most innovative universities in the world in 2023 by the World University Ranking for Innovation (WURI). The global ranking agency ranked the National University of Technology 51-100 universities in the world in terms of innovation. The WURI named NUTECH alongside most innovative university is like MIT, the University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard which topped in the rating . It also includes many lesser-known but remarkably innovative higher education institutions

that have not previously appeared in other traditional university rankings. In the list of elite 100 universities NUTECH is joined by Minerva University in America, Ecole 42 in France, Simon Fraser University in Canada, Abdullah Gul University in Turkey, Barpa University in Thailand, and Samar State University in the Philippines. The methodology for ranking is not based on tradition, reputation, or popularity, but focuses on new concepts such as innovation in industry, industrial linkage, entrepreneurship, social responsibility, openness, crisis management, and the fourth industrial revolution.

NAB Balochistan seminar empowers police to tackle corruption

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (Balochistan) organised a seminar at the Police Training College aiming to promote anti-corruption awareness and encourage a shared commitment towards building a corruption-free and prosperous nation. The seminar titled “Eradication of Corruption for a Prosperous Pakistan” was held at the Police Training College on Sariab Road, Quetta. The event focused on highlighting the harmful effects of corrup-

tion on society and showcased practical measures being taken to combat it. Prominent speakers emphasized the vital role of the police in promoting transparency and accountability. As part of the seminar, a symbolic walk involving trainees from the Police Training College was conducted. Deputy Commandant Aurangzeb represented the college, while Director Dr. Muhammad Rashad and Deputy Director Mr. Khurram Shahzad represented NAB Balochistan.

DC directs for carrying out IRS to eliminate dengue

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner, Hasan Waqar Cheema on Tuesday directed the health officials to expedite anti-dengue surveillance activities for tracing larvae and spewed the affected areas with Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS). Chairing a meeting to review anti-dengue arrangements here at his office, he said all resources were being utilized for eliminating dengue and concerned departments were fully mobilized for carrying out the task. He directed that anti-dengue regulations be fully implemented and stern action be taken

against those failing to comply with the laws. Hasan directed the officials to make the anti-dengue activities more effective by visiting regularly in the field. He called upon the residents to keep an eye on junkyards, schools and under-construction buildings which lead to the spread of dengue larvae and leave no place wet or with stagnant water. The DC asked the officials to create awareness among people to keep their houses clean, adding a vigorous awareness campaign was essential for effective community participation in this regard.

U.S Consulate General launches Science Project Winners on Voyage to Space Camp

KARACHI (APP): Through a U.S. government-funded grant, 24 Pakistani female and male students from three schools in Karachi are currently participating in the U.S. Space and Rocket Center’s Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. U.S. Consulate General Karachi collaborated with its implementing partner The Dawood Foundation’s (TDF) MagnifiScience Centre to promote and expand Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education in 50 schools in Karachi. This U.S. grant was comprised of three components: STEM training for 100 Pakistani teachers; educational field trips of over 1,000 students to the MagnifiScience Centre; and a culminating science project competition. This U.S. grant aimed to galvanize an increase in STEM education and encourage Karachi schools to allocate more resources to train staff that will enhance learning outcomes. In turn, students will be motivated to pursue careers in science fields, thereby meeting the increasing demand for STEM

graduates in industry, academia, and research. The United States has an ongoing commitment to supporting STEM education in Pakistan through many past and varied educational programs, including sending cohorts of Pakistani students to Space Camp in 2011 and 2015. The United States supports inclusive STEM education, green technologies, and entrepreneurship for young people around the world to sustainably develop their own countries’ economies and communities. As Consul General Nicole Theriot remarked, “I am thrilled that we were able to send such bright and talented young students to Space Camp in the United States as a reward for their creativity and commitment to further developing Pakistan through green technologies and entrepreneurship. We are proud to promote the U.S.-Pakistan ‘Green Alliance’ framework, focused on supporting Pakistan as it strengthens climate resilience, pursues energy transformation, and fosters inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Awareness Seminar held to educate teachers regarding prevention of corporal punishment

NAWABSHAH (APP): Reform Support Unit of the Department of Education in collaboration with UNICEF organized an awareness program for the teachers community regarding the prevention of corporal punishment rules and regulations under Act 2016 in educational institutions of Sindh Province. Addressing the seminar at a local hotel, Chief Advisor Curriculum Wing and Focal Person Education Department Dr Fauzia Khan, Education Specialist UNICEF Asif Abrar, District Education Officer Secondary Muhammad Saleem Bhatti, District Education Officer Primary Masood Ahmed Sahito, Child Protection Officer Muslim Farooq, Principal Humaira Mir, Shahnaz Lakho and other speakers said that Sindh Government has framed laws regarding prevention of corporal punishment to children, which aims at ensuring protection and safety of children and taking measures for all types of punishments to children. Speakers appealed to teachers to teach children

with love and affection so that they become a good citizen of the society after completing their education. On the occasion Education consultant UNICEF Sidra Sadozai informed about Act 2016 regarding prevention of corporal punishment. She said that Act 2016 was imposed by the Sindh Government for prevention from corporal punishment to children for which Child Protection Centers and committees were formed at district level so that legal action could be initiated against contraveners against physical abuse. She said that awareness seminars are being organized by committees in different areas of the province to inform about the rights and physical punishment prevention. She said that in case of any such incidence of punishment or misbehaving with child, the report shall be immediately communicated to Police 15, Helpline 1121 of Child Protection Authority or to the concerned district official of Sindh Child Protection Authority.

Joint Protocol signed to connect Pak, Uzbek via afghan-trans railway

ISLAMABAD (APP): The dream of connecting Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan through the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) intra-train project has come to a reality as the officials from the three countries on Tuesday signed a joint protocol at the Ministry of Railway. The signing ceremony was witnessed by the Federal Minister of

Railways Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Federal Minister of Finance, Senator Ishaq Dar, the ambassadors of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan and other high-level officials. The Joint Protocol was signed by the Secretary of Pakistan Railways, Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, Director General and CEO of Afghanistan Railway Authority, Alhaj Bakhtur Rehman Sharaf and

Head of Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade and Department of Transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Dekhkanov. Speaking on the occasion, the Federal Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique said that it was a historical day as the project would help to connect three countries business-to-business and people-to-people.

Asif Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto meet PM Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here at the PM House. The prime minister received both the leaders on their arrival, a PM Office statement said. In the meeting, they discussed the overall political situation in the country. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and Economic Affairs Minister Sardar Ayaz Sadiq were also present.

KE seeks Rs 2.336 per unit hike in power tariff for June

ISLAMABAD (APP): K-Electric (KE) has filed a petition on account of Fuel Charges Adjustment for June 2023, seeking Rs 2.336 per unit increase in power tariff. Positive FCA for June 2023 is due to utilization of fuel sources based on economic merit order and an increase in the fuel price of Furnace Oil, partially offset by a decrease in the price of RLNG. In the petition to the power regulator, the KE maintained that the price of furnace oil increased by 6% compared to the reference month of March. Likewise, the price of RLNG purchased from PLL decreased by 6%, the price of RLNG from SSGC decreased by 2%, while the price of power purchased from CPPA-G decreased by 1% and is subject to NEPRA’s final decision. The regulator will hold a public hearing on July 26.

Medical waste disposal system fully functional: PIMS

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has made it fully functional of its system to properly dispose of medical waste in the hospital. According to spokesperson PIMS Executive Director Dr. Mubashir Mushtaq Daha, following the directions of the Secretary of Health, measures were adopted on an emergency basis to dispose of the hospital’s waste and make the system fully functional. He said that guidelines had been prepared by the hospital to dispose of the medical waste. He added the hospital had also established a mechanism to separately dispose of the infectious and non-infectious waste. Dr Mubashir said, “Now well-organized system is in place in the hospital to incinerate medical waste. Only in the last month, the hospital had disposed of medical waste of 21,985 kilograms.”

Maldivian envoy pays farewell call on foreign secretary

ISLAMABAD (APP): High Commissioner of Maldives Farzana Zahir on Tuesday paid a farewell call on the Foreign Secretary Asad Majeed Khan here. The foreign secretary appreciated the high commissioner’s efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation between two countries in various fields including political, economic, education and tourism, according to a Foreign Office statement.

Developmental scheme of Local Government sector approved

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) approved a developmental scheme of Local Government sector with an estimated cost of Rs 62043.267 million in its 4th meeting of the current financial year 2023-24 chaired by P&D Board Ali Sarfraz Hussain, here on Tuesday. The approved development scheme was Development Resilient Environment and Advancing Municipal Services-I (DREAMS-I) at the cost of Rs 62043.267 million.

PMDC directs pharmaceutical companies to follow barcoding rules

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has decided to issue warning letters to pharmaceutical companies for violation of rules of printing barcodes on the packing of their products. According to officials of the National Health Services, the ministry has asked for a report on the implementation of barcoding rules. As per these rules, pharmaceutical manufacturers and importers must print 2-D barcoding on the packaging of their products. Putting such measures as a 2-D barcode matrix for the identification of medicinal products help in the eradication of spurious

and falsified drugs that pose a serious threat to the health of citizens, they added. It was decided that over the next two weeks printing of barcodes, as per rules, must be ensured. DRAP will immediately issue warning letters to all those pharmaceutical companies that have not registered their barcode data with DRAP and are not printing 2-D barcodes on the packing of their products, they said. According to them, this is an important step to stop the entry of spurious and counterfeit drugs into the market which can save hundreds of citizens from the harmful effects of such illegal medicines.

WWF’s remarkable performance under coalition govt elevates workers’ welfare in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) has achieved exceptional success in improving the well-being of workers in Pakistan under the leadership of Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and the coalition government. According to a press release, the WWF has experienced substantial growth in its receipts, indicating a strong commitment to workers’ well-being during the tenure of the incumbent government. During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the WWF witnessed significant financial growth, with receipts totaling Rs. 14 billion. However, in the following year, there was an impressive surge, resulting in a substantial increase to Rs. 50 billion. This remarkable rise in funding highlights the government’s strong commitment to enhancing the welfare of workers and their families nationwide. Under the coalition government, the WWF has achieved notable accomplishments, including the timely clearance of backlogs

related to Marriage Grants, Death Grants, and Educational Scholarships across the country. Additionally, 67 workers were able to perform Hajj after a two-year suspension due to Covid. The amounts for various grants and allowances have also been increased, providing workers with improved financial support. The Marriage Grant has been raised from Rs. 200,000/- to Rs. 400,000/-. Similarly, the Death Grant has been increased from Rs. 400,000/- to Rs. 800,000/-. The transportation assistance provided to workers and their children, which used to be Rs. 1500/-, has been raised to Rs. 6000/-. Likewise, the Uniform allowance given to workers and their children, previously Rs. 4500/-, has been increased to Rs. 9000/-. Moreover, the amount allocated for Books/Stationery, previously Rs. 7000/-, has been raised to Rs. 14000/-. A total of 3738 educational scholarships, amounting to Rs. 147,394,591/-, have been disbursed.

Sana, Italian envoy pledge to strengthen bilateral relations, security cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan and Italian Ambassador in Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese have agreed to strengthen cooperation between their countries’ interior ministries, implementing better strategies and measures to prevent cross-border crimes. In a meeting, they both expressed a shared commitment to enhancing bilateral relations and fostering stronger ties. Italian Ambassador expresses sorrow and regret over the tragic Greek ship incident during the meeting. The Interior Minister describes the loss of valuable lives of Pakistanis as an extremely mournful event. The Interior Minister emphasized that there will be no tolerance for the perpetrators involved and strict actions are being taken against

them. He urged European countries not to provide any shelter to those who have illegally entered, but instead, to repatriate them to their respective countries. This measure aims to prevent them from becoming a potential source of empowerment for others. The Interior Minister stated that they are actively raising this issue with countries that issue visas to these individuals. Italian Ambassador assures Interior Minister of swift resolution of visa issues faced by Pakistanis. The Ambassador acknowledges the commendable role of the Pakistani community in Italy. There is a high demand for Pakistani workforce in Italy, according to the Ambassador. The Italian Ambassador also commends the Pakistani police and security forces.

New UK initiative will boost trade with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Kingdom’s Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) has now entered into effect, providing tariff reductions and simpler terms of trade to Pakistan and 64 other countries. The new scheme has replaced the Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP) and will help drive business between the UK and developing countries, reducing the need for aid. UK Minister for International Trade Nigel Huddleston launched the scheme on Monday, during a visit to Ethiopia’s largest industrial business park, Bole Lemi. Under the DCTS, Pakistan has retained its enhanced preferences status and will continue to benefit from duty-free exports to the UK on 94% of goods exported. It will also remove tariffs on over 156 additional products, and simplify some seasonal tariffs. Total trade (goods and services) between the UK and Pakistan each year cur-

rently stands at 4. 4 billion. It is expected that 120 million in tariffs will be saved on exports to the UK under the scheme. Pakistan and other DCTS countries will be supported to participate in the international trading system through the UK’s Trade Centre of Excellence, which will provide specialist support to fully participate in the global trading system. This may include support on meeting trade standards, and participating in multilateral trade forums. UK’s Trade Director for Pakistan and British Deputy High Commissioner, Karachi, Sarah Mooney, said: “This is a major development in the trading relations between the UK and Pakistan. This important new scheme will further strengthen the economic ties between our two great countries, helping Pakistan to bolster its exports to the UK and harness the power of trade for development.”

Britain says it will start talks with Turkiye on new free trade deal

LONDON (Agencies): Britain said on Tuesday it intends to start talks with Turkiye over refreshing their bilateral free trade deal, with a view to including services and the digital sector in any future agreement. Britain already has a free trade agreement with Turkiye, which was rolled over when Britain left the EU, which the trade ministry said was now outdated. A review of that agreement has resulted in both sides concluding that there is room for it to be improved with a new deal, the



ministry said, although negotiations are not expected to formally begin until next year. The countries have a trading relationship which was worth £23.5 billion (\$30.7 billion) last year.

Business and Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch said Britain would use the talks to tailor a new FTA to Britain's economic strengths. "I look forward to using the deal to deepen the UK-Turkey trading relationship, drive economic growth and support businesses up and down the country," she said in a statement. Any deal could address issues pertaining to goods, such as current quotas on Turkish exports such as olive oil, and well as expand into services, digital and data.

World Bank chief Banga unveils new plans to boost lending 'firepower'

GANDHINAGAR (Agencies): World Bank President Ajay Banga unveiled new plans on Tuesday to stretch the bank's balance sheet and help countries tackle climate change and other challenges but said a capital increase would still eventually be needed. Banga, a former Mastercard CEO who took over the helm of the World Bank on June 2, announced the new proposals to "make our balance sheet work harder" during a meeting of finance officials from the G20 economies in Gandhinagar, India. The new steps,



still being discussed with shareholder countries, come on top of initial measures approved in April that will boost World Bank lending by up to \$50 billion over the next decade. The US, the bank's biggest shareholder, kicked off

the push for reforms in October, later nominating Banga to succeed former president David Malpass with a specific mandate to accelerate the evolution of the nearly 70-year-old institution. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen this week called for more work to reform the World Bank and other multilateral development banks, saying capital increases would be on the table only after they undertook changes to expand their capacity to help countries tackle climate change and other challenges.

Evergrande's overdue results show steep losses, liabilities

HONG KONG (Agencies): China Evergrande Group, the world's most indebted property developer, posted a net loss of 105.9 billion yuan (US\$14.8 billion) in 2022, while its total liabilities increased to 2.4 trillion yuan (US\$334.6 billion), it said in its long overdue results. The developer defaulted in late 2021 and has been struggling to complete projects and repay its many suppliers and creditors. After announcing an offshore debt restructuring plan in March, it is now garnering support to com-



plete the process. With one of the largest debt piles in the country, Evergrande's debt problem has rippled through China's property sector, a pillar of the world's second-largest economy, leading to a string of de-

faults and uncompleted homes across the nation. The big losses were in line with analyst expectations as Evergrande its contracted sales fell to 443 billion yuan and 31.7 billion yuan respectively, versus 723 billion yuan in 2020. Charles Macgregor, head of Asia of Lucr Analytics, said he was not optimistic about Evergrande's results. "Results are meaningless if the business model is broken," he added, speaking ahead of the announcements. Evergrande's shares listed in Hong Kong will remain suspended.

Microsoft, UK ask for pause of appeal over Activision deal

LONDON (Agencies): Microsoft today asked a London tribunal to pause its appeal against Britain's block on its US\$69 billion takeover of Activision Blizzard to give the parties more time to resolve the dispute. Britain's competition regulator, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), in April became the first major regulator to block the acquisition of the 'Call of Duty' maker, citing concerns about the impact on competition in cloud gaming. The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has also opposed the tie-up, but



suffered a major defeat last week when a federal court rejected the FTC's application to temporarily halt the deal. In Britain, the CMA's final report is usually the last word. Companies cannot offer remedies after its publication

and their only recourse is to the Competition Appeal Tribunal (CAT). But last week, less than an hour after a US federal court ruled the deal could go ahead, the CMA said it could look again at a modified proposal. It later said a restructured deal could satisfy its concerns subject to a new investigation. All sides applied for a two-month pause of the case at the CAT, which the CMA's lawyers said in court filings will "allow the CMA and the parties to engage swiftly and constructively in relation to Microsoft's proposals".

Tesla bosses pay US\$735mil in excess compensation suit

WILMINGTON (Agencies): Tesla Inc's directors will return US\$735 million to the company to settle claims they grossly overpaid themselves in one of the largest shareholder settlements of its kind, according to a filing yesterday in a Delaware court. The settlement resolves a 2020 lawsuit by a retirement fund which holds Tesla stock and challenged stock options that were granted to Tesla directors starting in June 2017. The settlement does not impact the US\$56 billion compensation package of Elon Musk, which



is being challenged by shareholders in a separate lawsuit that went to trial last year. A ruling is expected soon in the Musk case. The directors, including Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison, agreed to return the equivalent value

of 3.1 million Tesla stock options, according to a court filing. Tesla did not respond to a request for comment. The directors acted in good faith and in the best interests of Tesla stockholders but agreed to settle to eliminate the risk of litigation to themselves and to the company, according to a court filing. The directors were accused of awarding themselves unfair and excessive compensation in the form of around 11 million stock options from 2017 to 2020 that allegedly grossly exceeded norms for a corporate board.

BlackRock names CEO of world's biggest oil producer to its board

NEW YORK (Agencies): BlackRock has named Saudi Aramco chief executive officer Amin Nasser to its board, underscoring the asset manager's commitment to the oil industry in the middle of a highly politicised debate about its role in ESG investing. Nasser has led the world's biggest oil producer since 2015, including overseeing its public listing, and provides BlackRock with "a unique perspective" on key issues facing the company and its clients, CEO Larry Fink said Monday



in an emailed statement. BlackRock and Fink, 70, have been criticised by both sides of the political divide over ESG investing after promoting the strategy as a way to help the global economy respond to climate

change. Environmental advocates have slammed the firm for continuing to pile capital into the fossil fuel industry, while some Republicans have accused BlackRock of peddling a "woke" agenda that they say is at odds with American capitalism. At times, Nasser has taken issue with the ESG movement, warning in February that an increased focus on environmental, social and governance metrics was undermining investment in oil and gas to the point of posing a threat to global energy security.

MUFG overhauls joint ventures with Morgan Stanley in Japan

TOKYO (Agencies): Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group and Morgan Stanley will merge some operations at their Japan-based joint ventures, in the first major reorganisation since the two entities were formed more than a decade ago. The companies will integrate Japan equity sales for institutional clients, along with corporate access, research and a part of execution services, MUFG and Morgan Stanley said in a statement today. The banks also agreed to collaborate on foreign exchange



trading. They plan to implement the changes in the first half of 2024, subject to regulatory approval. Ja-

pan's largest lender invested US\$9 billion in the Wall Street bank at the height of the financial crisis in 2008, acquiring a 20% stake. Following the alliance, they set up two securities joint ventures in Japan in 2010. Morgan Stanley MUFG Securities is 51% owned by the US bank, while Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities is 60% owned by the Japanese lender. The ventures were designed to serve different purposes but have some overlapping functions.

China's Q2 GDP growth slows to 0.8%

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 percent 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 percent increase and compared with a 2.2 percent expansion in the first quarter. On a year-on-year basis, GDP expanded 6.3 percent in the second quarter, accelerating



from 4.5 percent in the first three months of the year, but the rate was below the forecast for growth of 7.3 percent. 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.

Cartier owner Richemont's shares fall as US sales slump

ZURICH (Agencies): Shares in Cartier jewellery owner Richemont slid on Monday as a drop in sales in the Americas overshadowed a post-Covid rebound in China. The Swiss luxury giant, whose other brands include fashion house Chloe and fountain pen maker Montblanc, posted €5.3 billion (US\$6 billion) in global revenue in its first quarter ending in June. It was a 14% increase from the same three-month period last year. But it was lower than the €5.4 billion expected by analysts surveyed by Swiss news agency AWP. The group reported a "strong rebound" in the Asia-Pacific region, excluding Japan, with revenue surging 40% to €2.2 billion at constant ex-



change rates. The removal of Covid restrictions and the reopening of borders in China in January led to double-digit growth in the mainland and triple-digit increases in Hong Kong and Macau. But sales fell 2% in the Americas to €1.1 billion, stemming from "lower wholesale sales and retail sales broadly aligned with the prior-year period", the company said.

Insurers to review Black Sea ship cover, say sources

LONDON (Agencies): Insurers are reviewing whether to freeze cover for any ships willing to sail to Ukraine after Russia said today it will suspend participation in a UN-backed deal that allows the export of grain through a Black Sea safe corridor, sources said. The agreement, brokered by Turkey last July, aimed to alleviate a global food crisis by allowing Ukrainian grain blocked by the Russia-Ukraine conflict to be exported safely. It will expire at the end of day today. "Due to the collapse of the Black Sea corridor deal, most shipowners will now refrain from calling Ukrainian ports," Christian Vinther Christensen, chief operating officer with Danish ship-



ping group Norden told Reuters. The last ship left Ukraine under the deal yesterday. Insurance has been vital to ensure shipments through the corridor and industry sources said the suspension by Russia was being evaluated in terms of whether cover in some form could continue. "Some underwriters will look to take advantage with a hefty increase in rates. Others will stop offering cover.

Dollar near 1-year low as euro scales 17-month peak

SINGAPORE (Agencies): The dollar wobbled near an over one-year low against its major peers today, as investors awaited fresh catalysts to gauge if the greenback has further downside in the wake of last week's cooler-than-expected US inflation report. The US dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of six currencies, dipped slightly to 99.84 in early Asia trade, after having tumbled to its lowest since April 2022 on Friday. The index also clocked its worst week of 2023 last week, after data showed US inflation subsided further with consumer prices registering their smallest annual increase in more than two years, taking pressure off the Federal Reserve to continue raising interest



rates. "I think the dollar can stay under selling pressure," said Carol Kong, a currency strategist at Commonwealth Bank of Australia. "Markets are focused on the end of the FOMC tightening cycle." Against the greenback, the euro hit a fresh 17-month high of US\$1.1256, while sterling gained 0.15% to US\$1.3094, not far from last week's top of US\$1.3144, also its highest since April 2022.

Swedbank's interest income rockets net profit past forecast

STOCKHOLM (Agencies): Swedish banking group Swedbank reported a bigger-than-expected rise in net profit today on the back of higher interest income, and said its credit quality was solid as loan impairments fell sequentially in the second quarter. Swedbank, Sweden's biggest mortgage lender, said its net profit more than doubled to 9.12 billion Swedish crowns from a year-ago 4.51 billion crowns to come in ahead of a mean forecast of 8.06 billion crowns in a Refinitiv poll of analyst estimates. Nordic banks such as Swedbank have seen a dramatic run of central bank rate hikes aimed at tackling soaring inflation lifting interest income and profit over the past year. Swedbank, a rival to lenders Handelsbanken and Nordea, said its interest income – which includes revenue from mortgages – rose to 12.77 billion crowns from 7.11 billion last year, ahead of the 12.32 billion crowns forecast by analysts. Loan losses from sectors hit by bal-



looning costs of servicing vast piles of debt amassed during the years of zero rates – above all by commercial real estate firms in Sweden – have so far been very modest for banks. That may change in the quarters to come if Sweden's commercial property bust worsens at a time when households are feeling an increasingly painful pinch from rising mortgage costs, although many have savings to dip into if needed. "Our credit quality is solid and we feel secure with our conservative and thorough lending process. We see that our customers are continuing to adapt to the prevailing economic conditions," Swedbank's chief executive officer Jens Henriksson said in a statement.

Sciver-Brunt's latest hundred helps England end Women's Ashes all square

Nat Sciver-Brunt at last scored a hundred against Australia in a winning cause as England triumphed by 69 runs in the third one-day international at Taunton on Tuesday to end the multi-format Women's Ashes all square at 8-8. Victory, under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method for rain-affected matches, meant England inflicted double white-ball world champions Australia's first bilateral ODI series loss since 2013. Sciver-Brunt's 129, her second hundred in three days against Australia following an unbeaten 111 in an agonising three-run defeat in the second ODI at Southampton, was the cornerstone of England's 285-9. A revised target of 269 from 44 overs proved



too much for Australia, world champions in both ODI and Twenty20 cricket, as they were dismissed for 199, with seamer Kate Cross taking 3-48. But holders Australia, who won the lone Test of this series, were already assured of retaining the Ashes at 8-6 ahead coming into this match. "We definitely think we're closing the gap to Australia," Cross told Sky

Sport. "The fact that we're 8-8 at the end of it and it doesn't really feel fair that it's going back to Australia." Sciver-Brunt, however, had the satisfaction of seeing her fourth ODI century in five innings against Australia at last lead to a win for England. "I tried to take it ball by ball today. I came in in some pretty tough conditions after they'd got two quick wickets," said the all-rounder. Australia's Ashleigh Gardner admitted: "England have outplayed us, and played a fearless brand of cricket, and it is something we should look at." England, having lost the toss, were soon in trouble as openers Sophia Dunkley and Tammy Beaumont fell with just 12 runs on the board.

Mooney returns to number 1 in ICC Women Rankings

Australia's Beth Mooney has topped Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu's nine-day stand as number one in the batters' list of the MRF Tyres ICC Women's ODI Player Rankings following the weekly update carried out on Tuesday. Mooney regains her position at the helm from number two, following scores of 81 not out and 33 in the first and second Women's Ashes matches between England and Australia in Bristol and Southampton, putting her on 769 points. The series is currently levelled with the decider taking place in Taunton today. Hot on Mooney's heels is Nat Sciver-Brunt, whose unbeaten 111 from 99 saw her move up two slots to second place and a career-best 763 points. This is the all-rounder's joint-



best position, which she last reached in April 2022. Sciver-Brunt is also back on top of the all-rounders list for the first time since September 2022 on 402 points. It is her third time at the top, but the first time she has passed the 400-point barrier. Her teammate and captain, Heather Knight, has skipped four slots to a joint 14th in the batters' rankings, sharing the spot with New Zealand's

Sophie Devine, thanks to her batting heroics in the first ODI, where she returned an unbeaten 75 from 86 balls. Alyssa Healy re-entered the batters' list in fourth place with 734 points, since the qualification date for appearance in the current rankings of 1 June 2022. She re-enters the rankings due to not playing an ODI since April 2022. Australia's Ashleigh Gardner and ICC Women's Player of the Month for June 2023 has jumped four places to number eight with 631 points in the bowlers' list and two places to fifth on 330 points in the all-rounders' list, which continues to be headed by Sophie Ecclestone (756 points), a position she has firmly kept her grip on since March 2022.

Djokovic fined US\$8,000 for 'racket abuse' in Wimbledon final

LONDON: Novak Djokovic has been fined US\$8,000 after smashing his racket against a net post during Sunday's men's singles final at Wimbledon, reported German news agency dpa. The All England Lawn Tennis Club has confirmed that the 36-year-old has been hit with the penalty for "racket abuse" during his defeat by Spain's Carlos Alcaraz. Djokovic allowed his frustration to show after failing to break Alcaraz



and then losing his own service game during the decisive fifth set of an enthralling contest on Centre

Court. Umpire Fergus Murphy, who had earlier pulled up the Serbian for a time violation, immediately issued a warning for a code violation. Djokovic's disappointment grew as the 20-year-old world No 1 took full advantage to seal a 1-6, 7-6 (8-6), 6-1, 3-6, 6-4 victory after four hours and 42 minutes. In the process, he denied his opponent a 24th grand slam title and an eighth at Wimbledon.

S. Korea apologise for picking player with drunk driving conviction

SEOUL: South Korea's football association (KFA) dropped Lee Sang-min from their Asian Games squad today and apologised for picking the defender who is ineligible due to a drunk driving conviction. Lee, 23, was caught driving under the influence in May 2020 and fined 5 million won on Aug 5 that year. Under KFA regulations, any player who has been fined at least 5 million won for such an offence cannot be eligible for selection for a minimum of three years. Lee's ineligibility period ends



only next month. "The KFA humbly acknowledge that in the selection process for the Asian Games national team players announced on (July) 14, they selected players who did

not conform to the national football team operating regulations," it said in a statement. "(We) will do our best to prevent similar situations from recurring through future administrative system maintenance." Lee was also selected for the Under-23 team in 2021 due to an oversight. South Korea are looking to win a third straight football gold medal at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, which were postponed from last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Games run from Sept 23 to Oct 8.

Saudi team to compete in World Fencing Championships

MILAN: Eight fencers from Saudi Arabia's national team will take part in the nine-day World Fencing Championships starting July 20 in Milan, Italy. A media statement issued on Tuesday said Ahmed Al-Sabban, president of the Saudi Fencing Federation, is heading the Kingdom's delegation to Italy. The Greens enter the tournament with fencers Adel Al-Mutairi, Ahmed Al-Qudaihi, Mohamed Al-Amr and Abdullah Al-Mansaf, who will compete with sabers. Meanwhile, fencers Ahmed Al-Hussein, Hussein Al-



Taweel, Khalifa Al-Amiri and Faisal Abed will compete in the epee event. The Saudi saber team completed their preparatory camp on Tuesday at the Christian Power Academy in Orleans, France. The training camp

lasted 20 days, under the supervision of Cyril Verbrackel, the director of sports performance at the federation, national coach Majid Al-Mutairi, and team administrator Saud Al-Huwaimel. The epee team held their training camp in Forli, Italy, for 10 days, under the supervision of coach Mohamed Fouad and team administrator Khaled Al-Baridi. During the camps, the Saudi fencers took part in several friendlies against European and Arab contenders as part of their preparations for the championship.

Fofana joins Ronaldo and company as Al-Nassr seek dominance

Cristiano Ronaldo is good at keeping Al-Nassr and Saudi Arabian football in the headlines. "I opened the way to the Saudi league and now all the players are coming here," he said earlier this week. Whether he "opened the way" is debatable, but there is no doubt that following his arrival in January, the quality of imports has moved to the next level. He must have been pleased on Tuesday when Al-Nassr announced the signing of Seko Fofana. Ronaldo had said: "In one year, more and more top players will come to Saudi. In a year the Saudi league will overtake the Turkish league and Dutch league." The comments may have provoked huge debate but there is little doubt that any club in Amsterdam or Istanbul, or in fact in any



league, would love to sign a player of Fofana's quality. The 28-year-old arrives in Riyadh following a spell as captain of RC Lens, the team that finished second in France last season, just a point behind champions Paris Saint-Germain. The Ivory Coast international was last season an integral part of a team that qualified for the UEFA Champions League, making 35 appearances and scoring seven

goals. A year earlier his record was three more games played and an extra goal scored. It is impressive consistency. Overall, he played 112 times for the club and scored 21 goals. Fofana has developed into a goalscoring midfielder; that much is clear from his stats. This spells danger for Al-Nassr's rivals. With the threat from Ronaldo as well as Anderson Talisca, who ended last season as the second-highest scorer in the league, there is some serious firepower at the club. When you consider that Marcelo Brozovic has arrived from Inter Milan as one of the best defensive midfielders around, it gives those with attacking threat greater possibilities to go forward, safe in the knowledge that a world-class star is behind them.

Messi starts his new job in the Florida heat

FORT LAUDERDALE, United States - Lionel Messi got down to business with his new Inter Miami team-mates on Tuesday, taking part in his first full training session with the Major League Soccer club. The Argentine World Cup winner took to the club's training field at 9am local time with temperatures already above 30 deg C. Along with his former Barcelona team-mate, Spanish midfielder Sergio Busquets, who signed for Miami on Sunday, Messi was given a 'tunnel' welcome from his new team. The players lined up opposite each other and Messi and Busquets ran through the 'tunnel' to applause and slaps on the back from the other players. The pair will soon

be joined by a third former Barcelona veteran with Spanish full-back Jordi Alba joining the club. "Jordi Alba will sign today," club co-owner Jorge Mas told reporters. Chatting with Venezuelan international Josef Martinez, likely to be his strike partner for Miami, Messi was watched by over 200 media representatives who had attended the session as he did some basic drills. Miami's training sessions had barely attracted double figure attendance from the media before Messi's arrival. Messi was unveiled to the club's supporters at the stadium on Sunday, at a celebratory event alongside Miami co-owner David Beckham. The Argentine's first game is scheduled for Friday.

Defiant Pogacar promises Tour de France fight

Two time former champion Tadej Pogacar insisted the two hardest stages of the Tour de France were still to come and refused to concede defeat despite a crushing time trial setback on Tuesday. Defending champion Jonas Vingegaard ripped up the form book in the 22.4km time trial, extending his overall lead to 1min 48sec over Pogacar. "That was the best day of my career," said the 26-year-old Dane who rides for Jumbo Visma, whose collective efforts beat Pogacar in the 2022 Tour. An exasperated Pogacar wore a forlorn look as he struggled to understand what had just happened to him on the key stage. "To be honest, I was hoping to be in yellow day," said the affable 24-year-old Slovenian.



nian. "I gave it all," he said shaking his head. "He took a lot of time off me but this isn't finished. "If tomorrow is raining, then tomorrow can go my way," he said in the sweltering heat of the early evening. "Its not easy to gain two minutes but we'll try," he said. "There are still two hard stages remaining, so its not lost yet. Maybe the two hardest."

Shakeel's double ton puts Pakistan on top in Sri Lanka Test

Saud Shakeel became the first Pakistani batter to make a double hundred in Sri Lanka as the visitors took control of the first Test after making 461 on Tuesday. Behind by 149 runs on the first innings, Sri Lanka reduced that to 135 when it was 14 for no loss by stumps on day three. Shakeel was stranded on 208 not out, his second century in two Tests, when Pakistan was all out after tea. In six Tests since his debut in December, he has scored a double hundred, a hundred and five half-centuries. He has a Bradman-esque average of 98.5. Shakeel was the mainstay of Pakistan's innings by stitching valuable partnerships with the lower middle order and the tail after the top order collapsed. At 101-5, a first-innings lead was the last thing on Pakistan's mind, but Shakeel added 177 runs with Agha Salman to rescue his side. The partnership was a record for Pakistan for the sixth wick-



et against Sri Lanka, improving on the 173-run stand between Sarfaraz Ahmed and Asad Shafiq in Dubai in 2017. "When I went in to bat, I wanted to attack," Shakeel said. "If I had tried to be defensive we would have got bowled out for 150. That's the reason I attacked and was able to take the game deep. "We have been working to play this kind of attacking cricket back in the camp at home. The coaching staff backed me. Pretty pleased with the effort." With an unorthodox batting technique, Shakeel used his feet expertly to the spinners, punishing the loose balls and forcing the Sri Lankans to spread the field during his stand with Salman.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: JULY 19, 2023



self today and might impress someone quite a bit!

- **VIRGO**: Let yourself finish whatever little tasks you need to do today even if you have big, new projects to start. Your amazing energy helps you take care of almost everything in front of you!
- **LIBRA**: You're running in place today, or at least it feels like it! Try not to get too frustrated. Just because it's hard to get much of anything done, that doesn't mean you can't still have a good time.
- **SCORPIO**: Surprise information comes your way later in the day and should provoke at least a smile, if not elation! Things really are getting better for you, and you can make this work out well too.
- **SAGITTARIUS**: One tiny detail is all that's standing between you and an early departure or major success, but you find it difficult to clear it out of the way! It's vital to find a way to get past it, though.
- **CAPRICORN**: Unexpected information comes your way today that might provoke a big change in your outlook. Most likely you'll find yourself looking up more related material and learning more and more.
- **ACQUARIUS**: Finances are more trouble than they're worth today, but you've still got to deal with them. Just slow things down as much as you can, though someone is almost certainly trying to pressure you.
- **PISCES**: You and your family or sweetie or even friends find it easier to get along today. If anything remains unsaid that you think ought to be heard, so ahead and start the conversation.

Scientists create new embryos to save African mammal

- The fertilized eggs are ready for transfer to wild southern white rhino surrogate mothers, the BioRescue research consortium says Nairobi (Agencies): A team of scientists working in Kenya announced on Monday that five new embryos have been created to save Africa's northern white rhino from extinction. BioRescue, the research consortium in charge of the project, said 18 eggs were collected from a female named Fatu in May and fertilized with sperm from two different bulls to improve "genetic diversity." Fatu and her mother, Najin, are the world's



two remaining northern white rhinos and live on Kenya's 90,000-acre Ol Pejeta wildlife conservancy, which is under poacher protection. The northern white rhino subspecies was declared functionally extinct in 2018 following the death of the last male, Sudan. "Four years since the start

of this ambitious project to save the Northern White Rhino from extinction, the BioRescue consortium has made significant progress towards its ultimate aim," BioRescue said in a statement. A team of scientists working in Kenya announced on Monday that five new embryos have been created to save Africa's northern white rhino from extinction. BioRescue, the research consortium in charge of the project, said 18 eggs were collected from a female named Fatu in May and fertilized with sperm from two different bulls to improve "genetic diversity."

Israeli airstrikes target Syrian capital – state media

- Air defenses responded to missiles in the vicinity of Damascus Damascus (Agencies): Air defenses around Damascus were activated early on Wednesday local time, in order to repel a missile attack from Israel, the Syrian news agency SANA has reported. An "Israeli missile attack" targeted several sites "in the vicinity" of Damascus, SANA said citing Syrian military sources. There were no immediate reports of casualties or property damage. According to the Jerusalem Post, this is the first Israeli attack on Syria in two weeks. In early July, IDF jets bombed targets in the Homs province and struck an air defense battery near the Golan Heights. The most re-

cent strike on Damascus was just over a month ago, seriously injuring a Syrian soldier outside the capital. The Israel Defense Force does not comment on the attacks, in line with its long-standing policy of not discussing operations conducted outside of the country. Israeli warplanes have repeatedly bombed targets inside Syria over the past decade, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu once acknowledged that there have been "hundreds" of strikes. On the rare occasions the IDF comments on the attacks, they claim to be hitting Iranian and Hezbollah targets in pre-emptive self-defense operations against Tehran's growing influence in Syria.

Pentagon's Indo-Pacific Command Chief: North Korea Has Missiles That Can Reach US

WASHINGTON (Agencies): North Korea has developed intercontinental ballistic missiles that can reach the United States, but it's still questionable they can carry a nuclear payload, US Indo-Pacific Command Commander Admiral John Aquilino said during a think-tank event. "The capability that they've delivered and demonstrated the other day we assess could reach the United States," Aquilino said during a discussion hosted by the Aspen Institute on Tuesday. Aquilino said the United States is still reviewing North Korea's nuclear capability. Earlier in



the day, media reported that North Korea fired two possible ballistic missiles. According to sources, the projectiles likely have fallen into the Sea of Japan but outside of Japan's exclusive economic zone. The broadcaster added that missiles flew 550-600 kilometers (340-370 miles), reaching an altitude of 50 kilometers.

Vehicle Traffic on Crimean Bridge Restored in Reverse Mode - Russian Gov't

MOSCOW (Sputnik): The movement of vehicles on the Crimean Bridge has been restored and operates in reverse mode, which means that the lane of the road is used for alternate traffic in the oncoming and passing direction, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin said on Tuesday. Earlier in the day, the Russian National Anti-Terrorism Committee said that Kiev carried out a terrorist attack on the Crimean Bridge using two underwater drones, the road part of the bridge was damaged, two adults were killed, and one child was injured. "Vehicle traffic on the Crimean bridge has been restored in reverse mode along the rightmost lane of the Taman-Kerch direction," Khusnullin said on Telegram. The authorities carried out a prelim-



inary examination of the bridge spans, which "confirmed that their condition allows to start the vehicular traffic," Khusnullin noted. This is not the first time the landmark bridge that connects Crimea to Russia's mainland was attacked. On October 8, 2022, the Crimean Bridge was damaged as a result of a truck explosion which Moscow believes was carried out by the Ukrainian special services. In May, the bridge was completely repaired and the railroad traffic was restored.

US groups demand Abu Akleh probe via Justice for Shireen Act

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Rights groups in the United States are urging Congress to pass a bill that would require the US government to investigate the killing of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh by Israeli forces and present its findings in a report to lawmakers. In a letter addressed to Congress members on Tuesday – amid the visit of Israeli President Isaac Herzog to Washington, DC – more than 60 organisations renewed calls for justice for the slain journalist – a US citizen who was fatally shot while covering an Israeli raid on Jenin in the occupied West Bank last year. Congressman Andre Carson had introduced the legislation – dubbed the Justice for Shireen Act – in May, coinciding with the first anniversary of her killing. "Shireen Abu Akleh was a celebrated journalist who gave voice to Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation. Her death, on May 11, 2022, and the violent attacks on her funeral procession by Israeli police, horrified the entire world," the letter read. "And yet,

a forceful response from the United States government for accountability for her killing has been noticeably absent." The statement was signed by prominent human rights and press freedom advocacy groups, including American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Amnesty International USA, Committee to Protect Journalists, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam America, Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) and Reporters Without Borders. The Justice for Shireen Act is unlikely to pass in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, where Israel also has many staunch supporters amongst Democrats. But the letter highlights the continuing push by rights advocates to seek accountability for the killing of Abu Akleh, a veteran television correspondent who was renowned across the Arab World. Carson's bill would compel the Biden administration to identify "any United States defense materials, funds or services that were implicated in the death of Shireen Abu Akleh".

US to send VAMPIREs to Ukraine – Reuters

- The platform is designed to take out drones and other low-flying aircraft WASHINGTON (Agencies): US officials are set to announce another \$1.3 billion arms package for Ukraine, including multiple types of suicide drones and the newly developed VAMPIRE rocket launcher system, according to Reuters. The latest military assistance will be unveiled sometime this week, the outlet reported on Tuesday, citing two US officials. Kiev will receive ammunition, radar and other counter-drone systems in addition to the VAMPIRE – or Vehicle-Agnostic Modular Palletized ISR Rocket Equipment. Produced by US arms contractor L3Harris, the VAMPIRE can be mounted on most vehicles with a cargo bed, including civilian pickup trucks, or installed in a fixed position. The weapon consists of a targeting sensor and a launch pod equipped

with four 70mm laser-guided rockets, and can be used by a single operator against both air and ground targets. While L3Harris says the system is "configurable with different sensors and weapons packages," it remains unclear what variant will be provided to Kiev. The upcoming weapons package will also include two types of loitering munitions – drones equipped with explosives which orbit the battlefield in search of a target – the Phoenix Ghost and the Switchblade. Both UAVs have been sent to Ukraine in the past, with nearly 600 Phoenix Ghosts supplied in a \$95 million arms shipment last year. The VAMPIRE was initially announced for Kiev last August, with L3Harris later confirming it had received a \$40 million Pentagon contract to deliver four systems by mid-2023 and 10 more by the end of the year.

Thousands of writers demand AI stop using work without permission

Thousands of writers have added their names to a letter calling on AI companies to stop using copyrighted work without permission. Margaret Atwood, Jonathan Franzen, James Patterson, Suzanne Collins and Viet Thanh Nguyen are among the prominent authors endorsing the letter addressed to the CEOs of OpenAI, Meta, Microsoft, Alphabet, IBM and Stability AI. In the letter organised by the Authors Guild, the largest professional writers' organisation in the United States, the signatories call attention to the "inherent injustice in exploiting our works as part of your AI systems without our consent, credit, or compensation". "These technologies mimic and regurgitate our language, stories, style, and ideas. Millions of copyrighted books, articles, essays, and poetry provide the 'food' for AI systems, endless meals for which there has been no bill," the letter reads. "You're spending billions of dollars to develop AI technology. It is only fair that you compensate us for using our writings, without which AI would be banal and extremely limited." "The introduction of AI threatens to tip the scale to make it even more difficult, if not impossible, for writers – especially young writers and voices from underrepresented communities – to earn a living from their profession," the letter adds. Generative AI models like ChatGPT use vast troves of data scraped from the internet to produce content that mimics human speech.

South Africa says arresting Putin would be 'declaration of war'

Putin's arrest would undermine South African-led mission to end war in Ukraine, President Ramaphosa says. South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa said that any attempt to arrest Russian President Vladimir Putin when he visits the country next month would be a declaration of war with Russia. Ramaphosa said in court papers that were released on Tuesday that "Russia has made it clear that arresting its sitting President would be a declaration of war." Putin has been invited to a BRICS summit in Johannesburg next month but is the target of an International Criminal Court arrest warrant – a provision that Pretoria as an ICC member would be expected to implement were he to attend. South Africa's diplomatic dilemma is playing out in court, where the leading opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), is trying to force the government's hand and ensure the Kremlin leader is held and handed over to the ICC if he steps foot in the country. In his response, Ramaphosa described the DA's application as "irresponsible" and said national security was at stake. According to the president, South Africa is seeking an exemption under ICC rules based on the fact that enacting the arrest could threaten the "security, peace and order of the state". "It would be inconsistent with our constitution to risk engaging in war with Russia," he said, adding that this would go against his duty to protect the country.

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