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Chief Editor: Rizwan Inayat

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Editor: Omer Rizwan

Saudi Arabia considering Chinese bid to build nuclear plant

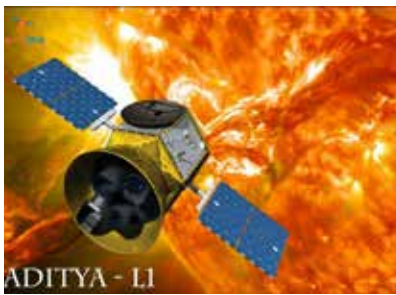
Saudi Arabia is considering a Chinese bid to build a nuclear power plant in the kingdom amid frustration over the United States' stipulations for supporting Riyadh's quest for nuclear power, the Wall Street Journal has reported. China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC), a state-owned firm, has proposed the construction of a nuclear plant near the border with Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, the newspaper reported on Thursday, citing unnamed Saudi officials. Saudi officials hope the Chinese bid will push US President Joe Biden's administration to loosen its conditions



for aiding the kingdom's nascent nuclear industry, including commitments

not to enrich uranium or mine their own uranium deposits, the newspaper said. China is unlikely to require Riyadh to adhere to such requirements, which are intended to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the newspaper said. CNNC and the foreign ministries of China and Saudi Arabia did not immediately respond to requests for comment made by the Reuters news agency. Saudi Arabia and China have deepened their ties in recent years, raising concern in Washington. China has in recent years sought to export its nuclear energy industry overseas.

India's ISRO Prepares To Launch Sun Mission - 'Aditya L-1' - After Historic Landing On Moon's South Pole



NEW DELHI (Agencies): India accomplished a remarkable feat on Wednesday by becoming the sole non-permanent UN member to achieve a successful Moon landing. This achievement, marking the successful touchdown of its mission on the unexplored South Pole of the Moon, provides a significant boost to the ambitions of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). ISRO is now gearing up for its upcoming space endeavor, the Aditya L-1 mission, set to launch in September 2023. The PSLV-C57/Aditya-L1 Mission has already reached the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota and is scheduled for launch in the first week of September. This spacecraft will carry seven scientific payloads to investigate various aspects of the Sun from different vantage points. ISRO Chief Somanath, discussing the success of Chandrayaan-3's soft landing, informed reporters about the impending Aditya L-1 mission, currently in preparation at Sriharikota. Aditya L-1 is a groundbreaking scientific endeavor for ISRO, akin to a 'space observatory' positioned at Lagrange-1 in the Earth-Sun system. Situated 1.5 million kilometers from Earth, Lagrange-1 provides an unobstructed view of the Sun without being affected by eclipses or occultation. Functioning as a space telescope, Aditya L-1 is designed to predict solar storms that could potentially harm satellites and power grids. Solar storms emit X-rays, electromagnetic waves, and high-energy particles throughout space, causing disruptions to radio signals and GPS.

Passengers forced to fly 'around the world' due to airline ticketing issue

TOKYO (Agencies): A group of students and teachers learned the hard way that having an airline reservation does not mean you are holding an airline ticket. 31 students along with their teachers found themselves stuck at Osaka's Kansai International Airport (KIX) after finishing a study tour of Japan. One of the teachers in the group, Dr. Trevor Boffone, took to social media platform TikTok to share the group's misadventures. In the video, Boffone first explained that he had been with 31 students, teachers and parents and they had just finished a tour of Japan with EF Tours, a travel agency specializing in student and educational tours. Boffone said that the tour was "awesome", but complications arose when the group checked in at Osaka Airport on August 11, 2023, for their flight back to Houston.

Pentagon facing ammunition crisis - WaPo

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US Department of Defense is having trouble keeping up with the demands of the Ukraine conflict, the Washington Post reported on Saturday, warning that failure to sustain current production levels could jeopardize security on the home front. US military contractors are soon expected to double the rate of standard NATO artillery round production recorded prior to the current phase of the conflict. However, even churning out 28,000 shells per month is insufficient to satisfy what the outlet called "Ukraine's astonishing hunger for artillery ammunition," let alone shore up depleted reserves at home. A shortage of raw materials - particularly the explosive TNT, which the US no longer produces - has hampered the Penta-

gon's efforts to restock its own arsenal, which has been severely depleted by its support for Ukraine. Washington currently obtains much of its TNT from Poland but has been searching for new suppliers, including in Japan, after losing production partner Zarya when the region where the factory was located voted to become part of Russia in last year's referendum. Limited supplies of the propellant used to move artillery shells through gun barrels are also hampering defense contractors' production capabilities, according to Czech propellant charge manufacturer Explosia. Spokesman Martin Venc told the Post that the raw materials required to make propellant, including nitroglycerin and nitrocellulose, are in short supply.

Putin offers 'condolences' after Russia plane crash kills Wagner boss

Kuzhenkino, Russia (AFP/APP): Russian President Vladimir Putin broke his silence on Thursday on the plane crash a day earlier that killed infamous mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin and other senior members of the Wagner paramilitary group. In televised comments Putin offered his "sincere condolences to the families of all the victims", describing the crash as a "tragedy". As well as Prigozhin, the other nine people on board also died. Putin's statement was the first official confirmation that the Wagner boss had been killed. Wednesday evening's

crash took place exactly two months after Prigozhin led a rebellion against Moscow's top military brass, considered by some observers to have been the biggest threat to Putin's long rule. Although Moscow opened an investigation into violations of air traffic rules, investigators have been silent since, as speculation of a possible assassination has grown. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky insisted Kyiv had nothing to do with the incident. "I think everyone knows who this concerns," he added, in what appeared to be a reference to Putin.

Japan starts dumping Fukushima water

TOKYO (Agencies): Japan has begun the release of water from the site of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, proceeding with a plan that has sparked outcry across the region. Some of its neighbors are not convinced that the discharge is as safe as Tokyo claims. The dump, which was given the final greenlight by the Japanese government on Wednesday, started at 1:03pm local time (0403 GMT) on Thursday, plant operator TEPCO reported. The first batch of around 7,800 cubic meters is to be removed into the Pacific Ocean over 17 days. Three more releases of the same volume are to follow before March 2024. Over 1.3 million cubic meters of water are stored at the location in more than 1,000 large tanks. The liquid was used to cool down the nuclear reactors damaged during the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster, preventing them from fully melting down. Tokyo says the water should be released after treatment, which removes most of the radioactive contamination, to decommission the power plant. The treatment process does not remove tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen, but the Japanese government has reported that its level in the discharged water would be around 190 becquerels per liter, well below what is considered safe by the World Health Organization.



Indonesia signs MOU with Boeing for F-15EX

JAKARTA (Agencies): The Indonesian government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Boeing for the acquisition of 24 F-15EX fighter aircraft. The MOU, which was signed at Boeing's St Louis facility on 21 August, constitutes a "commitment to finalise the sale" of the F-15EXs, Boeing said. The MOU was signed during a visit by Indonesia's Minister of Defense Prabowo Subianto to the US. In a statement, Prabowo said that the fighter's advanced capabilities are important for the protection of Indonesian national sovereignty. "The F-15EX... [has] digital fly-by-wire flight controls, a new electronic warfare system, an all-glass digital cockpit, and the latest mission systems and software capabilities," Boeing said. These capabilities will be leveraged in delivering the Indonesian version, which has been designated the F-15IDN, the company added. The US Department of State approved the sale of 36 F-15EXs on 10 February 2022 under Foreign Military Sales (FMS).

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Former US President Donald Trump surrenders in Georgia election case



Former United States President Donald Trump has surrendered himself to authorities in the state of Georgia, where he faces criminal charges related to efforts to overturn the 2020 election. The Republican leader flew down from his residence in Bedminster, New Jersey, to appear at the Fulton County jail on Thursday afternoon, less than a day ahead of his deadline to surrender. Once inside, he was swiftly booked, a process that required Trump to have his mugshot taken, a first in US presidential history. The process took approximately 20 minutes. Afterwards, Trump quickly disappeared into a motorcade waiting outside the jail. He had been released on a \$200,000 bond agreement, the highest of all his co-defendants. As he left the airport in Atlanta, Georgia, Trump issued a brief statement to reporters, denying wrongdoing and reiterating that he had the right to challenge his defeat in the 2020 election. "We have every right - every single right - to challenge an election that we think is dishonest," Trump said, offering a preview of his defence strategy. He also

turned the allegation of election meddling against the prosecutors, accusing them of trying to derail his 2024 bid for the presidency: "What they're doing is election interference. They're trying to interfere with an election." Trump is just one of 19 people charged in the Georgia election case, which alleges the existence of a criminal enterprise to override his defeat in the 2020 presidential race. The former president is believed to be the 12th among the defendants to surrender to authorities. All 19 defendants faced a deadline of Friday at noon local time (16:00 GMT) to turn themselves in. Since Tuesday, high-profile Trump allies have trickled into the Fulton County jail, including former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and lawyer Sidney Powell.

"UN Chief Urges Overhaul of UNSC and Global Financial Institutions at BRICS Summit"



UNITED NATIONS (Agencies): During the BRICS summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres emphasized the need for significant changes within the United Nations Security Council and proposed a revision of the Bretton Woods system. This global financial framework was established by Western nations led by the United States after World War II. Guterres addressed the attendees on Thursday, marking his inaugural participation in the event. He pointed out that the current structures of international governance no longer accurately mirror today's realities, having been designed in the aftermath of World War II. During that era, many African nations were still under colonial rule and lacked representation. The Secretary-General particularly highlighted the UN Security Council and the institutions associated with the Bretton Woods system, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. He stressed that for these multilateral establishments to maintain their universal relevance, they must undergo reforms to align with contemporary global power dynamics and economic circumstances. Failing to undertake such reforms, he warned, would result in fragmentation. Guterres emphasized the potential risks of a fractured global economy and financial system, divergent approaches to technologies like arti-

cial intelligence, and conflicting security frameworks. He cited an estimate from the International Monetary Fund that suggested such fragmentation could lead to a 7% reduction in global GDP—a consequence disproportionately affecting low-income nations, particularly those in Africa. Addressing the challenges of a world grappling with crises, Guterres conveyed a straightforward message: in a world undergoing division, collaboration is not just an option but a necessity. He called for the restoration of trust and the revitalization of multilateralism suitable for the 21st century. This, he asserted, would require the willingness to make compromises for the collective benefit. The Secretary-General underscored the urgency of unity for the sake of action and justice, especially given the existential threats posed by climate change, increasing poverty, hunger, and inequalities. The BRICS alliance, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (joining in 2010), represents over 40% of the global population. All five member states are also participants in the broader G20 consortium.

Microsoft to shut Xbox 360's online store next year

LONDON: Microsoft said on Thursday it would pull the plug on Xbox 360's online store and marketplace next year, as it focuses on its latest consoles and subscription service Game Pass. Xbox 360 Store and Xbox 360 Marketplace will be shut on July 29, 2024, and gamers using the old console will not be able to purchase and download new games, according to a post on Xbox's website. Microsoft is, however, allowing users to play with their already purchased Xbox 360 games and older titles that are compatible with the console. "A lot has changed since the Xbox 360 launched in 2005. Technology has evolved, expectations from players have shifted, and we are focused on making Xbox Series X|S the best place to play now and in the future," Xbox said. Microsoft stopped the production of Xbox 360 in 2016 and a year later launched Xbox Game Pass,



a subscription gaming service that can be accessed on consoles and Windows platforms. As part of its latest move, the Movies & TV app on the older console will also be removed. Xbox 360 is regarded as one of the best-selling gaming consoles of all time, right up against Sony's PlayStation 3. Microsoft had sold about 84 million units of Xbox 360 till 2014, which is when it stopped reporting its sales because of the launch of the successor Xbox One.

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.

Caretaker CM emphasizes officers to abide by principles of merit, transparency, impartiality

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan has stressed the civil officers to take decisions abiding by principles of merit, transparency and impartiality. The chief minister was chairing a meeting at cabinet room of Civil Secretariat here Thursday which was attended by Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Muhammad Zubair Asghar Qureshi, Senior Member Board of Revenue and all Administrative Secretaries. During the meeting, the chief minister highlighted the timeless wisdom of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah who during his address to civil officers in Peshawar in April 1948 emphasized the importance of civil servants in maintaining a transparent and efficient administration. He stressed that

government officers must execute their duties without submitting to external pressures and follow principles of competence, fairness, and the welfare of citizens. He reaffirmed his commitment to providing conducive environment for civil officers to perform their duties independently and efficiently. He emphasized upon the officers to ensure transparency in matters particularly related to financial issues, posting, transfers and general administration. The chief minister issued directions for prompt reporting of corruption cases to CM Office and Chief Secretary Office adding that irregular postings be discouraged. He said that illegal appointments made by earlier governments must be identified, reported and action shall be taken immediately. He advised that on complex matters,

opinion of the Law Department and Advocate General should be invited. He also directed to recover the government vehicles from unauthorized persons and officials and a compliance report to this effect be submitted to CM office. Speaking about good governance, the chief minister directed the chief secretary to hold monthly review meeting of the performance of all departments and present the same to the office of the Chief Minister. Caretaker CM Muhammad Azam Khan highlighted the caretaker government's resolve to minimize unnecessary expenses while prioritizing essential services. He directed to focus on austerity measures to optimize the utilization of public funds, ensuring that they are channeled towards projects and initiatives that yield tangible benefits for the public.

DC directs to tackle public transport and traffic challenges

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal chaired a meeting at his office here Thursday to address the issue of implementation of the public transport fare system and find out solutions to ongoing traffic issues. The meeting focused on a range of topics, including the deployment of fare collection mechanisms at all routes within the

Abbottabad district and removal of traffic-related hurdles. During the proceedings, the DC issued directives aimed at enhancing the overall citizen experience by effectively implementing the fare system and mitigating traffic-related challenges. He emphasized the importance of providing seamless facilities to the residents of Abbottabad and urged the

representatives from key stakeholders to play an active role in achieving this objective. The meeting was attended by SP Headquarters/Traffic Warden, Arif Javed, AC Headquarters Saqlainn Saleem, TMO Abbottabad Shakeel Hayat, Secretary Regional Transport Authority Hazara Division and representatives from the transporters' union.

Commissioner for strict implementation of Dengue Action Plan 2023

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Commissioner Peshawar Division Muhammad Zubair on Thursday stressed on strict implementation of Dengue Action Plan 2023 in the true sense, directing all civic bodies to maintain coordination to eradicate larvae and public awareness. The commissioner while chairing a meeting expressed his satisfaction with the measures taken to prevent the dengue virus in all five districts, directing all deputy commissioners of the division to remain in the field to cope with the disease. Commissioner Zubair was

informed that the situation in 2023 is more satisfactory than in 2022 due to the timely measures taken throughout the year and as compared to the total cases of 760 in last year only 20 cases have been registered Peshawar division and the travel history of all cases is available. Around 17 cases have been registered in Peshawar, two cases in Khyber and one in Nowshera. Directives for carrying out door-to-door visits by lady health workers in connection with the campaign were also issued. He also instructed for immediate initiation of

measures under the strategy for September and October and obtaining of Larva Clearance Certificate from the heads of public offices. In order to achieve better targets the Peshawar, Nowshera and Charsadda administrations were asked to get the services of 100 volunteers from the Pakistan Red Crescent (PRC) and signing of an early agreement with the organization in this regard. Zubair directed the Capital Police Officer (CCPO) Peshawar to ensure cleanliness and fog spray in the police stations to control the spread of the virus.

DC chairs scrutiny committee meeting to review medical retirement cases

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal here on Thursday chaired a meeting of the scrutiny committee to review the cases of retirement based on medical grounds. The meeting discussed 33 cases related to medical retirement. During the proceedings, each case was examined in detail and reviewed various aspects of the cases that led to the applications for retire-

ment on medical grounds. The Deputy Commissioner took the initiative to personally meet with all the individuals who applied for retirement on medical grounds in the presence of committee members. Medical Superintendent, District Headquarter Hospital (DHQ) Dr. Israr asked pertinent questions to the persons who had applied for retirement. These questions ranged from inquiries about

their health condition, and the nature of their illnesses, to the examination of their medical records. The meeting was attended by the AC Abbottabad Saqlain Saleem, Medical Superintendent DHQ Dr. Israr, Audit Officer DC Office, TMO Abbottabad Shakeel Hayat, Representative from the DHO Office, Health Coordinator Dr. Ashfaq; Deputy DEO male and female, TMO Havelian and others.

2 drug peddlers arrested

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (Agencies): Dera police arrested two drug peddlers and recovered ice from their possession in the limits of the City Police Station here on Thursday. According to police spokesman, SHO City Police Station Khabab

Wali Baloch during a snap-checking signalled two persons riding on a motorcycle to stop, recovering 210 grams of ice from the suspect identified as Abdul Sattar a resident of Basti Syedan. While 197 grams of ice was recovered from

the possession of the other accused Muzamil son of Muhammad Tariq resident of Mohalla Fethullah Badshah. Separate cases were registered against the arrested drug peddlers and further investigation is underway.

Police bids adieu to RPO DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Aug 24 (AP-P): Dera Ismail Khan (DI) Police on Thursday bid adieu to Regional Police Officer (RPO) Abdul Ghafoor Afridi, expressing gratitude for maintaining peace during his tenure. "I am deeply grateful to the dignitaries of the area, scholars, businessmen and media for their cooperation during my tenure and I salute them for their sincere cooperation," the RPO observed while talking in a fare-

well held at his office. Commissioner Dera Zafarul Islam Khattak, former secretary DRC Hajiullah Bakhsh Sapal, former Caretaker Provincial Minister Haji Abdul Haleem Khan Qasuria, and other notables of Tank, Dera and South Waziristan and local journalists attended the meeting. The RPO who has been transferred from Dera range appreciated the cooperation and coordination extended by all institutions, during his stay at the of-

fice. He said that wonderful cooperation and love by the people of Dera Ismail Khan would always remain in his memories. On the occasion, the deputy commissioner also presented a shield for his valuable services. The participants also acknowledged the services of outgoing RPO stating that a lot of work was done on the elimination of drugs, major robberies were traced and peace was established in the area.

PHC order release of ex-MNA Sibghat Ullah

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Wednesday ordered release of former Member of the National Assembly Sibghat Ullah, who was arrested under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) on August 5. The two-member bench comprising Justice Sayyed Arshad

Ali and Justice Dr Khurshed Iqbal heard the bail application of the former MNA from Dir. The petitioner's counsel Alam Khan Adenzai told the court that Sibghat Ullah, who was arrested from Dir on August 5 under 3-MPO, was still languishing in jail, The Assistant Attorney General

told the court that the former MNA had delivered a speech at the party meeting, after which he was arrested under 3 MPO. The court observed that delivering a speech was not an offence and ordered to release the former MNA after quashing his arrest order.

Trainee police personnel donate blood

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Hamza Foundation Welfare Thalassemia Hospital, Peshawar organized a blood donation camp at Police Training School Swabi wherein 65 under-training police personnel donated blood, said a press release issued here on Thursday. Director Police Training School,

Swabi, Tariq Iqbal Khan and DSP Admin, Fazal Meraj Khan, whose cooperation made the holding of the camp possible, were also present. On this occasion, Ibrarullah Jan, a representative of the Hamza Foundation delivered a detailed lecture on the welfare services of the organization and importance

about awareness and prevention of Thalassemia and blood donation. Talking on the occasion, Ejaz Ali Khan, the founder of Hamza Foundation appreciated the cooperation and spirit of the police personnel and the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur for blood donation.

Chairlift owners directed to submit fitness certificates

PESHAWAR (APP): District Administration Lower Dir here Thursday directed all the chairlift operators to submit fitness certificates at the earliest. Meanwhile, raids are underway in Lower Dir to inspect the working conditions of chairlifts while action has been taken against owners of

chairlifts who are operating ignoring safety standards. Tehsil Municipal Officer Balambat has sealed the chairlift situated in Balambat till further order while the Deputy Commissioner has constituted a technical team to conduct an inspection of all the chairlifts situated in the area.

114 shopkeepers arrested for profiteering

PESHAWAR (Agencies): District administration Peshawar continued its crackdown against profiteers and arrested 114 shopkeepers for profiteering. The administration has also warned 64 shopkeepers to bring improvement in their businesses, said a press release issued here on Thursday. On the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shah Fahad, the officers of the district administration carried out the inspection of 253 shops in various localities of the district and arrested 114 shops for profiteering, lack of official price-list, sale of un-

der-weight roti and poor cleanliness conditions in their business facilities. The arrested shopkeepers include fruit & vegetable vendors, nanbais (bakers), milkmen, grocers and others. Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Shah Fahad has said that the officers of the district administration are used to issue the official price list of fruits and vegetables and later ensure those official rates in letter and spirit. He has directed the officers of the district administration to consecutive visits to bazaars across the district and legal action against profiteers.

Leopard cub seized, poachers arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): The Wildlife authorities in Lower Dir District on Thursday seized a leopard cub and arrested the poachers during a routine checking of vehicles in the Chakdara area of Dir Lower District. The preliminary investigation revealed that the arrested person was involved in the shifting of rare wild

species from mountainous regions to downcountry for selling. The arrested person identified as Sher Mehmood son of Sultan Mehmood booked under relevant laws of the Wildlife Act of 2015. The seized cub is around three to four months old and will be kept at a sanctuary in Dir or may be shifted to Peshawar Zoo.

Ban imposed on rallies by candidates of LG elections

SWAT (Agencies): The district administration Swat under Section 144 has imposed ban on carrying out rallies by winning candidates of Local Government (LG) elections and brandishing of arms as part of enhancing security measures. According to a statement issued by office of District Magistrate here Thursday,

the ban has been imposed for a period of ten days hence forthwith and the violators would be prosecuted under Section 188 of CrPC. The District Intelligence Coordination Committee during its meeting held on August 24, also suggested imposition of ban to avert any untoward incident, said the statement.

Overpopulation exerts pressure on water resources; time for construction of new dams

PESHAWAR (APP): Besides food and socioeconomic resources, the country's overpopulation, which crossed the psychological barrier of 240 million in May this year, have started exerting pressure on water sector in the country. Highly vulnerable to climate change, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's low lying areas of Nowshera, Peshawar and Charsadda were exposed to drink poor quality of water after the last year devastated floods that adversely affected the quality of groundwater in these districts. Despite of the fact that Pakistan had witnessed 22 high to very high floods during the last 55 years, no attention was paid to the construction of small, medium and large dams since long, which may result water scarcity, droughts and more flooding in future. "I regularly go to Pabbi tehsil by covering 10 kilometers distance to bring clean drinking water for my family after the ground water of my village Mohib Banda badly affected by the last year floods was not fit for human consumption," said Riazul Haq, said former PST teacher of Nowshera district while talking to APP on Thursday. He said that the water of the nearby areas was very heavy and its drinking may cause vomiting and other waterborne diseases. Like, Riaz, most people are bringing clean drinking water from Pabbi, Nowshera and Peshawar due to poor quality of the ground water. Malik Riaz Khan, a senior children specialist at Govt Hospital Pabbi Nowshera said the use of contaminated water may cause diarrhea, cholera and others waterborne diseases that may prove fatal for weaker children. Besides stomach disorder and digestive problems, he said that the use of polluted water often caused stunted growth and malnutrition in children and lactating mothers. Professor Dr Muhammad Naeem of Economics Department, University of Swabi said that Pakistan was ranked 14 out of 17 extremely high water risk countries in the world due to overpopulation, lack of water reservoirs and climate change induced weather patterns. Citing the reports, he said that our country's population was expected to exceed 380 million by 2050 and the demand for water was likely to reach 274 million acre feet (MAF) as compared to 191 MAF supply of water by 2025. Dr Naeem said that water availability had plummeted from 5,229 cubic meters per inhabitant in 1962 to just 1,187 in 2017 in Pakistan. He claimed, the country treats about one percent of wastewater, which was one of the lowest rates in globe and around 40 percent of water was lost due to

spillage, seepage, side leakage, and bank cuttings along with irregular profiling of alignment of banks. Approximately, 97 percent of Pakistan's freshwater is used by the agriculture sector; he said, adding additionally, 30 percent of land is expected to be waterlogged while 13 percent to saline in the next few years if new dams are not constructed on priority basis in Pakistan. Tauheedul Haq, former Conservator of Forest said that the non construction of dams after Turbela had negatively impacted on water situation in the country. He said that about 46,000 dams had been constructed across the globe including 22,104 dams by China, 5,334 by India, but unfortunately, Pakistan had built only about 150 small and large dams since its inception. "Small dams could easily be constructed in KP in a short span of three years while big dams mostly require 10 to 15 years with more investment," he said, adding that Pakistan would require additional 76 MAF water by 2050 which was only possible by constructing small dams to meet the growing water demand. The National Water Policy (NWP) 2018 had revealed that Pakistan was heading towards a situation of water shortage due to lack of dams, which may lead to food insecurity for all living creatures in next few years. According to the policy, the per capita surface water availability had significantly declined from 5,260 cubic meters per year in Pakistan in 1951 to around 1,000 cubic meters in 2016. This quantity is likely to further drop to 860 cubic meters by 2025, marking the country's transition from a water stressed to a water scarce. KP Irrigation Department spokesman told APP that 24 small dams with storage capacity of 75,008-acre feet (AF) having 49,523 acres cultivated command areas (CCA) were being constructed in the province. Pezu dam in Lakki Marwat, Khattak Bandhan dam in Kohat and Makh Banda dam in Karak were completed by the federal government. Similarly, Ichar and Manchura dams at Mansehra, Chashma Akora Khel dam in Karak, Sarozai dam in Hangu, Sanam dam in Lower Dir, Bada dam and Ulta dam in Swabi were constructed jointly by the federal and provincial governments. Seven medium dams including Bara dam in Khyber; Tank Zam in Tank, Shiekh Haider Zam, Chaudwan Zam, Daraban and Kora Nullah in DIKhan and Larzan small dam in Tank with water storage capacity of 520,884 AF covering 171,748 CCA besides 31.5-megawatt power generation capacity were in design stage.

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BRICS Summit 2023: Pioneering the Path to a New World Order

In an era of unprecedented global challenges and transformations, the recently concluded BRICS summit has sparked discussions about the dawning of a new world order. The BRICS nations - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - have emerged as formidable players on the global stage, not only in terms of economic might but also in their collective pursuit of a more equitable and multipolar international system. As these nations unite to address global issues, their collaborative efforts could indeed mark the beginning of a new world order that prioritizes inclusivity, cooperation, and shared progress. The term "new world order" often evokes visions of a radical reshuffling of power dynamics, but in reality, the concept is multifaceted and reflects an evolution of international relations. The traditional Western-centric model is gradually giving way to a more balanced and diverse structure where emerging economies have a greater say in shaping global agendas. The BRICS nations, with their combined population accounting for over 40% of the world's total, represent a significant portion of humanity, and their voices are crucial in addressing a range of global challenges. One of the BRICS summit's most significant contributions is its emphasis on fostering cooperation and unity among nations that share common goals but diverse approaches. These nations recognize that their collective strength lies in their ability to pool resources, expertise, and ideas to tackle complex issues like climate change, economic inequality, and public health crises. By promoting a multipolar world order, BRICS challenges the notion that a single nation or a small group of nations should dictate the global agenda. This shift towards a more collaborative approach reflects the growing interdependence of nations and the recognition that no country can thrive in isolation. Economic collaboration within BRICS is a cornerstone of this evolving world order. The group's combined GDP accounts for nearly a quarter of the global economy, highlighting their potential to drive global economic growth and stability. Moreover, initiatives like the New Development Bank (NDB) demonstrate their commitment to reducing dependency on traditional financial institutions and fostering a more equitable distribution of resources. The NDB focuses on funding sustainable development projects in member countries and beyond, showcasing a departure from the unilateral policies that have characterized previous world orders. However, the journey towards a new world order is not without challenges. The BRICS nations themselves are diverse in terms of political systems, economic structures, and cultural backgrounds. Harmonizing their interests and strategies requires skillful diplomacy and compromise. Moreover, the existing global powers might resist relinquishing their influence, potentially leading to tensions as the world order recalibrates. In this context, the BRICS summit serves as a blueprint for a more inclusive and balanced world order. As these nations continue to collaborate, they demonstrate that constructive dialogue, mutual respect, and shared objectives can drive progress even in the face of ideological differences. In conclusion, the recent BRICS summit has kindled hopes for a new world order that is characterized by cooperation, equality, and mutual benefit. The BRICS nations, united in their commitment to address global challenges, signify a shift towards a multipolar system that better represents the diversity of the world's population. While challenges persist, the summit serves as a reminder that a more inclusive and equitable world order is not only possible but also imperative in this era of interconnectedness. As BRICS continues to evolve and shape international relations, the prospect of a new world order built on cooperation and collaboration becomes increasingly promising.

The AI arms race — By Shabbir Ahmed

In an age defined by exponential technological growth and shifting global dynamics, the clarion call from CIA Director William Burns for the United States to “do it faster and better” in the realm of artificial intelligence (AI) reflects the urgency of a new era. A transformative epoch marked by AI potential has emerged, reshaping the landscape of espionage and power. Yet, the intriguing paradox of embracing a ‘healthy competition’ between the US and China, while navigating their intricate geopolitical dance, adds a layer of complexity that merits deeper exploration. While Burns’ proclamation of AI as the most significant transformation since the Cold War captivates attention, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen’s recent diplomatic endeavors in China provide an illuminating context. Yellen’s dialogue with Chinese officials underscores the aspiration for ‘healthy competition’ in a relationship marred by economic frictions. Her message, echoing Burns’ sentiment, emphasizes the mutual benefits of cooperation without compromising national interests. At the core of the US-China equation lies a pivotal challenge – bridging the vast divide in their economic engagement. The call for ‘healthy competition’ hinges on a level playing field, where fairness and open market principles prevail. However, entrenched disparities in trade volumes, market access, and protection of intellectual property have rendered this aspiration elusive. Forging an equitable path demands more than rhetoric; it requires substantial structural shifts that challenge the core of each nation’s economic fabric. The AI revolution, heralded by Burns, introduces a new realm of competition, where the algorithms hold the keys to unlocking unprecedented

insights. Yet, this very revolution is intertwined with the larger narrative of geopolitical rivalry. China's perception of 'unhealthy competition,' characterized by economic containment strategies, clashes with the US viewpoint that market distortions caused by state interventions result in the same outcome. This dichotomy illustrates the challenge of reconciling competing ideologies within the context of AI's transformative power. As both nations race to harness AI's potential, it's essential to navigate the delicate balance between innovation and escalation. While the CIA's pursuit of AI supremacy echoes the broader sentiment of 'healthy competition,' the ramifications of this technological arms race transcend espionage. The quest for AI dominance, unchecked, holds the potential to further intensify existing rivalries, perpetuating a cycle of escalation. However, the crux of 'healthy competition' lies not just in technological prowess, but in fostering an environment of trust and understanding. The deep-seated political and ideological divides that characterize US-China relations cast a shadow over the potential for meaningful collaboration. From human rights concerns to territorial disputes, these fault lines persistently challenge the foundation upon which 'healthy competition' rests. The implications stretch beyond bilateral relations. The absence of 'healthy competition' could jeopardize cooperation on global imperatives like climate change. China's suspension of climate negotiations in response to geopolitical developments underscores the fragility of such cooperation. The interplay between AI, global challenges, and geopolitical rivalries presents a complex puzzle that requires thoughtful calibration.

- Courtesy: The Nation

China's farming push is about war — By Timur Fomenko

In a bid to secure a domestic food supply and cut down reliance on foreign imports, China is expanding its farmlands. As explained by the newspaper the China Daily, "the rapidly ageing rural population has made it more challenging for China to ensure food security," bringing about a decline in the number of farmers, and forcing the country to depend more on imported produce. Since China is the world's second-most populous country, with over 1.4 billion people, it is natural that its food demands are astronomical and growing year on year, as the population eats more with development and imports increase accordingly. But there is an additional, geopolitical element to China's sudden push for more farming. Using the word "food security" in the aforementioned article indicates that Beijing is well aware its growing reliance on foreign food imports represents a critical strategic risk for the country, one which can be leveraged to bring it to its knees. It might be implied that Beijing is preparing contingency plans for a potential war with the United States, and therefore must severely reduce its dependency on food imports, a great deal of which happen to come from the US itself. A rapid way to defeat any nation in war, if geography allows it, is to place a maritime embargo on it and cut it off from critical import and export routes, locking it into a war of attrition as its resources dwindle and time plays against it. It might be said that the British Empire achieved this twice against Germany, which was unfavorably locked in the heart of central Europe, using the superior power of the Royal Navy to impose maritime embargos against it. In both

World War I and II, Britain's geographic advantage allowed it to close Germany's commercial access to the Atlantic via both the North Sea and the Strait of Gibraltar. Berlin, lacking critical resources such as oil and enough food supply, was strategically encircled and – despite having lightning-fast strike capabilities – could not win a protracted war. Naval embargos are very damaging, and that's why the American strategy against China aims to completely encircle its peripheral oceans with interlocking alliances and a growing military presence. In the event of a war, the US would attempt to economically strangle Beijing with a maritime embargo, which would aim to cut it off from critical imports, and food would be no exception. If Chinese people starve, it brings the regime down and therefore the war is won. One strategic contingency by China to address these war plans has been to build the Belt and Road initiative and therefore establish multiple logistical routes across Eurasia, making it less strategically vulnerable to maritime power. But that isn't enough. The sheer size of China's population and, subsequently, food demand, means Beijing has minimal room to compromise on this, and its reliance on products grown en masse in America, such as soybeans, is a massive liability. This is why not only has China pushed the BRI, but it is pushing a doctrine of self-reliance on all fronts, which Xi Jinping has described as "dual circulation." That also includes not only things like microchip production, but farming and food as well. China's new economic outlook is a response to the reality that even without considering war, the era of globalization is ending

and the US is forcibly tearing it up, with everything becoming strategized. The primary goal of the country has to be to rely on itself and its own markets to sustain economic growth, as some countries become hostile, put up barriers, or leverage aspects of cooperation in demand for strategic objectives. If you look at US commercial goals pertaining to China, the ambition of US leadership is to cripple China's semiconductor and high-tech industries, but then demand Beijing buy hundreds of billions worth of soybeans to satisfy the needs of American agriculture. This is precisely what Trump proposed in his "trade deal" with China all the way back in 2019. The only acceptable commercial relationship Washington wants is one of exploitation, but with agriculture, the demand is there and the US knows it. Therefore, China's bid to shore up its own farming has both a military and strategic dynamic. First, stop a lack of supplies from becoming a liability in any embargo situation. Second, reduce dependency on the US market for agricultural exports as a means of trade leverage. But that doesn't mean it is without risk. A certain former Chinese leader tried to do this before, aiming to increase rice production on an enormous scale in order to boost the nation's own self-reliance and overtake Western powers. This effort, known as 'The Great Leap Forward' ended in disaster – one of the greatest famines in human history and millions upon millions of deaths. China's newest push must be more reasoned and according to market dynamics. Beijing doesn't need any more economic goals than they have had already.

- Courtesy: RT

FACTBOX - Wagner's global operations: War, oil and gold - by Reuters

Russia's most powerful mercenary, Yevgeny Prigozhin, was on board a plane that crashed on Wednesday near Moscow with no survivors, Russian authorities said, two months to the day after he led an abortive mutiny against the army top brass. The June 23-24 revolt by Prigozhin's Wagner mercenary group called into question the fate of its wide network of military and commercial operations across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. This Factbox outlines what Wagner is doing, and where.

- Ukraine

Wagner deployed in Ukraine soon after Russian Armed Forces launched a full-scale invasion in February 2022 and, by the summer of last year, it was enlisting thousands of prisoners to fight for it on front lines. By December, as it took a central role in the battle for Bakhmut, US intelligence estimated Wagner had 40,000 prisoner recruits fighting in Ukraine. Wagner leaders took credit for Russian success in Bakhmut, while upbraiding the regular military and the leadership of the Defence Ministry for alleged corruption and incompetence in prosecuting the war in Ukraine.

- Belarus

Prigozhin arrived in Belarus soon after calling off the mutiny under a deal negotiated by President Alexander Lukashenko. Russian President, Vladimir Putin, said then that Wagner's fighters would be offered the choice of relocating there. Satellite images of a military base near Asipovich, south-east of Minsk, where Russian media had reported the group would establish itself, appeared to show new construction, suggesting the swift development of a Wagner facility. But, in practice, since the announcement of the Belarus accord, which reportedly also guaranteed his personal safety, Prigozhin appeared to move around freely inside Russia.

- Syria

Russia officially began military operations in Syria in 2015, in support of President Bashar Al-Assad against rebels seeking to overthrow him. Moscow deployed its Air Force from Syria's Hmeimim Air Base and used contractors, including Wagner, for some ground operations and in security roles, with hundreds killed by the US in

2018. The group took over security of the Al-Shaer oil field and Western officials say it owns Evro Polis, a company that takes 25 per cent of profits from several Syrian oil fields. Wagner has recruited former Syrian rebels in areas retaken by Assad, including for use as mercenaries in Libya from 2019, while Hmeimim Air Base became a critical node in its logistical operations as a transit point for flights to Russia and Libya. But its operations in Syria were swiftly shifted over to the Russian State after the June mutiny, with contracts of fighters transferred from the group to Moscow's Defence Ministry, sources said.

- Libya

Wagner entered Libya in 2019 to help eastern commander, Khalifa Haftar's assault on Tripoli to drive out the internationally recognised government.

The US Department of Defence said in 2020 that Wagner's support for Haftar appeared to have been paid for by the United Arab Emirates, which backed the warlord, along with Russia and Egypt. The UAE did not respond to a request for comment then, nor in June this year when asked about any links with Wagner. UN sanctions monitors reported in 2020 that Wagner had deployed up to 1,200 people in Libya and the US military's Africa Command said Russian military aircraft were supplying Wagner fighters there. Wagner operated air defence systems and fighter jets from Jufra Air Base south of Tripoli, with some warplanes arriving from Hmeimim, where their original Russian markings were painted over. As well as bringing in Syrian fighters as mercenaries, Wagner worked alongside foreign combatants from Sudan, Chad and elsewhere. Although Haftar's offensive ended in failure with a ceasefire in 2020, Wagner remained in Libya with a presence at Jufra and other air bases in the south and east that researchers say it uses as a springboard to other sites in Africa. Wagner has also deployed at times around major oil fields and researchers say it has commercial interests in Libya that include energy output and local smuggling networks.

- Central African Republic

Though rich in minerals, the Central African Republic is one of the poorest countries

in the world. Russian mercenaries, including from Wagner, intervened in 2018 on the side of the government to quell a civil war that had raged since 2012. The Russian Ambassador to the Central African Republic (CAR) said in a February interview with RIA, a Russian state-owned news agency, that 1,890 “Russian instructors” were present in the country. Analysts have said Wagner received logging rights and control of a gold mine in CAR. The United States has put sanctions on a CAR company as one of several, including one from the UAE that Washington said was involved in financing Wagner through illicit gold dealings.

- Mal

Both Russia and Mali have said Russian fighters there are not mercenaries but rather trainers helping local troops fight a decade-long insurgency by Islamist militants. Mali's leaders seized power in a 2021 coup and brought in Wagner after asking a French military mission to leave. The government contracted directly with Wagner, paying around \$10.8 million a month for its services, Reuters reported in 2021. Wagner fighters have been accused of involvement in an incident last year in Moura, in central Mali, where local troops and suspected Russian fighters allegedly killed hundreds of civilians.

- Sudan

Western nations and diplomats say Wagner has been involved in gold mining, spreading disinformation and schemes to suppress pro-democracy demonstrations in Sudan, as Russia tried to sway events before and after the 2019 overthrow of Omar Al-Bashir. While Moscow has ties to both the military factions that have been locked in war in Sudan since 15 April, Wagner is thought to have sustained a relationship with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) rather than the Army. Wagner has denied it is operating in Sudan, saying its staff has not been there for more than two years and that it has had no role in the fighting. However, in May, the US accused Wagner of supplying the RSF with surface-to-air missiles, “contributing to a prolonged armed conflict that only results in further chaos in the region”.

Letters to the Editor: Jaranwala Carnage

Jaranwala, a small town in district Faisalabad, has been known as a town of farmers and industrial workers that serves as a nursery for the district's industrial base. People lived there since centuries in a cordial manner: On 15 Aug 2023 , a man reportedly got hold of few burned and mutilated papers of the holy Quran , a book revered holiest by Islamic followers across the globe. It was reported in nearest police station which promised to investigate. Someone found this opportunity to spread venom against the minority group.

Enraged people thronged near the town's administrative Assistant Commissioner Office, his house surrounded by a mob that started scorching the building structures, churches and homes of hapless minority. The inmates had got a timely warning thus they managed to escape from the scene timely. Mutual cordial citizenry got a serious setback. The political leadership condemned all this violence. This act is an unbecoming of a decent society. Any such insane attitude can't be expected. The government took a stern action and

immediately started relief and rehabilitation process , apprehension of culprits and thorough investigation will fix the perpetrators, promised to provide immediate relief to the residents , to rehabilitate and recompense the effectees. People showed their trust in the provincial and federal administration. Minorities must be protected well in every part of the country . They must not be marginalised.

- Maj Aamir Zia (R)
- Rawalpindi

ECP prioritizes fair play, timely election in inaugural roadmap meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has underscored its commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all political parties in the upcoming elections and stressed the timely conduct of the elections as well as the need to uphold transparency throughout the process. In the inaugural meeting focused on discuss-

ing the election roadmap, the commission, under the guidance of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, engaged in discussions with the delegates from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F). Furthermore, the commission committed to maintaining an ongoing dialogue with other major political par-

ties. Besides the Election Commission members, the meeting included the involvement of the Election Commission Secretary and other senior officials. The PTI delegation, composed of Dr. Babar Awan, Barrister Ali Zafar, Umair Niazi, and Ali Muhammad Khan (via video link), highlighted the constitutional obligation to hold elections within 90 days.

DC takes steps to enforce dengue prevention protocols

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon on Thursday launched a comprehensive drive and directed to strictly monitor the adherence to essential dengue prevention protocols. According to ICT Spokesman Dr. Abdullah Tabasim, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Rural carried out inspection visit across the Rural Sub-Division. The purpose behind this initiative was to closely assess and monitor the adherence to essential dengue

prevention protocols. During this tour, the AC Rural conducted on-site inspections at a range of petrol pump stations, car wash facilities, and tire shops, accompanied by dedicated dengue control teams. Notably, decisive action was taken as the AC encountered a tire shop blatantly flouting the mandated dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). In light of this egregious violation, the said tire shop was promptly sealed. This resolute step serves as a

clear demonstration of the commitment to upholding public health and safety. Furthermore, in the interest of fostering compliance and ensuring widespread awareness, verbal admonitions were issued to other establishments found operating in potential contravention of the stipulated dengue guidelines. This proactive engagement underlines the dedication of the authorities to curbing the spread of dengue and maintaining the well-being of the community.

ATC sends Ali Wazir & Imaan Mazari on judicial remand

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Anti-Terrorism Court Islamabad on Thursday sent former MNA Ali Wazir and Advocate Imaan Mazari to jail on judicial remand in a case pertaining to damaging public property and creating public unrest. The court also served notices to respondents in a plea seeking post-arrest bail of Imaan Mazari. ATC Judge Abul Hassnat Zulkerain heard the case against the two accused, who were produced be-

fore the court by the police. The prosecutor said that the police required further physical remand of the accused to recover written transcript of their speeches. The court rejected the request of further physical custody and sent the two accused to jail on judicial remand. The court also granted permission to Imaan Mazari to meet her mother Shireen Mazari on the occasion. The further hearing of the case was then adjourned till August 26.

All Pakistan Squash Championship kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 2nd CNS All Pakistan Squash Championship 2023 kicked off at Pakistan Navy Roshan Khan Jahangir Khan Squash Complex, Fleet Club, Saddar Karachi on Thursday. The chief guest at the opening ceremony of 2nd CNS All Pakistan Men & Women Squash Championship 2023 was Rear Admiral Muhammed Saleem HI(M) Commander Karachi, while Commodore Tauqeer Ahmed Khawaja SI(M) Tournament Director and Hokey Olympian Islahuddin Siddique were also present, said a press release.

Quetta administration removes local bus stand from Kelvin Road

QUETTA (Agencies): The Quetta administration has shifted the local bus stand from Kelvin Road to in front of Quetta railway station to reduce roadside problems and to ensure congestion-free travel on its thoroughfares. The local busses running on Sariaab, Barwari, Qambarani, Spini and Sabzal routes would be allowed only to pick and drop passengers in front of Quetta railway station. The initiative has been taken in view of the Balochistan High Court's order to resolve the traffic jam issue during peak hours. Secretary RTA Quetta Manzoor Ahmed said that keeping in view the public woes due to long traffic jams, all possible measures would be taken to resolve the traffic problems in the city. He said that due to the buses, traffic jams often occurred in the city and especially on Jinnah Road, which caused serious problems for the public and especially the patients. He said that for the convenience of the public, buses have been allowed at a railway station only for pick and drop. Therefore, transporters should make sure to follow government orders and strict action would be taken in case of violation.

Shoaib, Abid, Barkatullah named for Pakistan Davis Cup team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Muhammad Shoaib, Muhammad Abid and Barkatullah have been selected for the Pakistan team for the Davis Cup. The Pakistan Davis Cup team includes Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi (Playing Captain) while players comprise Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoaib, Muhammad Abid and Barkatullah, said a press release. The training camp for the Davis Cup tie will start on September 1 in Islamabad. After consultations between the PTF Executive Committee and Davis Cup Captain Aisam ul Haq Qureshi, former Davis Cup player Mushaf Zia was selected as coach to oversee the training camp.

Finance minister calls on PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Finance Minister Shamsad Akhtar on Thursday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here. In the meeting, they discussed the overall economic situation in the country, a PM Office statement said. Finance Minister Shamsad also apprised the prime minister of the performance of her ministry.

Energy Minister vows to aggressively pursue TAPI project



ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of Turkmenistan H.E. Atadjan Movlamov called on Interim Federal Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali here on Thursday. The ambassador extended his congratulations to the minister on assuming his new portfolio and exchanged pleasantries. The minister for energy expressed his gratitude and passed on the regards from the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. "The prime minister is pleased that the TAPI project is dealt on priority basis," he remarked. Both sides agreed to speed up the TAPI gas pipeline project. Muhammad Ali underscored the importance of gas for the economy of Pakistan. "With increasing energy demand of the country, such projects need aggressive approach,"

the minister said. He further reiterated Pakistan's commitment towards TAPI project. The progress on this project is in the right direction and will bear fruit. In this context, host government agreement (HGA) is expected to be concluded, with mutual consensus, in October. Moreover, frequent meetings of the working group on Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) electricity project will be held to expedite the project. The caretaker energy minister highlighted that Turkmenistan and Pakistan both consider each other strategic partners. The TAPI project will not only help meet the rapidly increasing energy demand of the country but offers great opportunity in regional connectivity and allied economic growth.

Governor host dinner in honor of Caretaker CM, cabinet

QUETTA (Agencies): Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar on Thursday hosted a dinner in honor of Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki and members of his new cabinet. Caretaker Chief Minister, Caretaker Provincial Ministers, Advisors, Chief

Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan, Inspector General Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Additional Chief Secretary Saleh Nasir, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Lal Jan Jafar and Principal Secretary to Governor Balochistan Hashim Khan Ghilzai attended the dinner.

Complaints against federal institutions resolved within two months: Regional Head Wafaqi Mohtasib

HYDERABAD (APP): Regional Head Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Hyderabad Syed Dr. Rizwan Ahmed has said that the Federal Ombudsman was an effective institution for resolving people's complaints related to mismanagement and corruption in federal government departments, where complaints could be filed on plain paper. He was addressing a reception given in his honour by the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries here on Thursday. Giving details about the institution of the federal ombudsman, he said that although the institution of the federal ombudsman was engaged in providing free and speedy justice, unfortunately, the majority of people and even most of the members of the chamber were unaware of the importance of the institution of federal ombudsman. He said that the Federal Ombudsman office did not require a

lawyer to resolve people's complaints adding that the complainant after filing the complaint, will be called for a hearing within a few days where the investigating officers of the Federal Ombudsman investigate the case thoroughly and matters will be reached to a solution within a period of two months. Syed Rizwan Ahmed informed that complaints could also be filed through the online facility by reaching the website of the Federal Ombudsman www.mohtasib.gov.pk and through the mobile phone app as well. On this occasion, Farooq Shekhan, President of the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries presented a traditional gift of Ajrak, a Sindhi cap and a shield to the Regional Head of Federal Ombudsman of Hyderabad Syed Dr. Rizwan Ahmed. The office bearers and members of the Chamber were also present.

Tahaffuz Centers established for treatment of citizens suffering from psychological issues

LAHORE (Agencies): On the directives of Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, Tahaffuz Centers have been established for citizens in distress due to psychological issues in all districts of the province. The in-charge Tahaffuz Centres requested the King Edward Medical University to provide staff for the provision of services to a large number of citizens. The request has been sent to the vice chancellor of King Edward Medical University by the in-charge Tahaffuz Centres. It said that support should be provided due to the rush of citizens and children suffer-

ing from psychological problems and drug users in the Tahaffuz Centres. Specialist staff from the Department of Psychiatry should be appointed in the Tahaffuz Centres. The application further stated that services should be provided to affected citizens with psychological illnesses, and staff at protection centers should be trained for this purpose and provide screening and treatment facilities to police personnel in the treatment of mental illnesses. The said request has been sent to the Vice Chancellor of King Edward Medical University on behalf of the in-charge Tahaffuz Centres.

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Pakistan's first 'Misaq Centre' opens in Multan to protect minorities rights

MULTAN (Agencies): On the orders of Regional Police Officer (RPO) Captain (rt'd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, Multan police opened a facility for the protection of minorities' rights and named it 'Misaq Centre' in the city on Thursday. RPO and CPO Mansoor ul Haq Rana visited the Centre, functional inside Chelyak police station, and

briefed the staff on the duty assigned to them. Police officials from minority communities were deployed at the centre, RPO said and added that protection of minority community rights was one of the prime responsibilities of police. RPO and CPO said that the Centre would help minority community members in resolving their problems.

US provided \$215m flood relief assistance to Pakistan



ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States has provided flood relief, disaster resilience, and food security assistance of more than \$215 million to Pakistan since the beginning of the calamity. According to a news release, more than \$80 million in US humanitarian assistance was given through USAID to provide urgently needed supplies for those most affected, including support for food, nutrition, health, security, safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene, and shelter. An additional \$100 million of recovery and reconstruction funding was announced at the January 9 International Conference on Climate-Resilient Pakistan in Geneva, Switzerland, while \$10 million was given as food security assistance to provide urgent supplies to help farmers recover in terms of seeds and fertilizer, and helps repair damaged critical irrigation infrastructure. "\$2 million was given in humanitarian assistance for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) flood response in Pakistan to provide life-saving resources to Afghan refugees

and host communities in Pakistan." More than \$1.9 million was provided in US Department of Defense funding to help airlift USAID supplies while \$3 million for new early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience funding to support Pakistan's ability to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters such as floods. An additional \$16.4 million in nutrition and food security support, early recovery, resilience, and risk reduction assistance was announced in June 2023 to provide life-saving food and nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance to more than 4 million people in flood-affected communities. "Private American citizens and US companies have donated food, medicine, and other relief supplies, and at least \$37 million dollars to help the people of Pakistan in this time of need," the press release added. "US flood relief assistance complements the efforts of the US-Pakistan Green Alliance, which advances cooperation in agriculture, clean energy, and water to support climate resilience, energy transformation, and inclusive economic growth," it said.

Zalmi Foundation gives away Rs 1 mln cash award to Hamza Khan



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Zalmi Foundation has handed over cash award of Rs 1 million to World Junior Squash Champion Hamza Khan. Javed Afridi, Chairman of Zalmi Foundation and Peshawar Zalmi, had announced the cash award for Hamza Khan for winning the World Junior Squash title for Pakistan after

37 years. Javed Afridi, in a statement, said they were proud of Hamza Khan for bringing laurels for Pakistan. The Zalmi Foundation would continue to encourage national heroes in the future too, he added. The Zalmi Foundation has also given away prizes to Pakistan Blind Cricket Team and special athletes in the past.

ISSI delegation visits Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): At the invitation of the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS), Kabul, a delegation of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) visited Afghanistan from 21-23 August 2023. The delegation was led by Director General ISSI, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and included the Director of the Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA), Amina Khan. During the visit, the ISSI delegation held several interactions, which included a call on the Acting Foreign Minister of the Interim Afghan Government (IAG) Amir Khan Muttaqi; and a Bilateral Dialogue with the Centre for Strategic Studies, headed by Waliullah Shaheen, Director General CSS. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood also delivered a lecture on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations at the Institute of Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan. During the ISSI delegation's meeting with Acting Foreign Minister Muttaqi, Obaid Ur Rehman Nizamani, the Chargé d' Affaires of Pakistan in Kabul, was also present. The meeting focused on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, where Acting Foreign Minister Muttaqi underlined the closeness of ties between the two countries, reinforced by numerous commonalities of faith, culture and geography. Muttaqi apprised the delegation regarding progress achieved under the Interim Government regarding ensuring overall security in the country, improving the economy, controlling poppy cultivation, and addressing corruption. He also highlighted notable progress registered in bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan and talked about the need to further focus on regional trade and connectivity. He stressed strengthening of bilateral dialogue particularly on issues of mutual concern. During the meeting, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood reviewed the developments during the two years of Afghan Interim government, particularly in the realm of security and stability, economy, curbing corruption, and reducing poppy cultivation. He also talked about the importance of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and the recent positives in terms of enhanced bilateral trade. Sohail Mahmood underscored Pakistan's role in efforts for stabilization of Afghanistan and stressed the urgency of addressing matters relating to border security and counter-terrorism through close consultations and collaboration. He further stressed that a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan was in Pakistan's interest and would be best suited to advance the common interests of trade and connectivity through CPEC and other mega infrastructure projects. During the Bilateral Dialogue between the ISSI delegation and CSS, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, while shedding light on the relationship, said that there were no other two countries in the region that had so much in common as Pakistan and Afghanistan do; from geographical

proximity to common faith to shared history to ties of ethnicity and kinship to cultural and linguistic affinities, the two peoples were bound by indissoluble bonds. "This makes positive mutual engagement a matter not of choice, but of necessity," he stressed. He added that it was time for Pakistan and Afghanistan to place the bilateral relationship on a sounder basis that addressed security concerns, strengthened the efforts for a robust economic partnership, and promoted the agenda of regional connectivity and economic integration. Waliullah Shaheen, Director General, CSS, stressed the importance of bilateral relations – stressing that the relationship must be approached through the prism of a new narrative revolving around 'friendship and mutual understanding' as there was no other way to approach the relationship, since ties were intertwined. A new approach should be evolved in order to deal with sensitive matters and develop bilateral cooperation into a complimentary relationship. Think-tanks like CSS and ISSI could help promote such an approach, he observed. Sohail Mahmood also delivered a lecture at the Foreign Ministry's Institute of Diplomacy, in which he focused on the evolving geopolitical environment at the global and regional levels and other developments in the economic and political realms that should be a matter of concern for the international community. He noted several key developments in the post-August 2021 Afghanistan including the prevalence of relative peace, albeit with continuing attacks from Daesh/ISKP; increase in IAG revenue generation; expansion in Afghanistan's overall trade volume; decrease in poppy cultivation; and efforts to combat corruption. He also underlined the international country's expectations regarding inclusivity, womens' rights and girls' education, and effective counter-terrorism action. Sohail Mahmood also spoke about the importance of the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship and underscored that both countries suffer from trans-national terrorism, which warranted mutual co-operation and a collective response. He added that Islamabad and Kabul should explore the formation of a broader framework of institutional engagement, which entailed regular consultations and identified pathways for cooperation in other areas. He stressed that a pragmatic and holistic approach needed to be adopted to address the key issues with the aim to find practical solutions that alleviate the concerns and maximize the convergences. During the visit, the ISSI and CSS agreed to strengthen mutual exchanges as part of think-tank collaboration and people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and Afghanistan. DG ISSI ambassador Sohail Mahmood also extended an invitation to Director General CSS Waliullah Shaheen to pay a return visit to Pakistan.

Islamabad police ensures robust security measures in high security zone

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police is ceaselessly dedicated to preserving law and order within the federal capital and has ensured robust security measures in high-security zones. In a dedicated effort to bolster security within the high-security zone, a police spokesperson said that personnel stationed at the Margalla Road checkpoint diligently carry out their duties. They carefully verify the credentials of individuals seeking access to the high-se-

curity zone and meticulously record vehicle information. The high-security zone encompasses critical government and private institutions, diplomatic missions, and other vital assets, emphasizing the need for unwavering protection. Government employees entering this zone are now required to visibly display their departmental identification cards. Furthermore, individuals with business interests within this area are strongly encouraged to

carry their necessary documentation and cooperate fully with the on-duty personnel. Senior officers have issued directives to the personnel on duty, emphasizing the importance of upholding the highest standards of diligence and professionalism while fostering positive interactions with citizens. A sincere appeal is made to all citizens to promptly report any suspicious activities or individuals to the "Pukar-15" helpline, a police spokesperson added.

BBC Bureau Chief meets PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): South Asia Bureau Chief of BBC News Jacky Martens called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here

on Thursday and discussed matters of mutual interest. She briefed the prime minister about expansion of the BBC's presence in Pakistan. Fed-

eral Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi and Minister for Interior Sarfraz Bugti were also present.

PM assures of all steps for progress of Gilgit Baltistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Thursday held a meeting with Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Gulbar Khan and discussed issues of mutual interest. The chief minister congratulated the prime minister on assuming the office and expressed his best wishes for him. The prime minister

said Gilgit-Baltistan had great potential for tourism which was not fully exploited. The Federal Government was taking all possible measures for resolving the issues of Gilgit Baltistan and for progress of its people. The chief minister invited the prime minister for a visit to Gilgit-Baltistan and for addressing the assembly of the re-

gion. While accepting the invitation, the PM said he would soon undertake the visit and would meet with the students of Gilgit-Baltistan University. He said the GB people were very hospitable and he was a witness of it many times. The chief minister informed the prime minister about the administrative issues of his region.

Faith leaders hail Pakistan's pledge to hold perpetrators of Jaranwala incident accountable

WASHINGTON (APP): Speakers at a meeting of representatives of all faiths held at the Pakistan Embassy have expressed satisfaction at the commitment shown at the highest level in Pakistan to bring those responsible for the deadly Jaranwala incident to justice and to compensate those affected. "August 16 was a dark day for Pakistan; it was a conspiracy to disrupt social harmony and religious bonds between followers of two faiths," Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, told the gathering on Wednesday. He said that the entire leadership of Pakistan and civil society had strongly condemned the incident, and stood by Christian brothers and sisters who suffered from arson and vandalism. US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain also condemned the incident and expressed the deepest con-

dolences on behalf of Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the United States government. "Pakistan is a place that is very dear to my heart ... my family is from Lahore. It is such a beautiful country in so many respects," the US diplomat said. "To me it hurts when I see an event that doesn't represent the beauty of Pakistan, true values of Pakistani people." He called for working together and to consider ways and means to prevent misuse of laws to stop such incidents. "Beyond the laws that are on books, we have to create a climate in which all people can practice their religion freely, without fear of persecution; without fear of violence, because that is something that we all share," Ambassador Hussain said. Pakistani-American Christian leaders and representatives of other faiths also thanked the government for its pledge to protect the minorities and

expressed solidarity with the affected Jaranwala community. Ilyas Masih, Director of the All Neighbours' Association, underscored the teachings of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and the Quaid-i-Azam's vision, saying the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed freedom of religion to all people. In his remarks, Ambassador Masood Khan thanked Ilyas Masih and his Association for its efforts to promote interfaith harmony. He also thanked the participants expressing solidarity and reiterating strong commitment towards the cause of promoting greater understanding among the followers of various religions and societies. Highlighting the efforts to compensate and rebuild places of worship as well as homes of the affected people in Jaranwala, Masood Khan said that the community had also stepped forward to help rebuild the damaged houses and properties.

Country Manager UNDP in Pakistan visits NADRA Swift Registration Centre

LARKANA (APP): The Country's Manager and Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan, Samuel Rizk, on Thursday, visited the NADRA Swift Registration Centre in Larkana. He reviewed the working and performance of NADRA counters and took information on which In-charge NADRA Larkana Center Abdullah Bhutto and zonal in-charge Larkana Mehmood

Sheikh gave him a detailed briefing on the preparation of Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC) for flood victims, on which Samuel Rizk praised the performance of NADRA administration and said that NADRA Swift Registration Center made free national identity cards for flood victims in Larkana last year. He also said that the management of the NADRA centre in Larkana is satisfied with the briefing given to him. Sam-

uel Rizk said the Centre will provide financial assistance to these victims and help them in other government functions. Computerized National Identification Cards (CNIC) will be made to facilitate the lives of the victims. Earlier, the officials of NADRA Center Larkana warmly welcomed Samuel Rizk by presenting traditional gifts of Sindhi Ajrak and Topi and flowers to him at the Nadra Center.

PM commends heroes who rescued trapped chairlift passengers in daring operation

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In a commendable act of valor, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar awarded commendation certificates to courageous commandos, armed forces personnel, and local residents who successfully rescued eight passengers trapped in a suspended cable car in Batagram. The prime minister, speaking at a commemoration ceremony hosted at the PM Office, praised each individual involved in the operation, lauding their remarkable skills that led to the triumphant resolution of the mission. He emphasized that the entire nation shared concerns about the safety of the stranded children, who were trapped on the chairlift for hours. Acknowledging the collaborative nature of the endeavor, he extended recognition to those who, from their homes, offered prayers for the safe and effective rescue operation. The prime minister, speaking as a father, empathized with the parents of the stranded children. He highlighted the role of strategic and efficient planning in ensuring their safety and applauded the flawless execution of the operation. He commented, "Hats off to all of you who did an immaculate job. The biggest credit goes to those who were carrying out the planning." During the ceremony, the rescued children shared their emotions with the prime minister, expressing their relief upon learning that the Pakistan Army had initiated the rescue operation. The prime minister underscored the state's paramount responsibility of providing quality health-

care, education, and a dignified life. Reflecting on the recent sacrifices of security personnel in South Waziristan, he urged those with ill intentions against obstructing the state's functions to reconsider their stance. He reiterated that the nation would always remember the sacrifices made by various segments, including politicians, police services, Pakistan Army, journalists, PAF (Pakistan Air Force), and ordinary citizens, in the fight against terrorism. The prime minister highlighted that the families of terror victims experience indescribable pain, and the salaries given to security forces personnel were merely meant to meet their needs. He reaffirmed the nation's deep respect for their sacrifices. Prime Minister Kakar assured that capable individuals were overseeing state affairs and acknowledged the caretaker setup's limited time and mandate in facilitating the upcoming general elections. The prime minister also personally distributed commendation certificates to security forces personnel and local experts who contributed to the rescue operation. The rescued children present at the event were also presented with souvenirs. Lt. General Inam Haider Malik, Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), praised the effective coordination among relevant departments, attributing the success of the challenging operation to this collaborative effort. He announced a safety audit of all cable cars in the region and emphasized the need for capacity-building in local



rescue departments to handle such emergency situations. Caretaker federal ministers Murtaza Solangi, Jalil Abbas Jilani, Jamal Shah, Sarfraz Bugti, Anwar Ali Hyder, Ijaz Gohar, and Madad Ali Sindhi were also present at the ceremony. Ali Swati, a local expert who played a pivotal role in the rescue operation, shared his apprehensions about the cable car's wire strength while acknowledging the risks involved. Despite concerns, he passionately took up the challenge to save lives. Gulfaraz, one of the rescued passengers, expressed

gratitude for the Pakistan Army's operation, recounting their 16-hour ordeal in the cable car and their sense of relief after the successful rescue. The ceremony

concluded with warm embraces and commendation certificates extended to the heroes who played an integral role in the daring rescue operation.

UAE ambassador appreciates Health Minister’s appointment

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salim Al-Zaabi on Thursday said that the appointment of Dr. Nadeem Jan a top public health specialist as Health Minister, reflects the seriousness of the Government of Pakistan towards health sector. During meeting with the minister, the ambassador lauded the Government of Pakistan’s approach of assigning the right man for right job on his appointment as the country’s health minister. The ambassador presented the Minister of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Dr Nadeem Jan, a joint invitation letter from the UAE Minister for Health and Prevention, UAE Special Envoy for Climate Change and the Director-General WHO on the forthcoming 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Nov-Dec this year. The Minister for Health welcomed the dignitaries and appreciated the UAE exponential support to Pakistan in health system development, particularly for the Polio eradication under UAE PAP and for human health and well-being interconnected with climate change. The minister expressed his keen desire to work whole heartedly for the health and well-being of his nation and make some

tangible improvement in the health sector to fulfill the aspirations of the people of Pakistan. The UAE leadership is interested in establishing health projects that serve the Pakistani people and looking for the possibilities of forging joint partnerships in the healthcare sector, as expressed by the ambassador. The two sides also discussed the importance of enhancing joint action to address climate change, particularly as the UAE is committed to supporting global climate action by hosting the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) this November at Dubai Expo City. The minister expressed that eradication of polio from Pakistan as well as from the world is very close to his heart and hence, wished this task to be completed by the end of this year. “I have tasked the polio program leadership to spare no effort in realizing this goal. I am devoting major part of my efforts to polio eradication and we are already working on an emergency initiative to stop polio,”the minister said. The Health Minister and the UAE Ambassador expressed a mutual desire to celebrate World Polio Day this year in a grand manner to be held on October 24, 2023.The Secretary Health, Iftikhar Ali Shallwani was also present during the meeting.

30 new Covid cases reported in last week

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Health officials on Thursday said that 30 new coronavirus cases were reported during the last week across the country. As per the data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the case positivity ratio was 0.39 per cent while two patients were in critical condition. No death was reported from the coronavirus last week while 7,676 Covid-19 tests were conducted. Meanwhile, the official of the Ministry for National

Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination said that the government has strengthened the role of Border and Health Services in Pakistan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19. He said there was a surveillance system at all entry points of the country including airports. There will be rapid tests and screening of passengers at all airports. He added 90 per cent of the country’s population already got the Covid-19 vaccine.

May-9 vandalism:ATC allows police to interrogate Imran in 6 cases

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday allowed police to interrogate Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in six cases related to May-9 vandalism. Duty Judge Ejaz Ajmad Buttar passed the orders while allowing applications filed by the investigation officers for the purpose. The investigation officers had submitted that the PTI chairman was involved in six cases, including the attack on Askari Tower, setting PML-N’s Model Town office and Shadman Police Station on

fire. They submitted that offences under Section 131 (Abetting mutiny or attempting to seduce a soldier, sailor or airman from his duty), 121 (Waging or attempting to wage war or abetting waging of war against Pakistan) and others of Pakistan Penal Code had been added in the cases.They submitted that after the addition of the offences, the accused was required to be interrogated. They pleaded with the court to grant permission to interrogate the accused, who was confined at Attock District Jail.

ACS South Punjab terms biofloc fish farming a ‘blue revolution’

BAHAWALPUR (Agencies): Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Captain (retd) Saqib Zafar has said the pilot project of bio-floc fish culture technology is an important contribution to the fisheries sector. The pilot project of bio-floc fish culture technology is being completed in Bahawalpur at a cost of Rs 18.2 million, he said while inspecting the bio-floc fish project here Thursday.The Additional Chief Secretary termed this project ‘Blue Revolution’. He said that with the help of this technology, water would be saved, pollution would be eliminated and the set goals for sustainable development in the form of green energy would also be achieved. After the completion of the pilot project, this technology will be promoted in the fisher-

ies sector. It will reduce the cost of fish farming, he added. On this occasion, the Deputy Director of Fisheries told him that water was getting dirty due to the fish waste in the fish farms and some part of the food was also wasted. Therefore, water polluted with fish waste and the food is replaced. He said that through biofloc fish culture technology, eco-friendly chemicals were added to the fish farms. With the help of chemicals, the bacteria will eat wasted food and after that, this bacteria becomes food for the fish. With this technology, the water of the fish farm does not have to be changed. In this way, water is also saved. It was informed in the briefing that this project will be completed during the current financial year, he told.

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SBP issues commemorative coin to mark 75 years of Pak-US diplomatic relations

KARACHI (Agencies): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), on Thursday, issued a commemorative coin to mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the United States of America. The Rs75 coin will be available at the exchange counters of SBP Banking Services Corporation from August 25, 2023.The commemorative coin was issued in a ceremony held in Islamabad and attended by the Foreign Secretary for Pakistan, Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome, said a statement issued here. Governor SBP, Jameel Ahmad, in his welcome address, said that the issuance of the commemorative coin was a manifestation of the importance both the countries attach to their relationship, and the design of the coin signifies how independent nations join hands to work together for the progress of their people. He highlighted the important economic ties between the two nations, encompassing trade, Foreign Direct Investments, finance and remittances, and lauded the deep people-to-people connection between the countries in various walks of life, particularly in the field of education. He hoped that given the promising future of the fintech sector in Pakistan and SBP’s multiple initiatives for supporting the same, US fintech firms would explore and invest in the opportunities provided by these emerging businesses. Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi praised the beautiful commemorative coin, remarking that the national symbols of Pakistan and the United States of America on the coin highlight the democratic roots of both countries. Delineating the multidimensional relationship between the two countries, encompassing trade & investment, defence, counter-terrorism,



education, energy, climate and health, he said that the high-level bilateral visits between the two countries have helped to further cement the relationship. Reiterating the importance of the Pak-US relationship for Pakistan, the US and the region, the Foreign Secretary said that the coin would continue to stand as an enduring symbol of our commitment to this long-standing association. Qazi paid tribute to the mutually beneficial relationship between the countries, acknowledging the efforts of Ambassador Blome in injecting a new vigor into this relationship. He also thanked the Governor SBP for holding a historic ceremony to commemorate the importance of the Pak-US relationship. US Ambassador, Donald Blome, said that the coin represents the shared values, ideals and common ties between the two countries, as well as their commitment to a brighter future. He was confident that new initiatives such as the US-Pakistan Green Alliance would help both countries to jointly address their shared challenges. He thanked the State Bank of Pakistan for the meaningful gesture of issuance of the commemorative coin and expressed hope of working closely with the Government of Pakistan. The coin is in a round shape milled with serrations on the edge, diameter

of 30.00 mm, weighs 13.5 grams and has Cupro-Nickel metal contents. On the obverse side of the coin, ‘The State Emblem of Government of Pakistan’ is shown in the centre with the wording ‘ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN’ written on the top of the emblem along with the periphery. The face value of the coin in words ‘Rs.’ and in numeral ‘75’ is written on the left and right sides of the emblem respectively. Below the state emblem, years in numeral ‘1947-2022’ are written depicting the year of Pakistan’s independence and the year of 75th anniversary of Pak-US relations respectively. The wording ‘Eman-Ithad-Nazm’ in Urdu Script is written below the years ‘1947-2022’ along with the periphery. On the reverse side of the coin, the national emblem of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ‘The Great Seal’ is shown in the centre. The wording ‘UNITED STATES OF AMERICA’ is written on the top of the US national emblem and ‘75 ANNIVERSARY OF US-PAK RELATIONS at the bottom of the emblem, along with the periphery. Two stars- one on the left side and the other on the right side- are shown to separate this wording. Below the emblem, the numeral ‘1776’ is written depicting the year of independence of the United States of America.

President House seeks opinion of Law Ministry on date of election

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The President House Thursday sought the opinion of Ministry of Law and Justice on the letter written by the Election Commission of Pakistan. The Presi-

dent House asked for the opinion on the viewpoint of the Election Commission that only the Election Commission had the authority to give a date for elections. The opinion was sought

after the Election Commission replied to a letter written by the President on Wednesday. The President House addressed its letter to the Secretary Ministry of Law and Justice.

Commerce Ministry,FBR to introduce track,trace system for transparent cotton trade

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Ministry of Commerce and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Thursday collaborated to introduce track and trace system for transparent cotton trade. The development took place in a meeting of Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana, Chairman of the Federal Board

of Revenue (FBR), with Dr. Gohar Ejaz, the Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce, Industries and Production, said a press release issued here by the Ministry of Commerce. During the meeting, it was decided that the FBR, in collaboration with federal ministries and provincial de-

partments would introduce a Track and Trace System at ginning factories in Pakistan to promote transparent cotton trade. This initiative aims to assist the textiles and apparel industry in meeting the traceability standards set by various trading blocs, nations, brands and retailers.

President briefed on Zainab Alert Act

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi Thursday was briefed on the implementation of Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act. The briefing was attended by Secretary Human Rights and officials of Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Agency. Amin Ansari, father of Zainab Ansari, also attended the meeting. The president called for coordinated steps for stopping the incidents of kidnapping and torture of children. He underlined the need for raising awareness to stop the incidents of disappearance of children. “Awareness is needed to be provided to parents and teachers about protection of children and for saving them from disappearance,” he added. President Alvi said strong coor-

dination was very important among the law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders. There was a need to create a system of effective coordination between the provincial police departments and relevant institutions, he said, adding police had a critical role to play to stop incidents of disappearance of children and their early recovery. He asked the police to ensure registration of cases of disappearance and kidnapping of children. He said suggestions should be sought from non-governmental organizations in a consultative meeting to improve the system regarding reporting about disappearance of children. The president welcomed the establishment of Zainab Alert Response and Recovery

Agency (ZARRA) in Islamabad, saying it would help in timely search of children and exchange of information. President Alvi was briefed about the Zainab Alert Act, mandate of the agency and its performance. It was told that the agency was working in coordination with all stakeholders and with the help of Zainab Alert complaints about disappearance of 2153 children were registered. Some 1247 children were successfully searched while 430 reports about disappearance were fake. Complete action was taken on 1837 complaints while 319 complaints were being looked into. Efforts were also afoot to improve coordination between the federal and provincial departments.

‘Assassin Bug’ being nurtured at CCRI Multan lab to kill cotton enemy pests in field

MULTAN (Agencies): The Entomology Department of Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) Multan is fostering an ‘Assassin Bug’ within its laboratory, a powerful predator known to consume over 20 major cotton pests. Dr. Rabia Saeed, the overseeing entomologist, highlights the potential of this predator in reducing expenses on insecticides and enhancing organic cotton production. With insect pests causing approximately 46% crop damage, the CCRI Multan is at the forefront of seeking alternative solutions like friendly pests to control these damages effectively. Dr. Rabia explains in a video on the CCRI Cotton News YouTube channel that the efficacy of insecticides is inconsistent, emphasizing the need for reliable alternatives.The Assassin Bug, scientifically termed Rhynocoris marginatus, is naturally found in various Asian fields, including cotton, Okra, groundnut, and pigeon pea. Collected from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Swabi district, these bugs are being nurtured in the CCRI lab.



The laboratory trials indicate successful feeding on armyworm, pink bollworm larvae, and Dusky Cotton Bug. Dr. Rabia outlines that these predators are released in select cotton fields, and a comparative trial is planned at CCRI’s farm. One field will be equipped with Assassin Bugs, while the other won’t, aiming to assess their efficacy against pests and potential impact on friendly crop insects. CCRI Multan’s Transfer of Technology Department Head, Sajid Mahmood, highlights that Pakistan contends with 150 cotton

enemy pests, the highest number among cotton-producing nations. Dr. Farhan Ahmad, another scientist, lauds the Assassin Bug as a potent predator and is confident in its effectiveness. While the Assassin Bug study is ongoing, once its population reaches the required level and recommendations are finalized, it will be made available to farmers. This initiative aligns with the effort to develop biocontrol agents against cotton pests, reducing economic losses and promoting sustainable pest management practices.

Red Sea Global finalizes contractor for AMAALA's spas and swimming pools

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's multi-project developer Red Sea Global has selected Abdullah bin Taleb Swimming Pools Co. to construct pools, spas and other water feature works at Triple Bay in AMAALA. According to a press release, these water features will be constructed at two resorts operated by Rosewood Hotels and Resorts and InterContinental Hotels Group's Six Senses. The press statement noted that the



water elements in these resorts are expected to enhance the guest experience as the Kingdom steadily embarks on its journey to emerge as a

global tourism hub. "This collaboration with Abdullah bin Taleb Swimming Pools Co. is another milestone on the works for two key resorts currently under development at Triple Bay," said Fahad Al-Balawi, head of construction at AMAALA. He added: "Their expertise and commitment to excellence align perfectly with our vision for AMAALA, along with our shared ambitions in the field of responsible development."

Nvidia's CEO joins tech elite with US\$46 billion net worth

CALIFORNIA (Agencies): Nvidia Corp's chief executive officer Jensen Huang grew as much as US\$4.2 billion richer after the company's latest earnings and forecast beat estimates. The shares surged as much as 10% in aftermarket trading, boosting Huang's total fortune to US\$46.1 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. If that gain can be sustained, Huang is poised to end up among the world's 25 wealthiest individuals, the index shows. Huang's 3.5% stake in Nvidia makes up the vast major-



ity of his fortune. The company's shares soared during the Covid-19 pandemic – when the crypto boom drove up usage of its chips for mining – before falling by almost two-thirds over the course of a year and

shooting back up. So far this year they have more than tripled in value with the rise of AI demand. Huang co-founded the firm in 1993 and helped transform it from a maker of video-game graphics chips to the now-dominant supplier of accelerators that train AI software. The company doubled revenue in the last quarter and offered a bullish outlook for growing both demand and supply over the coming year. It contracts out its chips fabrication to Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. and Samsung Electronics Co.

Qantas books bumper US\$1.1bil profit after Covid turbulence

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australian airline Qantas posted an annual profit of US\$1.1 billion Thursday, capping a major financial rebound after the travel turbulence of the Covid years. The national carrier said the result was a "world away" from the dark days of the pandemic, in which the company booked losses of US\$4.5 billion as the aviation sector ground to a halt. Although the bumper result will delight shareholders, it also ratchets up pressure on Qantas to slash sky-high fares that have an-



gered many customers post-lockdown. "This is a remarkable turnaround, three years in the making. And it's been hard," said outgoing chief executive Alan Joyce, who will

stand down in November. Qantas has drastically restructured to get its books in better shape – infuriating transport unions after sacking or standing down thousands of staff at the height of the outbreak. Joyce defended these moves as crucial to the company's long-term fortunes while signalling plans to acquire new planes and overhaul the Qantas fleet in the future. "Put simply, we can afford to invest and grow, especially in new aircraft, while still delivering returns to shareholders," he said.

Soft data drags dollar ahead of Jackson Hole

SINGAPORE (Agencies): The dollar nursed a sharp pullback against Asian currencies on Thursday, after softer-than-expected global economic data muddled the interest rate outlook and pushed down US yields ahead of the Federal Reserve's Jackson Hole symposium. The Australian dollar, which has been taking a battering for a few months on signs of China's slowdown and resilience in the US, jumped 0.9% overnight after US manufacturing and services PMIs missed expectations. "Weaker than expected ... data led markets to



scale back their expectations for US policy," said Commonwealth Bank of Australia currency strategist Carol Kong, with jobless claims the next focus ahead of Fed Chair Jerome Powell's Friday speech. The New Zea-

land dollar also leapt overnight, as did the yen, which crossed below 145 to the dollar for the first time in more than a week tracking a sharp move lower in US Treasury yields. Further moves for the major pairs were only slight in Asia morning trade, leaving the Aussie at US\$0.6479, the kiwi at US\$0.5976 and the yen firming slightly to 144.64 per dollar. The dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of six major currencies remains higher for the month, but dipped about 0.2% overnight.

China group tours return to Japan but 'explosive spending' unlikely

TOKYO (Agencies): Chinese group tours are back in Japan but anyone banking on them arriving in droves and splashing around cash like they did before the pandemic is likely to be disappointed. An ANA Holdings flight on Wednesday evening brought in the first package-tour visitors from Beijing since China lifted its pandemic-era restrictions on the trips to Japan and other key markets including the United States. But hopes the return of packaged



tours will herald big returns for department stores, hotels and restaurants in Japan are clashing with a Chinese economy struggling to

post significant growth and Japan's controversial plans to release treated wastewater from the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant into the sea. "Chinese consumer sentiment is cooler than ever, and the desire to save is increasing," said Sony Financial Group economist Takayuki Miyajima. Isetan Mitsukoshi is expecting less "explosive buying" at its department stores now that many high-end brands are available within China, a spokesperson said.

Boeing's new 737 Max supplier defect threatens delivery targets

NEW YORK (Agencies): Boeing has recently identified a new 737 MAX quality problem involving supplier Spirit AeroSystems that has resulted in improperly drilled holes on the aft pressure bulkhead, the planemaker said on Wednesday. Boeing said the defect will delay near-term deliveries and the company is evaluating whether it could cause it to miss its annual delivery target of at least 400 737s this year. Boeing shares were down 2.7% and Spirit shares fell 6.1% in afterhours trading. The new sup-



ply-chain snag is the latest issue to impede deliveries of the cash-generating MAX following Boeing's disclosure of a problem in April that Spirit had improperly installed brackets

joining the aft fuselage to the vertical tail. Boeing confirmed that the latest issue will delay the first MAX 8 delivery to Malaysia Airlines, which had scheduled an Aug 28 arrival event. Spirit said that because it uses multiple suppliers for the aft pressure bulkhead, not all 737 fuselages are impacted by the new "elongated" hole problem. "Based upon what we know now, we believe there will not be a material impact to our delivery range for the year related to this issue," Spirit said.

Grab shares jump as breakeven nears a decade after founding

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Grab Holdings Ltd shares jumped 11% after the company brought forward its profitability target and posted a narrower quarterly loss, buoyed by extensive cost cuts at the Southeast Asian ride-hailing and food-delivery provider. The stock had its biggest gain in three months in New York after Grab said on Wednesday it expects to break even in the third quarter, rather than the fourth quarter as previously projected. Second-quarter adjusted losses nar-



rowed more than analysts had predicted, and sales topped estimates. Grab has grown rapidly since its founding in 2012, but losses mounted as it spent on expansion and lur-

ing customers amid intense competition from rivals such as GoTo Group and Sea Ltd. A recent focus on cost curbs — including more than 1,000 job cuts in June — has brought the Singapore-based company on the brink of profitability for the first time. The results are "a clean and solid beat especially on improving momentum in mobility and delivery", analysts at Citigroup said in a note. The outlook reflects "effective cost control and clear execution direction."

BRICS invites Saudi Arabia among 6 new nations to join

RIYADH (Agencies): The BRICS group of nations decided at a summit this week in Johannesburg to invite six countries - Argentina, Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - to become new members of the bloc, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Thursday. BRICS membership of new countries will take effect on Jan. 1, 2024, said Ramaphosa. Leaders from Brazil,



Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) have agreed to expand their group, which would be the first expansion since 2010.

Global warming predicted to cost Australia billions

SYDNEY (Agencies): Global warming could cost Australia's economy hundreds of billions of dollars in the coming decades if workplaces cannot adapt to soaring temperatures, a government report said Thursday. Working conditions will become so difficult in the already sun-kissed and desert-scarred continent that officials predict a drop in output of between A\$135 billion (US\$88 billion) and A\$423 billion (US\$274 billion). The forecast assumes global temperatures will increase by three to four degrees Celsius by 2063, leaving labourers to toil in ever more difficult conditions. Measures such as tree planting and



changing how buildings are designed would only help sweltering workers "to some degree", the report said. The estimate does not include the cost to agriculture, or tourism – with fewer visitors expected to come to Australia due to natural disasters and the degradation of natural attractions, such as beaches hit by erosion.

Big Tech braces for EU's Digital Services Act roll-out

LONDON (Agencies): More than a dozen of the world's biggest tech companies face unprecedented legal scrutiny, as the European Union's sweeping Digital Services Act (DSA) imposes new rules on content moderation, user privacy and transparency this month. Across the EU, a host of internet giants – including Meta's Facebook and Instagram platforms, Chinese-owned video app TikTok and a handful of Google services – are adapting to the new obligations, including preventing harmful content from spreading, banning or limiting certain user-targeting practices, and sharing some internal data with regulators and associated researchers. The EU is seen as the global



leader in tech regulation, with more wide-ranging pieces of legislation – such as the Digital Markets Act and the AI Act – on the way. The bloc's success in implementing such laws will influence the introduction of similar rules around the world. But researchers have raised questions over whether these companies have done enough to meet lawmakers' expectations.

Nvidia bets US\$25bil that AI boom is far from over

NEW YORK (Agencies): Nvidia's CEO Jensen Huang said he expects the artificial intelligence boom will last well into next year and made what could be the largest single bet yet in the tech sector to back up his optimism. The company's sales forecast on Wednesday blew past Wall Street's expectations and it said it would buy back another US\$25 billion of its shares, a move most companies make when their leadership thinks the company is undervalued. Nvidia's stock price, though, has more than tripled this year and was set to hit an all-time high after Wednesday's results. Nvidia said it plans to ramp up production of its hardware into next year, quashing doubts that a few analysts had raised



about how long the AI craze could last. The company has a near-monopoly on the computing systems used to power services like ChatGPT, OpenAI's blockbuster generative AI chatbot. "We have excellent visibility through the year and into next year, and we're already planning the next generation infrastructure with leading (cloud computing firms) and data centre builders," Huang told investors on a conference call.

CNN considering Mark Thompson for top job

ATLANTA (Agencies): CNN is considering former New York Times and BBC chief Mark Thompson as one of the top candidates to lead the media company, news website Semafor reported on Wednesday, citing people familiar with the talks. Thompson left the Times in 2020 after an eight-year tenure, during which he oversaw the publication's transformation from print to digital. The veteran media executive began his career at the British Broadcasting Corporation,

which he joined in 1979 as a production trainee, eventually becoming editor of the "Nine O'Clock News" and "Panorama" and later, director of television. He left the BBC in 2002 to become chief executive of Channel 4, but returned when he was appointed director-general in May 2004, a position he held until 2012. He could not be reached for comment. A spokesman for CNN's parent company, Warner Bros Discovery, declined a request for comment.

Kenyan court orders mediation in Meta labour dispute

NAIROBI (Agencies): A Kenyan court has given Facebook's parent company Meta and content moderators suing it for unfair dismissal 21 days to resolve their dispute out of court, a court order showed on Wednesday. The 184 content moderators are suing Meta and two subcontractors after they say they lost their jobs with one of the firms, Sama, for organising a union. The plaintiffs say they were then blacklisted from applying for the same roles at the second firm, Luxembourg-based Majorel, after Facebook switched contractors. "The parties shall pursue an out of court

settlement of this petition through mediation," said the order by the Employment and Labour Relations Court, which was signed by lawyers for the plaintiffs, Meta, Sama and Majorel. Kenya's former chief justice, Willy Mutunga, and Hellen Apiyo, the acting commissioner for labour, will serve as mediators, the order said. If the parties fail to resolve the case within 21 days, the case will proceed before the court, it said. "We are pleased to be moving into a mediation phase as we believe it is in the best interest of all parties to come to an amicable resolution," Sama said in a statement.

Al-Hilal,Al-Nassr and Al-Ittihad the teams to beat after AFC Asian Champions League draw

Some of the clubs may not be too familiar to the likes of Neymar, Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema but these superstars now know who they will be facing in the 2023-24 AFC Asian Champions League. The draw in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday was a low-key affair but all of the 40 teams who start on this journey — with the tournament now an autumn-to-spring affair — know that the quartet of Saudi Arabian clubs are the ones to beat. With Al-Nassr squeezing through the play-offs with a 4-2 win over Shabab Al-Ahli on Tuesday and going into Pot 4, any group they entered was always going to earn that well-known clichéd tag. There is no “death” here though as Group E is alive with talent,



history and excitement. It contains Iranian titans Persepolis, one of the biggest clubs in Asia, and there could be 100,000 fans in Tehran to greet the Yellow Bulls when they arrive. That will be quite the clash and will show those who are new to Asian football what the competition is all about. Al-Duhail are not only the champions of Qatar but reached the semifinals last time around and have Hernan Crespo as

coach. The other team in the group is far from a whipping boy too. Istiklol of Tajikistan beat Al-Hilal in 2021 and cannot be underestimated. Al-Nassr will be fancied to go through given the talent at coach Luis Castro's disposal but the Portuguese boss, who has had a poor start to the domestic season with two defeats from two, may end up wishing that he had been handed an easier ride. Al-Hilal's certainly looks to be a smoother ride to the last 16 and their three opponents have just one previous appearance in the tournament between them. It is less than four months since the Blues lost the final to Urawa Reds and missed the chance to extend their record of four wins to five.

Rocket League set to close out Gamers8 at Boulevard Riyadh City

RIYADH: Gamers8: The Land of Heroes on Wednesday confirmed details of the highly-anticipated Rocket League tournament which will close the world's biggest gaming and esports festival. From Aug. 24 to 27, the best Rocket League teams will battle it out for a share of the \$2 million prize pool — with the winners taking home \$500,000. Organized by the Saudi Esports Federation, the competition starts on Thursday as the 24 participating teams begin the group stages live from the Esports Arena at Boulevard Riyadh City. Faisal bin Homran, chief esports officer at the Saudi Esports Federation, said: “Gamers8:



The Land of Heroes has seen some of the greatest gaming action ever this summer, and Rocket League is the ideal tournament to conclude the biggest gaming and esports festival worldwide. “A high-powered hybrid of arcade-style soccer and vehicular mayhem with easy-to-understand controls and fluid, physics-driven

competition, Rocket League has rightly earned a spot as one of the favorite games across the globe. Expect hi-octane thrills and drama galore at Gamers8: The Land of Heroes.” The participating Rocket League teams at Gamers8: The Land of Heroes are: FaZe Clan, FURIA Esports, Gen.G Mobill Racing, Karmine Corp, Team Liquid, Team BDS, Ninjas in Pyjamas, Team Secret, Ground Zero Gaming, Pioneers, Rule One, Team Falcons, Elevate, Gaimin Gladiators, Limitless, Twisted Minds, Version 1, KOI, G2 Esports, OpTic Gaming, Team Vitality, Monkeys, Oxygen Esports and suhh.

Messi into another final after inspiring Miami comeback

MIAMI: Lionel Messi inspired Inter Miami to come back from two goals down to beat Cincinnati 5-4 on penalties after their thrilling US Open Cup semifinal ended 3-3 after extra time. Miami, who won the Leagues Cup on penalties against Nashville on Saturday, are now one win away from their second trophy since Messi joined the club last month. The US Open Cup is American soccer's oldest and most important knockout competition, dating back more than a century to 1914 and is similar to England's FA Cup or Spain's Copa del Rey. Miami will face the winners of Wednesday's other semifinal between Houston Dynamo



and Real Salt Lake in the final on Sept. 27. A month ago Cincinnati, who are top of Major League Soccer's standings while Miami are bottom, would have been clear favorites in this game but the Florida team are now a very different side to the one which was winless in their 11 league games before the arrival of the Argentine. But

in the intense heat, with temperatures over 100 degrees celsius at kickoff, Miami's unbeaten run since the signing of Messi and Spanish pair Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba, looked to be coming to an end in Ohio against an impressive Cincinnati side. Inter trailed 2-0 with 22 minutes remaining before the Argentine delivered two perfect assists to striker Leonardo Campana to take the game into extra time. Messi's compatriot Luciano Acosta put Cincinnati ahead in the 18th minute and American striker Brandon Vazquez doubled the home side's lead with a fine strike from the edge of the box in the 53rd minute.

Moon,Kennedy share world championship pole vault title

BUDAPEST: American Katie Moon and Australia's Nina Kennedy decided to share the gold medal in a dramatic women's pole vault final at the World Athletics Championships on Wednesday. The two women cleared 4.90m in an event that stretched two hours and 10 minutes, but both missed on all three attempts at 4.95m and decided to share the victory rather than



go to a jump-off. It was the second consecutive world title for Moon, who

also won Olympic gold in Tokyo. The 4.90, mark was a national record for Kennedy and a personal best by 8cm. Wilma Murto of Finland tied her season's best of 4.80 for bronze, missing all three of her attempts at 4.85m. The 25-year-old became the first Finnish woman to win a Diamond League title when she beat Moon at the London event on July 23.

Serial winner Emery wants more Euro glory with Villa

LONDON: Unai Emery believes Aston Villa can end a 27-year wait for silverware on their return to European football this season in the Europa Conference League. Ollie Watkins scored a hat-trick as Villa had far too much firepower for Scottish side Hibernian in a 5-0 play-off, first leg win today to close in on the group stage. Emery won the Europa League four times during spells in charge of Sevilla and Villarreal. The Spaniard also led Arsenal to the 2019 Europa League final and Villarreal to the Cham-



pions League semifinals in 2022. “We want to be successful in the Conference League. It's important to be in Europe and do something,” said Emery after the routine victory in Edinburgh. Emery revealed earlier in the week he is inspired

every day by seeing pictures of Villa's 1982 European Cup winning side at the club's training ground. Villa's fortunes were transformed after the former Paris St Germain boss was put in charge last season. Emery took over a side just outside the relegation zone in October after Steven Gerrard was sacked and led them a seventh-placed finish to secure European football for the first time in 13 years. “It's not only about tonight or the Conference League, it's also about building a strong mentality,” added Emery.

Ace king Isner says will retire after US Open

NEW YORK: Big-serving American John Isner will call it a career after the upcoming US Open, the ATP Tour's all-time ace leader announced on Wednesday. Isner, 38, turned pro in 2007 and reached a career high of world No 8. He won 16 singles titles, the biggest being the Miami Open crown in 2018, his most successful season. “After 17+ years on the @atptour, it's time to say goodbye to



professional tennis,” Isner said on social media site X, formerly known as Twitter. “This transition won't be

easy but I'm looking forward to every second of it with my amazing family,” said Isner, who has four children with his wife Madison. “The @usopen will be my final event. Time to lace 'em up one last time.” The towering North Carolina native crushed an ATP-record 14,411 aces in his career and has the fastest serve ever officially recorded, a 253kph bomb he unleashed in the first round of the 2016 Davis Cup.

Dominican Republic's Paulino claims 400m gold

BUDAPEST: Marileidy Paulino of the Dominican Republic won World Championship gold in the women's 400m on Wednesday, finally claiming top spot on the podium after silvers at last year's worlds and Tokyo Olympics. The race was wide open

in the absence of injured American Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, the 400m hurdles world record holder and fastest in the world this year over the flat, and with Olympic and defending world champion Shaunae Miller-Uibo going out in

the heats four months after having a baby. Paulino, second-fastest this year, was out in lane seven and ran a controlled race to come off the final bend in the lead and drive home for an emphatic victory in 48.76 seconds.

UAE men's cricket team sets example for non-Test-playing nations

The potential for upset and shock is one of fascination in any sport. In cricket, this relates mainly to opportunities for so-called associate members of the International Cricket Council to defeat one of the ICC's 12 full members. However, this is not exclusively the case, as a victory for a lower-ranked full member over a top-ranked one counts as an upset, especially if it happens in a Test match. As these are played only between full members, the opportunities for associate members to “giant kill” are limited to the shorter formats. Analysis of all World Cups played in both one-day, or ODI, and T20I formats reveals that it is rare for a non-Test-playing associate nation to defeat a Test-playing one. In 12 ODI World Cups since 1975, there have been 13 occasions. This represents only 9 percent of the opportunities for so doing. Ireland, which became a full member in 2017, caused four upsets during its asso-



ciate years. In the 2007 ODI World Cup, Ireland shocked and eliminated Pakistan in a three-wicket victory in Jamaica. It was Ireland's first win over a team with Test-match status. Another shock in that tournament was the five-wicket defeat of India by Bangladesh. This caused India's elimination at the group stage, an outcome that has not subsequently recurred. It is always a delight for the Irish to defeat England, at whatever sport. It has more success at rugby than cricket but, in the 2011 ODI World Cup, its team beat England in a manner that will be remembered forever in Ireland.

Dates set for DP World ILT20 season 2 across the UAE

DUBAI: The second season of the DP World ILT20, the biggest contest of its kind in the UAE and the second most-watched league in India, will be played between Jan. 19 and Feb. 18, 2024, it was announced on Wednesday. The full schedule will be unveiled soon. For the second consecutive year, six teams — Abu Dhabi Knight Riders, Desert Vipers, Dubai Capitals, Gulf Giants, MI Emirates and Sharjah Warriors — will compete for the DP World ILT20 trophy in a 34-match format. There will be 30 group games and



four playoffs including the final. The James Vince-led Gulf Giants are the defending champions having defeated the Desert Vipers by seven wickets in the inaugural season's final at a packed Dubai International Stadium.

Warholm saves Norway's honor, Ingebrigtsen denied in 1500m again

BUDAPEST: Norway's Karsten Warholm produced a fighting performance to regain his 400m hurdles title but teammate Jakob Ingebrigtsen once again fell short in the 1500m on a pulsating night at the world championships on Wednesday. Warholm declared “that is what we do best, us Vikings” after holding off the field to win his third world title. The two women's finals were polar opposites of each other. Marileidy Paulino of the Dominican Republic finally secured her first global title in the 400m after settling for silver at the Tokyo Olympics and last year's world championships, timing a national record of 48.76sec. The pole vault, though, was



a back and forth duel between Olympic champion Katie Moon of the US and Australian Nina Kennedy. In the end they shared a hug and the gold medal on a mark of 4.90m instead of holding a jump-off, echoing the men's high jump at the Tokyo Olympics when Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim and Gianmarco Tamberi of Italy agreed to share the honors.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: AUGUST 25, 2023



– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.
– **ARIES**: You need to keep both feet on the ground, no matter what. You may be trying to do too many things at once, but if you stick to one thing at a time, you ought to do just fine in the long run.
– **TAURUS**: You're more in touch with your ideals than you have been, and it's a good time for you to emphasize what's right over what's expedient. It might not make as many friends, but it earns admirers.
– **GEMINI**: Someone close is keeping one of their goals hidden from you. It might not be a big deal at all, but it could also be something that matters. Watch and wait for the time being.
– **CANCER**: Even if the workplace is far from your mind, you still need to deal with some minor crisis. Keep your cool and let people know what to do, then get back to your regular schedule.
– **LEO**: You need to hear people out before you can really make a difference today, so be patient! Once you're

certain that you've got all the data, you should be able to make a plan that works.
– **VIRGO**: You're filled with creative energy, but you might find it stifled if you can't reconcile yourself to the imperfections of life. If you can avoid complaining, you should be able to really express yourself!
– **LIBRA**: You've got some serious weirdness to sort through, and you ought to make sure that you've got all the time you need. Don't read too much into it. Everyone is stressed out about now!
– **SCORPIO**: Not all arguments are signs of stress or weakness. At least one you find yourself in today is an important part of the family process. But don't go for the jugular. You need consensus in the end.
– **SAGITTARIUS**: You should focus on cost savings today. Write a budget or work on one you've already got. It may not come naturally to you, but you should try to buckle down and really get to work on it!
– **CAPRICORN**: You're pretty pleased with the way things have been going lately and get some validation from your sweetie or a relative who knows you well. Keep the glow alive and things should stay great!
– **ACQUARIUS**: It's a good day to take care of chores or other tasks that are more or less solitary. Your energy is just better spent out of the public eye, and you probably have stuff to catch up on anyway!
– **PISCES**: Your intuitive side is starting to see that things need to be different, but that doesn't mean that you can make those changes instantly.

New York City Mayor seeks to incorporate Israel police drone technology into NYPD

NEW YORK (Agencies): The Mayor of New York City is looking to potentially incorporate Israeli drone technology and methods to aid in law enforcement and emergency efforts, in the latest example of cooperation between American and Israeli police forces. Eric Adams, the New York City Mayor, visited Israel this week in order to assess the country's law enforcement technology and the possibility of incorporating it into the New York Police

Department (NYPD), telling reporters during an online briefing in the Israeli capital, Tel Aviv, yesterday that the Israeli police forces "are a little bit more advanced". Adams praised the drones used by Israeli law enforcement as being more durable and being able to fly for much longer than NYC's current technological devices, clarifying that "the method in which they're using them, the methods in which they are training to use them, is what caught

my interest". Referring to himself as "a great fan of technology and all it can do to make our lives easier and safer", the Mayor proclaimed that "Israel is on the cutting edge of exciting developments in technology that will benefit all of us." He also referred to Israeli police's use of drones in coordination with police motorcycles, saying it could potentially be a tactic utilised by the NYPD to help response times for accidents or other emergencies.

US intelligence says an intentional explosion brought down Wagner chief plane

WASHINGTON (Agencies): A preliminary U.S. intelligence assessment concluded that an intentional explosion caused the plane crash presumed to have killed a mercenary leader who was eulogized Thursday by Vladimir Putin, even as suspicions grew that the Russian president was the architect of the assassination. One of the U.S. and Western officials who described the initial assessment said it determined that Yevgeny Prigozhin was "very likely" targeted and that the explosion falls in line with Putin's "long history of trying to silence his critics." The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment, did not offer any details about what caused the explosion, which was widely believed to be vengeance for the mutiny in June that posed the biggest challenge to the Russian leader's 23-year rule. Several of Prigozhin's lieutenants were also presumed dead. Pentagon spokesman Gen. Pat Ryder said press reports that a surface-to-air missile took down the



plane were inaccurate. He declined to say whether the U.S. suspected a bomb or believed the crash was an assassination. Details of the intelligence assessment surfaced as Putin expressed his condolences to the families of those who were reported to be aboard the jet and referred to "serious mistakes" by Prigozhin. The jet carrying the founder of the Wagner military company and six other passengers crashed Wednesday soon after taking off from Moscow with a crew of three, according to Russia's civil aviation authority. Rescuers found 10 bodies, and Russian media cited anonymous sources in Wagner who said Prigozhin

was dead. But there has been no official confirmation. President Joe Biden, speaking to reporters Wednesday, said he believed Putin was behind the crash, though he acknowledged that he did not have information verifying his belief. "I don't know for a fact what happened, but I'm not surprised," Biden said. "There's not much that happens in Russia that Putin's not behind." The passenger manifest also included Prigozhin's second-in-command, who baptized the group with his nom de guerre, as well as Wagner's logistics chief, a fighter wounded by U.S. airstrikes in Syria and at least one possible bodyguard.

Heat stress could threaten health of one billion cows

PARIS (Agencies): By the end of century, more than one billion cows worldwide could suffer from heat stress if global warming continues unabated, threatening their fertility, milk production and lives, according to research published on Thursday. Nearly eight out of 10 cows across the planet are already experiencing excessively high body temperatures, spiked respiration rates, bowed heads and open-mouthed panting – all symptoms associated with severe heat stress, the study said. In tropical climates, 20 per cent of cattle endure those symptoms year-round. These numbers are projected to balloon if cattle farming continues to expand in the Amazon and Congo basins, where temperatures are on track to rise more quickly than the global average. If emissions of climate-heating greenhouse gases continue to rise, the study predicts heat stress will become a year-round



problem in Brazil, southern Africa, northern India, northern Australia and central America by 2100. "A very important determinant of how many cows are exposed to this heat is decisions about land-use change," lead author Michelle North of University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa told AFP. "Deforestation of tropical forests for livestock expansion is

not a viable development future, because it makes climate change worse and will expose hundreds of millions more cattle to severe heat stress," she added. The study, published in Environmental Research Letters, found that in a worst-case scenario, cattle husbandry will nearly double in Asia and Latin America and increase more than fourfold in Africa..

Study links children's screen time to heart damage in adulthood

NEW YORK (Agencies): More sedentary time as a child could lead to a higher chance of heart attacks and strokes later in life, researchers found in a new study. Even for those at a normal weight and blood pressure, hours of inactivity from childhood to young adulthood was associated with heart damage. This study was conducted as part of the Children of the '90s study by the University of Bristol, in which over 14,000 children born between 1991 and 1992 and their families were "intensively observed" for over two decades. "All those hours of screen time in young people add up to a heavier heart, which we know from studies in adults raises the likelihood of heart attack and stroke," the study's author, Dr. Andrew Agbaje of the University of Eastern Finland in Kuopio said. "Children and teenagers need to move more to protect their long-term health." As part of the research, 11-year-old children were given a smartwatch with an activity tracker to wear for seven days. They were then given the smartwatch at 15 years of age, and again at 24. Scientists measured these children's hearts with a kind of ultrasound scan



called an "echocardiography" when they were 17 and 24, after they adjusted for outside factors such as age, sex, blood pressure, body fat, smoking, physical activity and socioeconomic status. The 766 children studied were sedentary for an average of 362 minutes a day. That number grew to 474 minutes once they hit adolescence, and 531 when they were 24, making for a 169-minute increase between those years. Each one-minute increase in a child's sedentary time from ages 11 to 24 was associated with a 0.004 g/m^{2.7} increase in their heart's left ventricular mass when they were 17 to 24. When multiplied by 169 minutes, that additional inactivity totaled a 0.7 g/

m^{2.7} daily rise, which researchers said is equal to a 3-gram increase in left ventricular mass between each heart measurement for those who grew taller at an average rate. Previous studies in adults showed a similar increase in left ventricular mass of 1 g/m^{2.7} over a seven-year period was associated with a two-fold increased risk of heart disease and stroke. "Our study indicates that the accumulation of inactive time is related to heart damage regardless of body weight and blood pressure," Agbaje said. "Parents should encourage children and teenagers to move more by taking them out for a walk and limiting time spent on social media and video games."

Asian airline to weigh passengers

SEOUL (Agencies): Passengers flying with Korean Air will be asked to step on the weighing scales before they board in the coming weeks, to help regulators in Seoul update aircraft weight and balance standards, South Korean media reported this week. Weigh stations will be installed at Seoul's Gimpo Airport for domestic passengers from August 28 to September 6, and at Incheon Air-

port for international passengers from September 8 to 19, Korea JoongAng Daily reported on Monday. The airline will record the weight of each passenger plus their carry-on luggage, which will be forwarded to the country's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. The ministry will then use this data to calculate the average weight of a typical passenger, which will be

used to draw up regulations on seating arrangements and how much extra fuel a plane should carry. Airline staff stressed that overweight passengers will not have to pay more, and that all the data collected will be anonymized. However, this message appears to have been lost on the Korean public, who took to social media to vent about potential fat-shaming in the airport.

Ukraine asks Lebanon to bar Syria ship carrying 'stolen' corn from docking

KYIV (Agencies): Ukrainian officials, on Thursday, asked Lebanon to bar a Syrian state-owned cargo ship carrying allegedly stolen Ukrainian grain from docking in Lebanon's Tripoli port, according to the Ukrainian embassy and a diplomatic note seen by Reuters. The Ukrainian mission said in comments to Reuters that the "Finikia" was transporting 6,000 metric tons of corn, which it considered stolen, from the Black Sea port of Sevastopol. In the note to Lebanon's ministries of transport, finance and economy, as well as the customs directorate, the embassy said the corn

had been "stolen from storage units in the Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions". It said the ship was "in violation of international law" and expressed its hope that Lebanon "does not allow the entry of the aforementioned cargo ship "FINIKIA" to Lebanese ports to sell stolen Ukrainian grain." Lebanon's Ministers of Transportation and Finance did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment. Syria's government and the Syrian General Authority for Maritime Transport, which owns the "Finikia", did not immediately respond to written questions.

Niger's rebels leader allows Mali, Burkina Faso armies to enter in case of attack

RABAT (Agencies): General Abdourahamane Tchiani, the head of the Niger's National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland, signed an order authorizing defense and security forces of Burkina Faso and Mali to enter the territory of Niger in case of an attack against it, the Agence Nigérienne de Presse (ANP) reported. On August 24, head of the caretaker government Ali Lamine Zeine met with ministerial delegations from Mali and Burkina Faso, the news agency reported. The delegations confirmed their

desire to fight terrorism and extremism together with Niger, ANP said. Representatives of the three countries stressed "the need of strengthening cooperation mechanisms, intelligence data sharing and joint operations for purposes of increasing efficiency to counter the activity of terrorist groups," the news agency said. Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali agreed "to provide each other with capabilities for mutual defense and help in the sphere of defense and security in case of an aggression or terrorist attacks."

Seven killed in Turkish drone strikes on PKK members in northern Iraq

ERBIL (Agencies): Turkish drone strikes on Thursday killed seven members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) including two medical personnel, in Iraq's northern province of Erbil, the counter-terrorism service said, as Turkey's foreign minister visited the region. Three PKK fighters were killed in Sidakan district when a Turkish drone struck their vehicle, the counter-terrorism service said in a

statement earlier on Thursday. Another drone strike killed four PKK members, including two medical personnel also in Sidakan area a few hours later, the counter-terrorism service said in another statement later in the day. The attacks took place as Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan was in Erbil meeting top Kurdish officials, including President Nechervan Barzani and Prime Minister Masrour Barzani.

Saudi civil defense calls for caution as rain due across Kingdom from Friday

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's General Directorate of Civil Defense called for caution after rain was forecast in most regions in the Kingdom from Friday until Tuesday. The authority said people should stay away from bodies of water, swamps, and valleys, and follow instructions announced through the directorate's various media and social networking sites. The regions of Makkah, Asir, Al-Baha, and Jazan are expected to ex-

perience moderate to heavy rain that may lead to torrential rains, hail, and dust storms. The authority added that light to moderate rain and downburst, causing dust storms, is expected in the following areas of the Makkah region: Makkah, Bahrah, Al-Jumum, Al-Qunfudhah, Al-Lith, Al-Khurma, Ranyah, and Turbah. The regions of Madinah and Najran are also expected to be affected by light rain and downburst causing dust storms.

US will train Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16s from next month

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The United States has said it will start training Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighters from next month, joining other allies working to strengthen Ukraine's air defences some 18 months since Russia's invasion. The pilots will be brought to the US in September where they will first learn English before starting their training on how to fly the advanced fighter. Speaking in Washington, DC, on Thursday, Pentagon spokesman Pat Ryder said the training in Texas and Arizona would involve "several" pilots and "dozens" of personnel to maintain the aircraft. US President Joe Biden and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy discussed the training programme in a call on Thursday, the White House said. "President Biden reiterated the US com-



mitment to support Ukraine's defence against Russian aggression for as long as it takes, and to hold Russia accountable for its actions," it said in a statement. The US announcement expands plans by European allies Denmark and the Netherlands to donate F-16 fighters to Ukraine and train its pilots. Norway has also said it will provide the planes to Ukraine with Greece joining the countries offering training.

Canada probes Walmart, Hugo Boss, Diesel over Uighur forced labour claims

Canada's corporate watchdog will probe Walmart, Hugo Boss and clothing brand Diesel following allegations the companies exploited the forced labour of China's ethnic minority Uighurs. The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) announced its investigation on Thursday after civil society groups last year accused the firms of using Chinese suppliers implicated in forced labour in Xinjiang. The probe comes after the three companies, which have denied accusations of using forced labour, refused to participate in a preliminary assessment of the claims. "As mediation between the parties is not currently an option, we will be launching investigations into the allegations outlined in these reports," CORE spokesperson Sheri Meyerhoffer said in a statement. "The investigations will provide

all three companies with an ongoing opportunity to provide further relevant information and mediation of the allegations remains open. We are hopeful that the investigation findings will provide the companies with information to support their ability to strengthen their due diligence practices." Walmart, Hugo Boss and Diesel did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Human rights groups say more than one million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities have been interred in camps in China's far-western Xinjiang, where they face abuses, including forced labour, forced sterilisation, beatings and rape. Beijing has denied committing human rights abuses, including genocide, and argued that its "vocational education and training centres" have dramatically reduced violent extremism and poverty.

IBSA Games: Pakistan thrash England to maintain winning streak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan blind cricket team continued their unbeaten run as they defeated England by six wickets in their last-round match of IBSA World Games in Birmingham on Thursday. England chose to bat first after winning the toss. Pakistan's bowlers displayed exceptional skills, preventing the English batters from finding their rhythm and accumulating runs freely. England's batting lineup was dismantled, leading to their dismissal at a total of 103 runs in 18 overs. Among the top contributors, Luke Sugg managed 25 runs while Matt Dean secured 13 runs. Pakistan's Shahzaib



Haider stood out as the standout bowler, clinching four wickets. He was well supported by Muhammad Shahzeb and Mohsin Khan, who claimed two wickets and one wicket, respectively. In response, Pakistan achieved the target in

9.4 overs, losing four wickets along the way. Nisar Ali shone as the top scorer with an impressive 35 runs off 17 balls, while Matiullah contributed 22 runs. Ed Hossell, Jones, and Ahmed claimed one wicket apiece for England.

Erdogan backs Ukraine territorial integrity against Crimea annexation

ANKARA (Agencies): President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has reaffirmed Turkey's stance against the annexation of Crimea by Russia and pledged solidarity with Ukraine's territorial integrity, local Turkish media reports. "We express in every platform, especially in the United Nations, that Crimea is a part of Ukraine," Erdogan stated on 23 August, speaking via a video message to attendees of the Third Crimea Platform Summit in Kiev. The Crimea Platform serves as an international initiative by Ukraine to garner increased global attention towards Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Erdogan expressed confidence in the effectiveness of the platform's efforts in advocating for the Crimean cause through peaceful means, the report added. "I believe that this platform, which was established to defend the Crimean cause more effectively through peaceful means, will strengthen the messages we want to convey on the Crimea issue," he remarked. The Turkish leader highlighted the significance of ensuring the well-being and security of Crimean Tatars of Turkish descent. "Ensuring the safety and well-being of our Crimean Tatar Turkish kin is also among our priorities," Erdogan emphasized, reiterating a call for the release of Neriman Cemel, deputy chair of the Crimean Tatar National Assembly, and her associates.

Protests hit Druze city in Syria for fifth day

DRUZE - SYRIA (Agencies): Hundreds of Syrians in the mainly Druze city of Sweida took to the streets for a fifth consecutive day on Thursday, protesting at worsening economic conditions and demanding the departure of Syrian President Bashar Al Assad, Reuters reports. Residents converged to a main square of the south-western city in protests sparked last week by sudden steep gasoline price hikes, witnesses and civic activists said. Prominent formerly pro-government Druze religious leaders met on Thursday for the first time since the protests erupted, acknowledging the right to protest peacefully against government policies, but refrained from endorsing the widespread calls for Assad to step down. "These protests are the righteous voice of the Syrian people," Sheikh Hikmat Hajri, the spiritual leader of Syria's Druze community, told followers. But he spoke against vandalism or the acts of violence seen last week, when youths burnt tyres and blocked access to the city. Protesters, who on Wednesday burnt a huge poster of Assad that hung in the main square, chanted "Go, go, Assad. We want to eat." Same chants could be heard at the start of pro-democracy protests in 2011 that were violently crushed by security forces and sparked a violent, an over-decade long conflict.

Iran says prisoner exchange process with US will take up to two months

DUBAI (Agencies): The process of releasing US prisoners held in Iran will take up to two months, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said on Monday during a press conference. "A specific time frame has been announced by relevant authorities, and it will take a maximum of two months for this process to take place," Kanaani said. Earlier this month, Tehran and Washington reached an agreement whereby five US citizens held in Iran would be freed while \$6bn

of Iranian assets frozen in South Korea would be released. Iranian assets that had been frozen in South Korea were transferred to Switzerland's central bank last week for exchange and transfer to Iran, South Korean media reported on Monday. Washington would also release some Iranians from US prisons, Iran said. Iran allowed four detained US citizens to move into house arrest from Tehran's Evin prison, a lawyer for one said. A fifth was already under home confinement.

G7 powers condemn failed North Korean satellite launch

Brussels (AFP/APP): Foreign ministers from the G7 group of rich democracies condemned North Korea's failed bid to launch a spy satellite Thursday, arguing that it used banned ballistic missile technology. In a joint statement Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States and European Union said North Korea's move "poses a grave threat to regional and international peace and stability". North Korea's second bid to put a sky satellite in orbit failed on Thursday, three months after a first crashed into the ocean. The nuclear-armed authoritarian state said afterward that it would attempt another launch in October. The satellite was to have been carried to orbit in a staged rocket that uses the same technology as ballistic missiles – which

Pyeongang is forbidden from developing under UN resolutions. "Despite the repeated calls from the international community, North Korea continues to intensify its escalatory actions through a record number of ballistic missile launches," the ministers said. This, they alleged, proves North Korea's "determination to advance and diversify its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities." "North Korea's reckless action must be met with a swift, united, and robust international response, particularly by the United Nations Security Council," they said. Three G7 members – Britain, France and the United States – are permanent members of the UN Security Council, but two more, China and Russia, have been more sympathetic to North Korea.

Russia extends US reporter Gershkovich's detention by three months

Moscow (AFP/APP): Russia on Thursday extended by three months the detention of Wall Street Journal correspondent Evan Gershkovich, defying pleas for the release of the reporter arrested on the job in March. Gershkovich, unlike many Western reporters, had continued to report from Russia during Moscow's offensive in Ukraine. He was the first journalist arrested by Moscow on allegations of spying – which he and his employer strongly deny – since the Cold War, sending a chill through media circles. "The time of detention has been extended by three months," a spokesperson for Moscow's Lefortovsky court said. The new end-date for the detention is November 30. AFP was denied access into the courtroom for the hearing, which was held behind

closed doors. But AFP reporters saw the 31-year-old, handcuffed and wearing a chequered shirt and jeans, being escorted into the court by masked men. Responding to the decision, the State Department renewed calls on Russia to release "immediately" both Gershkovich and another detained American, former Marine Paul Whelan. "The claims against Evan Gershkovich are baseless," a State Department spokesperson said. The Wall Street Journal said it was "deeply disappointed" that Gershkovich will remain "arbitrarily and wrongfully detained for doing his job as a journalist". "The baseless accusations against him are categorically false, and we continue to push for his immediate release," the New York-based newspaper said in a statement.

Rights group urges Norway to investigate Iraq man who killed civilians, children in Syria

OSLO (Agencies): A human rights group in Norway has filed a legal complaint against a man alleged to have been an Iraqi militant who killed civilians while fighting in Syria. In a statement, the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCMF) announced that it had filed a complaint to Norway's War Crimes Unit over an Iraqi man who has been living in the country for six years. In videos which cir-

culated throughout social media over the past week, the unidentified man boasts of having killed civilians while fighting Syrian opposition forces as a member of Iraq's paramilitary Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), an umbrella group of mostly Iran-backed Shia militias who operate within Iraq, but that have also fought alongside the Syrian military and forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad's regime.

Russia's 'Astarta' Sniper Rifle Outguns US Rival With Superior Firepower & Accuracy

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russia's new "Astarta" sniper rifle performed superbly in tests, outgunning the American Barrett with fourfold accuracy, its developer "High Precision Systems" reported. High Precision Systems, a company that's part of Russia's state-owned defense corporation, Rostec, plans to start mass production of the new Astarta anti-material rifle within 4 months, a corporate rep told reporters at the Army-2023 forum. Ac-



cording to the company, the Astarta outperformed the American Barrett rifle in terms of accuracy fourfold in comparative tests.

BRICS hails 'historic' entry of new members amid bloc rivalry

Johannesburg, (AFP/APP): In a significant move aimed at redefining the prevailing Western-led global order and bolstering its influence during a period of strategic competition, the BRICS coalition, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, announced a momentous development on Thursday. During their annual summit in Johannesburg, the BRICS leaders unveiled the historic admission of six new countries into their fold, marking a pivotal step in the group's evolution. Argentina, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates have been granted full membership status, effective from January 1. The inclusion of these nations was hailed as a historic expansion by Chinese President Xi Jinping, whose country holds the most prominent position within this collective of major economies. President Xi underscored the significance of this expansion, emphasizing its potential to invigorate BRICS cooperation and contribute to global peace and development. The driving force behind this expansion has been Beijing's endeavor to cultivate and enhance the BRICS as a counterbalance to the dominance of the United States and Western nations in global affairs. This pursuit of membership expansion took center stage during the summit discussions in Johannesburg. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed hailed this moment as a great achievement for his country, which ranks as the second-most populous nation in Africa. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi expressed his optimism about the transformative impact of Iran's membership on global fairness and lasting peace. Echoing similar sentiments, leaders

from Egypt and the UAE expressed their enthusiasm for collaborating with this loosely defined group that encompasses billions of people across four continents and holds a substantial portion of the world's wealth. The BRICS bloc operates on a consensus-based decision-making process, and the agreement to include these six nations was reached following days of bilateral discussions and closed-door meetings. Although the specific criteria for entry and the rationale behind selecting these nations from among numerous candidates remain undisclosed, this development paves the way for potential future expansions within this diverse assembly of major and minor economies. Notably, the BRICS alliance represents both the world's largest democracy and its largest authoritarian state. With over 20 countries having formally applied for membership and a similar number expressing interest from across the Global South, the BRICS has emerged as a focal point of international attention. The presence of more than 50 world leaders at the summit underscores the allure and growing relevance of the BRICS message on the global stage. Against a backdrop of intense geopolitical rivalries, analysts have projected that the 15th summit of the BRICS could carry significant implications. While US officials have downplayed the prospect of the BRICS evolving into a geopolitical competitor, characterizing the group as a heterogeneous mix of friends and adversaries, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a proponent of Argentina's membership, emphasized the strength derived from this diversity and its role in shaping a new international order.

Rockslide kills boy in Israel nature reserve near Dead Sea

TEL AVIV (Agencies): A rockslide at a popular Israeli nature reserve near the Dead Sea killed a boy and injured at least eight people on Thursday, the ambulance service said, Reuters reports. Police rescue efforts were assisted by the military, which dispatched helicopters to assist with the evacuation of casualties. Some of the injured were trapped under rocks before they were freed and airlifted to hospital. "You could see rocks the size of cars falling down," Yonatan Bar David, who was at the Ein Gedi site with his family, told Kan Radio. He was unharmed, but two of his children were taken to hospital with minor injuries. Rock fall warnings are common in the southern desert cliffs of Ein Gedi, a hiking site known for its springs and waterfalls. Police said they were looking into the incident. Sections of the area will remain closed while a geological survey is conducted, said the head of the Ein Gedi Rescue Unit, Alon Shachal.

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Rohingya in Bangladesh camps living on just \$0.27 a day

DHAKA (Agencies): The wellbeing of more than 500,000 Rohingya children is in danger as a result of cuts to food aid to refugee camps in Bangladesh, Save the Children has warned. In the world's most populated refugee camp, Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, the Rohingya live on just \$0.27 a day following funding cuts by the World Food Programme (WFP). This is particularly harmful as the Rohingya are banned from working or leaving the camps. Zia, a 12-year-old Rohingya refugee whose name has been changed, said: "Last time I had fruit was three months ago [...] We can only afford chicken once a month." Mahbuba, whose name has also been changed



to protect her identity, details her struggle with food insecurity, saying: "When I go to collect rice from the food assistance outlets, I feel like crying at having such a tiny amount." The cuts have worsened the already dire living situation of the Rohingya people, Save the Children

warned, adding that 45 per cent of Rohingya families were not eating a sufficient diet and malnutrition was widespread in the camps, while 40 per cent of children experienced stunted growth. Children suffer the most from these cuts, Save the Children explained, due to the physical abuse and pressure to join gangs the environment of poverty created. It added that physical abuse was involved in a quarter of all cases relating to child safeguarding. Save the Children Country Director in Bangladesh, Shaheen Chughtai, called for an international effort to relieve the situation, saying: "The UN's humanitarian response plan for the Rohingya refugees is only 30 per cent funded." Over 750,000 Muslim RohingyaA have fled neighbouring Myanmar to Bangladesh since 2017, escaping genocide and mistreatment from the military according to Human Rights Watch.



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