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Chief Editor: Rizwan Inayat



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Pages 10 Price: Rs. 25/-

Vol 11, No 306 - Tuesday 03 October 2023 Rabi ul Awwal 16, 1444 A.H.

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Dutch scientist's Pakistan quake 'prediction' sparks concern, debate

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The prediction by a Dutch research organisation of a powerful tremor that may hit Pakistan soon has not only taken social media by storm, but even authorities seem to be taking it seriously. But even as the scientific community insisted that it was not possible to predict earthquakes this way, Iranian media reports suggest that the prediction is being taken seriously across the border as well. The Solar System Geometry Survey (SSGS) of the Netherlands, made a prediction of a powerful earthquake along the Chaman fault line, in Balochistan. SSGS's methodology involves monitoring fluctuations in atmospheric electric charge near sea level, which are associated with Earth's axis rotation, to identify regions where significant earthquake activity may occur within one to nine days. Its claims were initially made on X (formerly Twitter) but gained currency after being echoed by Frank Hoogerbeets, a researcher and seismologist at SSGS, who has previously made accurate predictions. Mr Hoogerbeets, a Dutch researcher, forecasted a major earthquake in Pakistan within the next 48 hours, particularly along the Chaman fault line, with a magnitude of six or higher on the Richter scale. However, it should be noted that more than three days have passed since he made



his prediction on Sept 29. In February, Mr Hoogerbeets forewarned of a major earthquake in Türkiye and Syria and a 7.8-magnitude quake followed, claiming over 50,000 lives. On January 30, 2023, he predicted heightened geological activity across Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and China. Subsequently, a 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck Pakistan on February 7, resulting in nine casualties.

– 'Not possible'

However, the claims of the Dutch institute have been refuted by scientists, seismologists and geologists. Even experts from the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) have stated that earthquakes occur due to the movements of tectonic plates and predicting their movement deep under-

ground was not possible "under the current scientific knowledge". "The formula identified by the SSGS was yet to be recognised by the scientific bodies of the world," a senior official of the PMD said. "This prediction is almost impossible because the earthquakes are caused by disturbances underground and it could either be due to a huge lake or crater-like structure or a rock formation like a high mountain that hits the other plates," the official said adding, "But we do not know the terrain and formation of all the plates the world over." A report by BBC Urdu also underscores that currently, scientists worldwide lack the capability to forecast earthquakes, and it is anticipated that such a system will remain unavailable for some time.

UK Pledges \$4.8Bln to Develop Attack Submarines Under AUKUS



MOSCOW (Agencies): The United Kingdom has signed contracts worth 4 billion pounds (\$4.8 billion) with leading British manufacturers to develop powerful attack submarines as part of the AUKUS program with Australia and the United States, UK Secretary of State for Defense Grant Shapps said on Sunday. "I can announce that we have signed contracts worth 4 billion pounds with leading British businesses to drive forward the development of the most powerful attack submarines ever operated by the Royal Navy," Shapps said at the 2023 Conservative Party Conference. The UK defense chief added that the new "hunter-killer" submarines would allow the country to maintain its strategic advantage under the sea and help fund thousands of jobs in the country.

US Attorney General Promises to Resign if Biden Meddles in Trump Investigation

MOSCOW (Agencies): US Attorney General Merrick Garland said on Monday he would resign if US President Joe Biden interferes with investigations into former US President Donald Trump. "I am sure that that [Biden's interference] will not happen, but I would not do anything in that regard. And if necessary, I would resign, but there is no sense that anything like that will happen," Garland said in an interview. He also said he does not discuss the investigation into the former president with Biden or his administration, adding that the incumbent US president "never tried to put hands on these investigations."

India Demands That Canada Withdraw Some 40 Diplomats by October 10 - Reports

MOSCOW (Agencies): India has demanded that Canada repatriate roughly 40 diplomats from the country by October 10, following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's remark that New Delhi may have been linked to the murder of a Sikh independence activist in Canada, media reported, citing people familiar with the demand. One of the sources told the media that Canada had 62 diplomats in India, adding that New Delhi had told Ottawa to reduce the number by 41 people. Another source said that New Delhi had threatened to revoke the diplomatic immunity of Canadian diplomats who remained after that date, the report said. India has reportedly said it wanted "parity"



in the number and grade of diplomats posted in each nation. Trudeau said in September that Canada was examining "credible allegations" potentially linking Indian officials to the June 18 killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar by two masked gunmen in Surrey, British Columbia. The prominent separatist leader campaigned for the creation of an independent Sikh state in India called Khalistan.

Covid-19 vaccine scientists win Nobel Prize



STOCKHOLM (Agencies): Two scientists have been awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine for their pioneering research that led to the development of mRNA vaccines, which helped curb the spread of Covid-19, it was announced early on Monday in Stockholm, Sweden. Dr.

Katalin Kariko and Dr. Drew Weissman will share the prize almost two decades after first publishing a 2005 paper examining the potential benefits of mRNA technology. Their research received little attention at the time but the Nobel Prize committee praised the scientists' "groundbreaking findings," which they said "fundamentally changed our understanding of how mRNA interacts with our immune system." "The laureates contributed to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health in modern times," the committee said in a statement on Monday.

North Dakota state senator and his family die in plane crash

NEW YORK (Agencies): A state senator from North Dakota, his wife and their two youngest children, have died in a small plane crash in Utah, officials said on Monday. The plane carrying Doug Larsen and his family crashed shortly after taking off near Moab, Utah, where the aircraft had stopped to refuel on Sunday evening. The pilot of the plane also died in the crash, police said. The Larsens were visiting family in Scottsdale, Arizona. The Grand County Sheriff's Office posted a statement on Facebook say-



ing they were notified about a "plane going into the ground" shortly after taking off from Canyonlands Airfield about 15 miles (24km) north of Moab at approximately 20:30 local time (02:30 GMT).

Ukraine Loses Two-Thirds of Its Revenues as US Funding Dries Up

NEW YORK (Agencies): On 30 September, US lawmakers excluded a rise in funding for Ukraine from the House version of the short-term spending bill. Ukraine has lost \$24 billion because the US has refused to include aid to Kiev in its short-term spending bill, an analysis of the country's budget data shows. Last month, the White House asked the US Senate for \$24 billion for Ukraine for the 2024 fiscal year, from 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024. The Senate, however, proposed to allocate \$4.5 billion for the Pentagon and \$1.65 billion for the State Department to Ukraine. On Sunday, US President Joe Biden signed the bill passed by Congress, which will allow the continuation of government funding for 45 days - until 17 November. At the same time, the law does not provide for the allocation of funds for Ukraine. Ukraine has calculated that



it needs about 1.33 trillion hryvnia, (approximately \$36 billion), to get it through 2023, which means that the US shortfall has left it out of pocket for two-thirds of the year, ie for eight months and three days. Since February 2022, the US Congress has appropriated over \$45 billion to the State Department and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to support Ukraine's military operations, provide humanitarian assistance, and ensure the continuity of the government in Kiev.

African nation to send troops to Haiti



NAIROBI (Agencies): Kenya is set to spearhead a multinational security mission in Haiti to combat criminal gangs and militant groups that are plaguing the small Caribbean nation. The UN Security Council greenlit the

security mission on Monday, with 13 members voting in favor of the US-introduced resolution and two abstentions from Russia and China. The measure authorizes deployment for one year, but requires a review after a period of nine months. The international force will not be under the direct authority of the UN, but will instead be led by Kenyan commanders. They will guard key infrastructure - including air and sea ports, hospitals, schools, and major roadways - as well as carrying out "targeted operations" alongside Haiti's national police force.

UK to ban trans women from female hospital wards – Telegraph

LONDON (Agencies): UK Health Secretary Steve Barclay will propose barring transgender women from female hospital wards, The Telegraph reported on Monday. The newspaper said the proposals would be formally announced at the Conservative Party conference on Tuesday. The measures would reportedly guarantee that patients have the right to be cared for in wards only shared by people of their own biological sex and to receive "intimate care" by doctors and nurses of the same sex. The current NHS guidance allows for patients to be placed in wards on the basis of the gender they identify with. Barclay's plan would reportedly have trans patients housed in



"separate accommodation." "We need a common-sense approach to sex and equality issues in the NHS," Barclay said in a statement to The Telegraph on Monday. "And I can confirm that sex-specific language has now been fully restored to online health advice pages about cervical and ovarian cancer and the menopause."

Top Chinese scientist questions India's historic Moon landing

BEIJING (Agencies): India's Chandrayaan-3 did not land at or near the south polar region of the Moon, Chinese scientist Ouyang Ziyuan has argued. With China planning to reach the same region next year, the scientific rivalry between Beijing and New Delhi has heated up. Chandrayaan-3 touched down on the Moon on August 23 at a latitude of 69 degrees, which Indian scientists say is within the region of the lunar south pole. "This is wrong," Ouyang told the Chinese-language Science Times

newspaper last week, according to Bloomberg. "The landing site of Chandrayaan-3 is not at the lunar south pole, not in the lunar south pole region, nor is it near the lunar south pole region." Ouyang argued that while a latitude of 69 degrees on Earth would be well within the Antarctic circle, the Moon's smaller axial tilt means that its southern polar region spans between 88.5 and 90 degrees. Under Ouyang's definition, Chandrayaan-3 landed 619 kilometers (385 miles) away from this region.

Pretoria plans new model of electricity provision in South Africa

PRETORIA (Agencies) South Africa's parliament said it plans to hold more public hearings on the country's proposed Electricity Regulation Amendment Bill, which is expected to pave the way for a new transmission company and to allow for competitive energy trading. The public engagements phase forms part of the legislative process for the Bill, Zet Luzipo, chairperson of the parliament's mineral resources and energy committee, said on Saturday, according to local media. "The Bill aims

to effect changes to the Electricity Regulation Act in order to provide for additional electricity generation capacity and infrastructure, as well as the establishment of the Transmission System Operator SOC Ltd," the Independent Online quoted Luzipo as saying. The Bill, approved by the government in March, was tabled in parliament in late August after the independent association Business Leadership South Africa criticized an apparent delay in the legislative process.

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.

Seven-day anti polio campaign starts in KP; 7.478mln children to be immunized

PESHAWAR (APP): The seven-day anti-polio campaign started across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday wherein as many as 7.478 million children under the age of five would be vaccinated against the crippling polio disease. According to the Emergency Operation Center (EOC), in the first phase of the polio campaign, all children under the age of five in Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, Malakand and Hazara divisions would be given polio drops

while in the second phase of the campaign, which would continue from October 9 to 13, all children up to five years of age in Bannu and DI Khan divisions would be vaccinated. During this campaign, vitamin A would also be given to children to increase their immunity, said the EOC, adding that in the first phase of the campaign, in all the districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, Malakand and Hazara divisions, 6,362,895 children would be vaccinated against

polio. In the second phase of the campaign, 1,116,081 children would be given anti-polio drops in Bannu and DI Khan divisions. Similarly, all children up to the age of five living in all Afghan refugee camps in the province would also be immunized against polio. EOC mentioned that 34,551 teams of trained polio workers have been formed for this campaign including 31151 mobile teams, 1953 fixed teams and 1447 transit teams.

Secretary health conducts visit to assess polio, dengue campaigns

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Islam Wazir on Monday conducted surprise visit to various areas in Peshawar to inspect the ongoing efforts in combating polio and dengue within the province. Accompanied by the District Health Officer of Peshawar and Dengue Focal Person Dr Ikram Ullah Khan, Secretary Mahmood Aslam Wazir visited medical centres established within Union Council Khalisa 1 and Khalisa 2 of Peshawar. During the visit, Secretary Mahmood Aslam Wazir interacted

with the polio vaccination teams and assessed the arrangements in place to combat the looming threat of dengue. In addition to these inspections, the Secretary of Health and a team of epidemiologists engaged with the local community to amplify awareness about the critical importance of preventing the spread of dengue, with a special emphasis on mosquito control measures. This outreach initiative involved evaluating tire shops and standing water in various areas, with Secretary Mahmood Aslam Wazir personally educating

residents about how stagnant water can become breeding grounds for disease-carrying mosquitoes. Underlining the government's unwavering commitment to eradicating polio from the region, Secretary of Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir officially launched the polio vaccination campaign by personally administering polio drops to a child. The polio vaccination campaign commenced on October 2, with coordinated efforts spanning five divisions, including Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, Malakand, and Hazara.

Power suspension in Peshawar notified

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar Industrial Grid Station on 3rd October from 8

a.m. to 12 p.m. Subsequently, it said consumers of Abasin, Landi Arbab, Bara, Swati Gate and Shiekh Muhammadi feeders will face inconvenience. Moreover, it said power Supply will remain suspended from Peshawar

Industrial Grid Station on 3rd October from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. resultantly consumers of Dora Road, New Deh Bahadar, Pishtakhara, Deh Bahadar, Wazir Bagh and scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience.

Water Resource Accountability Program implemented to overcome scarcity of essential commodity

CHITRAL (APP): Water scarcity poses a significant challenge with potential disastrous impacts on the economy and recognizing this urgency the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Pakistan is implementing the UKaid-funded Water Resource Accountability in Pakistan (WRAP) Programme. This was said by Dr. Mohsin Hafeez, Director Water, Food & Ecosystems, IWMI while addressing a consultation workshop held here on Water Accounting and Water Resources Assessment Standards. The workshop was chaired by Caretaker Minister for Irrigation KP, Engr Ahmad Jan and attended by Secretary Irrigation, Tahir Orakzai and a number of experts on water and irrigation. Welcoming the participants of the workshop, Dr. Mohsin provided an insightful overview of the WRAP programme and its component which focuses on the climate resilient solutions for improving water governance. The overarching objective of the program is to enhance water governance through climate-resilient solutions, implementing federal and provincial-level climate-smart interventions. These initiatives, he added, are geared towards strengthening national capacities for the implementation of climate-smart interventions, breaking through technical and non-technical barriers, and ensuring long-term sustainability. Furthermore, the program will generate critical evidence for the implementation of national climate and water policies. The major outcome of WRAP Programme is to improve water governance in the Indus Basin to support the implementation of national policies (water and climate change). The focus is also on the better use of water and how it could be shared around priority usage areas to support the im-

plementation of Water Acts. Moreover, dissemination of key findings through multiple forums and capacity development activities of key government institutions and the private sector to advocate for scaling up technical interventions to support diversity and inclusion through improving water governance. Speaking on the occasion, caretaker Minister for Irrigation Engr. Ahmad Jan urged the youth and stakeholders to come forward with new ideas and assist the government in drafting water conservation policy and implementation. The Minister deplored apathy of past governments in conservation of drinking water, adding that water related policies were drafted in every period but not implemented. We have always wasted a precious blessing like water which is decreasing day by day, he noted and said the countries across the globe were doing fast work to conserve drinking water and increase water storage capacity but unfortunately, the political forces in Pakistan were entangled in political issues, he lamented. The Minister said that the drinking water pipelines were connected with drainage pipes and no preventive measure was ever taken to avert clean drinking water from mixing with sewage. He invited the educated youth and organizations working on water to guide the government and propose recommendations for drafting a policy. Secretary Irrigation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tahir Orakzai said that KP was rich in natural resources and the government was working on various projects regarding water reservoirs but the desired results could not be achieved so far. He said that in present times every organization has to work together to complete any project, adding, water is life and we must act fast to save life.

KP Universities bars from granting new affiliation to new institutions, colleges

PESHAWAR (APP): The Higher Education Department (HED) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has barred the public sector universities of the province from granting fresh or new affiliation to any new institution, college or programme till finalization of fresh policy by Higher Education Commission (HEC). According to a letter issued to the public sector universities, the HED explained that the main reason behind was violation of HEC policy for affiliation by the universities and granting affiliation to colleges without hav-

ing proper qualified teaching faculty, meeting necessary academic and physical requirements. It said that some universities of KP were violating jurisdiction policy whereas some colleges were running BS programmes which were affiliated with such universities where the BS programme was not offered at the main campus. It advised that such programmes should be shifted to nearby universities by getting NOC, adding that the degrees awarded in such cases would not be attested by HEC.

Marina Asif Advocate appointed Legal Advisor of EK consultants

PESHAWAR (APP): Senior Advocate of Peshawar High Court Marina Asif has been appointed Legal Advisor of EK Consultants, a trusted organization in the field of international immigration that had provided thousands of Pakistani women and men with higher education and excellent employment opportunities in the UK and other European countries, said a notification issued here on Monday. Advocate Marina Asif is a well-known advocate who had been serving as a Senior Advocate in Peshawar High Court for the past 10 years and defended hundreds of women's rights

cases and provided free legal support to the victims. She was also an excellent social worker who was actively fighting for the rights of the oppressed women of the society. Marina Asif Advocate had completed her LLB degree from the University of Peshawar with distinction. Talking to media here Monday, she expressed her resolve to keep advocating the interests of the oppressed segments of the society. She expressed gratitude to the head of EK Consultants Pvt. Ltd. Asif Khan Marjan for endorsing trust in her abilities and appointing her as the legal advisor of his organization.

Forest deptt plants 3,000 Diar saplings in Chitral National Park

CHITRAL (APP): As part of the tree plantation drive, the Forest department has planted as many as 3000 Diar saplings in internationally known Chitral National Park during the monsoon season. Divisional Forest Officer, Wildlife, Chitral Gol National Park Mohammad Altaf Ali Shah said that the core zone of this park covers an area of 7,750 hectares, while the buffer zone, which was added later, covers an area of 50,000 hectares. According to him, this park was the habitat of Markhor, Himalayan Lynx, snow leopard, wolf, jackal and some other species of wildlife. He estimated 2278 Markhors in the area, adding that there were some places in this park which were posing threat to the wildlife due to deforestation. The wildlife considers itself safe and they also get food from these trees, especially in winter when there is heavy snowfall. Conservator Shaukat Fayaz of Mal-

akand Forest Department was also present to supervise the plantation drive. According to him, the guards of the forest department and the volunteers of Al-Khidmat Foundation participated in this campaign. He said that due to cutting of trees especially chestnuts by the locals in winter the forest area in Chitral was decreasing. He suggested provision of cheap electricity or gas to the locals to help reduce axing the forests. He said the plantation of 3,000 Diyar saplings would make the Chitral National Park more beautiful and the forest dense. Divisional Forest Officer Asif Ali Shah, Sub-Divisional Forest Officer Chitral Division Yusuf Farhad, Sub-Divisional Forest Officer Darosh Umeer Nawaz, Divisional Forest Officer Wildlife Chitral Goal National Park Mohammad Altaf Ali Shah, Block Officer Aziz Wali and other officials also participated in the plantation campaign.

KMU to introduce four year integrated dental curriculum

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar has decided to introduce a four-year integrated dental curriculum from the academic year 2023. This modern modular system will be implemented in all public and private dental colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from the next academic year. According to a press release issued here on Monday, the decision was taken in a high-level meeting held at KMU Peshawar, in which the principals of all the public and private dental colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and experts from various disciplines participated. The meeting was chaired jointly by Adviser to Chief Minister for Health Prof. Dr. Riaz Anwar and Vice-Chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq.

On this occasion, Director IHP&R Dr. Brekhna Jameel gave a detailed presentation about the plan for a four-year integrated dental curriculum in which various aspects of the modular curriculum were discussed. Addressing the meeting, Prof. Dr. Riaz Anwar appreciated the initiative, stressing the need for reforms in the dental curriculum to achieve global commitment and increase the quality of dental education. He said that after the successful experience of the modular system in MBBS, now with the implementation of this modern curriculum in dental education, where dental education will get an opportunity to develop on modern lines, it will also improve the treatment of dentistry.

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No place for terrorists and their facilitators in Pakistan, reiterate Murtaza Solangi, Sarfraz Bugti

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Monday that it was responsibility of the government to ensure peace in the country and assist the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in conducting free, transparent and impartial elections. This, he said, during a meeting with Caretaker Minister for Interior Sarfraz Bugti who called on him here. On his arrival at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi welcomed Interior Minister Sarfraz



Bugti. The two ministers discussed matters of mutual interest including law and order situation in the country. In the meeting, both Murtaza Solangi and Sarfraz Bugti expressed

their profound regret over the loss of precious lives in the recent bomb blasts in the country. Both the federal ministers reiterated that there was no place in Pakistan for terrorists and their facilitators. In the meeting, the support of the caretaker government to the Election Commission regarding the elections was also discussed. The ministers said that the caretaker government will provide all possible assistance to the ECP in fulfilling its the constitutional responsibility of conducting general elections in the country.

SABS University Jamshoro conducts entry test for admissions

HYDERABAD (APP): The Entry Test for admissions 2023-24 at Shaheed Allah Buksh Soomro (SABS) University of Art, Design and Heritages Jamshoro started at the Campus from Monday which will last for three days. According to university spokesman, candidates from Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu Kashmir and other parts of the country are appearing in the test for admission in 187 seats which available for the candidates on merit, self finance, university support programme and foreign with 50 percent quota reserved for Sindh and remaining 50 percent for other parts of the country. The University offers admission in seven departments including Fine Art, Architecture and

Planning, Communication, Textile, Product, Fashion and Interior Design, the university spokesman informed and added, 272 female and 36 male candidates are appearing in the test. The test comprised of two portions of Mcqs and Drawing, both carrying 40 and 60 marks respectively. The test will remain continued on Tuesday and Wednesday whereas the remaining students will be called randomly to appear in Entry Test. The Vice Chancellor SABS University Prof. Dr. Arabella Bhutto along with vigilance committee paid visit during Entry Test. Addressing the welcome ceremony, the Vice Chancellor said the artist is a part of the creator family because the artist portrait, draft and design universe.

PM launches anti-polio vaccine drive targeting 44 mln children

ISLAMABAD Oct 2 (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday launched the five-day anti-polio vaccination drive targeting around 44 million children across the country. The prime minister initiated the campaign by administering anti-polio vaccine oral drops and vitamin A to children, here at the PM House. Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said 350,000 polio workers would participate in the drive to administer anti-polio vaccine to 44 million children aged 0-5 years. He termed the

polio workers as the nation's heroes who braved challenges while making the anti-polio drive successful. He also mentioned the support of the international partners in helping Pakistan to eradicate polio. Kakar urged the religious scholars and clerics to play their role in convincing the parents to get their children administered with anti-polio vaccine. "It is our religious, moral, and social responsibility to save our future generations from this crippling disease," he said. "We have to make Pakistan free from polio."

HEC announces Commonwealth Scholarships for Masters, PhD

ISLAMABAD Oct 2 (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced Commonwealth Scholarships for Masters and Ph.D for the years 2023-24. According to HEC, out of total 56 scholarships, 26 nominations are available for Masters and 30 nominations are available for Ph.D. The CSC portal is open for applications up till October 17, 2023. It is worth mentioning here that the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) provides the UK government's Commonwealth scholarship scheme led by international development objectives. Since 1960, the CSC has funded over 30,000 individuals to study in the UK and gain skills, acquire knowledge and build networks to tackle global development challenges. As per eligibility criteria, to apply for these scholarships, a candidate must meet HEC eligibility in addition to CSC requirements mentioned below. Be a Pakistani/AJ&K national and permanent resident of Pakistan /AJ&K. Dual nationals are not eligible. For Master scholarship, an applicant must hold

a first division in 16 years Bachelors/master's degree in the relevant field of study, while for PhD scholarship, an applicant must hold a first division in 17/18 years Masters/MS/MPhil degree in the relevant field of study. Similarly, candidate must not have Second/Third division in the terminal/last degree. Result-awaiting candidates are eligible to apply. All applicants are required to provide HAT test score. Applicant must have obtained a minimum score of 60 out of 100 in HAT test. Those applicants who have taken HAT test on or after January 01, 2022 may upload the test result on HEC portal for consideration and enter their score while filling online HEC application. Without providing minimum HAT test score (60 out of 100), applications will not be considered for further process. Those interested applicants who are yet to take HAT test, may register for the same by visiting <https://etc.hec.gov.pk/>. ETC is accepting applications for HAT test. Merit shall be strictly based on HAT score. (HEC reserves the right to modify the merit criteria).

Interim Govt decides to evict 11 lacs foreigners residing illegally in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD Oct 2 (APP): The caretaker government has decided to evict 11 lacs foreigners living illegally in Pakistan because of their involvement in funding, facilitating terrorists and other illegal activities. In the first phase, illegal residents, in the second phase, those with Afghan citizenship and in the third phase, those with proof of residence cards will be expelled. "Illegally resident foreigners pose a serious threat to the security of Pakistan" said a source privy to the development and added that the plan for eviction of illegally residing Afghan citizens has also been approved as this lot is involved in funding, facilitating and smuggling terrorists

whereas 7 lacs Afghans have not renewed their proof of residence in Pakistan. It has been informed that in the first phase, illegal residents will be deported along with those who do not renew their visas. In the second phase, those with Afghan citizenship will be deported, in the third phase, those with proof of residence cards will be deported. The Ministry of Interior has prepared a plan in consultation with the stakeholders and the Afghan government. In the meantime, the ministry has also issued directives to the concerned to compile a record of Afghans living without permits and prepare a transportation plan to bring them to the Afghan border.

Outlaw held over displaying weapon on social media

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Police claimed to have arrested an outlaw over displaying weapon on social media amid Muzaffargarh Police's ongoing campaign against illegal weapons. According to spokesperson, the police team led by SHO Daira Deen Panah police station Ghazal Haider traced the accused named Rashid who displayed the weapon on social media and lodged case by arresting him. SHO Haider said that illegal weapon will not be tolerated at any cost. He said that raids against those having illegal weapon and those who display them on social media will continue on regular basis.

36 more dengue cases reported in 24 hours

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 36 more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 1,332 in the district. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Monday said that, among the new cases, 26 cases had arrived from Potohar town urban, six from Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi and two of each from Chaklala Cantonment and Potohar rural. He said 126 patients were admitted to district hospitals of which 95 were confirmed cases while 1,237 were discharged after treatment. Dr Sajjad informed that the district administration had registered 21 FIRs, issued tickets to 10, sealed two premises, and a fine of Rs 175,000 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. During indoor surveillance, in the last 24 hours, the teams checked 14,948 houses and larvae were found in 899 homes. Similarly, he added that while checking 5,145 places, the teams found larvae at 126 sites during outdoor surveillance.

DC inaugurates six-day polio drive

SARGODHA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Sargodha Capt (ret-d), Shoaib Ali on Monday inaugurated the six-day anti-polio drive here by administering drops to children at DHQ Teaching hospital. According to a reporters, he said that the campaign would be carried out from October 02 to October 05, while there would be follow up days on October 06 and 07. Deputy Commissioner (DC) said that 6,89,411 children would be administered anti-polio drops in the district by 3,331 teams including 3036 mobile teams, 206 fixed and 89 transit teams for which 612 area In-charges would duties in 169 Union Councils.

PEC provides first aid to 4,136 victims last month

FAISALABAD (APP): The Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) provided first aid to 4,136 victims of different incidents during the last month. According to a performance report released here on Monday, rescue teams attended 10,764 emergency calls, including 2,344 of accidents, 6,846 of medical, 122 fire incidents, 270 crimes, 11 calls about drowning cases, 21 building collapse and 972 miscellaneous. The PEC rescued a total of 9,939 victims out of which 4136 were provided first aid on the spot while 5,440 others were transferred to different hospitals.

DC Islamabad directs crackdown against illegal petrol filling stations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon directed officers crackdown against illegal petrol filling stations and to ensure the quality and quantity of petrol sold at petrol pumps. On the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner, the Assistant Commissioner Industrial Area Awais Irshad Bhatti was also conducting inspections of petrol stations to check for the presence of duty and inspection of weights and measures as per the notified roster, ICT Spokesman said on Monday. The petrol stations found to be violating the rules were being sealed, and strict action would be taken against illegal petrol filling stations. The Deputy Commissioner has warned petrol pump owners

and operators to ensure that they are selling pure and unadulterated petrol in the correct quantity. He has also appealed to the public to report any irregularities to the authorities. The Deputy Commissioner's crackdown on petrol pumps was widely appreciated by the masses. It will also help to curb the illegal petrol filling station business. The DC's crackdown on petrol pumps was part of a larger campaign by the government to ensure the quality and quantity of goods and services sold to the public. The government has also taken steps to crack down on adulterated food and beverages, and on businesses that were using false or misleading weights and measures.

Famous actor Umer Sharif remembered on his death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned actor, King of Comedy, TV and stage personality, Umer Sharif was remembered on his second death anniversary on Monday. He was born on April 19, 1960 in Karachi, Umer Sharif started his career from Karachi as a stage performer at the age of 19 in 1974. Some of his popular comedy stage plays include "Bakra Qistoon Pe" and "Buddha Ghar Pe

Hy". Mr 420, Mr Charlie, Ghunda Raj, Laat Sahab, Kundan, But Shikan and Chand Babu were some of his movies. Umer Sharif received National awards for Best Director and Best Actor in 1992. He was the only actor to receive four Nigar Awards in a single year. He also received three Graduate Awards. Umer Sharif was also a recipient of Tamgha-e-Imtiaz by the government of Pakistan.

ANF seizes 139 kg drugs in seven operations; arrests eight accused

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover 139 kg drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 45.6 kg hashish and 12 kg opium were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Khanewal. A resident of Islamabad was smuggling drugs by hiding them in secret cavities of a car. In another operation at Allama Iqbal International Airport, 53 cocaine-filled capsules were recovered from the pos-

session of a passenger. The accused had reached Lahore from Muscat by flight number PK-230, he said. The spokesman informed that in a joint operation conducted by ANF and Pakistan Rangers Punjab in Kasur, four suspects were arrested while 7 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of the accused, residents of Lahore and Kasur. In the fourth operation at Sialkot International Airport, 50 Ice and 50 hashish-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a passenger. The accused, a resident of Pakpattan, was leaving for Doha by flight number QR-631.

National polio immunization drive starts

ISLAMABAD (APP): A countrywide vaccination campaign to administer anti-polio drops to children under five years of age started on Monday. In a video message, Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan said that this was the second national anti-polio campaign of the year 2023 which was started across the country. The minister said that around 43 million children will be vaccinated in the national anti-polio campaign. He added to overcome Vitamin A deficiency in the children, a supplement dose will also be given to the children. Dr. Nadeem Jan

said that there is no cure for polio and that only the polio vaccine can save children from permanent disability. He urged parents, civil society, teachers, scholars and religious scholars to play their roles in the eradication of polio. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that eradication of polio is essential for our national honor and respect. He said at one stage it was not possible to eliminate polio from Afghanistan and Pakistan. "Now we are close to eradicating polio." He said, "The fight to eradicate polio cannot be won without the help of parents."

ANF crackdown against drug smuggling continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) continues its operations against drug trafficking and recovers more than 139 kg of drugs in 7 operations different operations while arresting 8 accused. According to the spokesperson of ANF on Tuesday, 45 kg 600 grams of hashish and 12 kg of opium were recovered from the vehicle near Motorway Toll Plaza Khanewal on. Meanwhile a resident of Islamabad was smuggling drugs by hiding them in the trunk of a car but was apprehended by the ANF. During operation at Allama Iqbal International Airport, 53 capsules filled with cocaine were recovered from the stomach of a passenger. The accused had reached Lahore from Muscat via flight number PK-230. The spokesperson further said

that 4 suspects arrested in a joint operation with Pakistan Rangers Punjab in Kasur and 7 kg of heroin was recovered from their possession. At Sialkot International Airport, 50 ice and 50 hashish filled capsules were recovered from the passenger's stomach. The accused was a resident of Pakpattan and leaving for Doha via flight number QR-631. Meanwhile 9 kg hashish was recovered from a local resident near Ghazar Taos Bala Bazaar in a joint operation with FC Balochistan at Luck Pass Check Post. During the operation, 40 kg of ice was recovered from 5 parcels in the bus. Drugs were being smuggled to Karachi under the guise of vehicle spare parts. 5 kg hashish concealed for smuggling recovered near Padraik, Pisman area.

FIA arrests suspect over human trafficking

MULTAN (APP): A sub-agent who was reportedly involved in people trafficking to Saudi Arabia for beggary reasons on an Umrah visa was caught during a raid by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The arrested accused nominated in the case FIR No 167/23 has been identified as Rab Nawaz s/o Sarfraz. The accused instigated two persons Mujahid Iqbal and Tanveer Abbas for begging on Umrah visa. FIA Mul-

tan circle was conducting raids to arrest the other accused. It's worth mentioning here that the FIA teams have conducted two separate raids at Multan International airport recently and took passengers into custody who were travelling to KSA for begging purposes on Umrah visa. During immigration, they revealed that they would beg there and half of the begged amount would be handed over to the sub agents.

72 percent locomotives of Railways in functional condition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Around 72 percent of Diesel-Electric Locomotives (DEL) of Pakistan Railways out of a total of 461 are in functional condition which is not sufficient to run the entire operations of the department. Pakistan Railways has 332 locomotives in running condition out of a total of 461, while 129 (28 percent) diesel-electric locomotives were non-functional, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. Of 129 locomotives around 41 were under normal overhauling schedules and maintenance. The official said the locomotives would be rolled out after routine schedule maintenance turn by turn. He said that 11 locomotives met with an accident on various dates and locations, and fabrication work and procurement of spares were under process for these locomotives. The official said that around 69 DPU class diesel-electric

locomotives were held up for repair and need major modification while eight locomotives were temporarily deleted and under condemnation process due to overage. To a question, he said that Pakistan Railways was planning to procure as many as 25 diesel-electric locomotives for various shunting points across the country which would help to replace outdated locomotives that were to be scrapped very soon. The project for the procurement and manufacturing of 25 shunting locomotives would be implemented in three years at an estimated cost of Rs. 14 billion, he added. Currently, he said that only 51 locomotives were being operated for this service against the 98 shunting points at various railway stations across the country. Additionally, most of the old locomotives would be discarded due to high maintenance costs.

LHC adjourns hearing of Lal Haveli’s de-sealing case till Oct 11

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Lahore High Court bench here on Monday adjourned the hearing of Lal Haveli’s de-sealing case till October 11. According to details, as hearing started Sardar Abdul Razzaq, the petitioner’s lawyer argued before the Court that the Lal Haveli was sealed by the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) without notice. On which the Additional Attorney General told the Court that Lal Haveli properties were sealed on orders of Chairman ETPB and will

file a detail reply on the next hearing. LHC Justice Mirza Waqas Rauf after hearing the arguments from both sides adjourned the hearing till October 11 and directed the Additional Attorney General to submit the reply on next hearing. Earlier, Sheikh Sidique, the elder brother of the former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed had challenged the sealing of Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed’s Lal Haveli, by the ETPB on September 21.

BISP is strongest, most successful social security program: Zulifqar Abro

SUKKUR (APP): Program Manager, Action Against Hunger, Rukhsana Mubarak called on the Zonal Director, North Zone, Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Sukkur, Zulfiqar Ali Abro at BISP Zonal Office here on Monday and discussed the bilateral issues. Speaking about BISP program, Abro said that BISP was the strongest and most successful social security program of the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Security under which, more than 8 million deserving families were financially supported. Giving her a detailed briefing about the ongoing various programs of the BISP, he said that a cash assistance initiative of BISP provided financial assistance to nine million women heads of households

under Benazir Kafaalat. In addition to Benazir Kafaalat, 710 thousand lactating mothers and their children under two years of age are being supplied with food supplements under Benazir Nashunama to overcome malnutrition among them, he added. The Zonal Director BISP said that the Programme had greatly contributed towards uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the improvised and economically marginalized segments of the society, particularly the women. He further said that a cash assistance initiative of BISP provided financial assistance to nine million women heads of households under Benazir Kafaalat. Ms Rukhsana said that the BISP was one of the best social safety programmes of the developing world.

Police arrest 10 for possessing illegal weapons, liquor

RAWALPINDI (APP): The district police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi have conducted raids in different areas and netted 10 outlaws for possessing 45 liters liquor, five 30 bore pistols and ammunition. According to a police spokesman, R.A.Bazar, Race Course, and Saddar Wah police held Aqeel, Shahid, Tahir, Naqash and Yasir and recovered 45 liters liquor from their possession.

The spokesman informed that Waris Khan, Sadiqabad, Westridge, Gujar Khan and Dhamial police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up Numan, Zia ul Haq, Usman and others on recovery of five 30 bore pistols and ammunition. The SSP said that strict action in accordance with the law was being taken against the lawbreakers and operations against aerial firing and illegal weapon holders would continue.

Jamal Shah deposits valuable gift in Toshakhana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah has deposited a valuable gift in Toshakhana which was received by him during his recent visit to Qatar. The gift was a valuable bronzes sculpture of falcon, said a press release here on Monday. The gift was given by the Minister of Culture State of Qatar

Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani as a gesture of goodwill. Jamal Shah emphasized that this gift rightfully belongs to the nation, which is why he chose to place it in Toshakhana. He clarified that he has no intention of keeping any gift items presented to him during meetings with diplomats or on future foreign visits.

FM to participate in Trans-Himalaya Forum in Tibet on Oct 4-5

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani is visiting China to participate in the 3rd Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation, being held in Nyingchi, Tibet Autonomous Region, on October 4-5. The foreign minister is undertaking the visit at the special invitation of the Foreign Minister of China, Wang Yi, the Foreign Office said Monday. The Trans-Himalaya Forum was initiated in 2018 to deepen practical cooperation among regional countries on diverse subjects including geographical connectivity, environmental protection, ecological

preservation and enhancing cultural linkages. The last in-person meeting of the Forum was held in 2019. The theme of this year’s Forum is “Ecological Civilization and Environmental Protection.” The Foreign Office in a statement said during his stay in Tibet, FM Jilani will address the opening ceremony of the Trans-Himalaya Forum. On the sidelines, the foreign minister will meet with several regional dignitaries including the Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia, the Foreign Minister of China and the Interim Foreign Minister of Afghanistan.

IESCO plans to start installing over 1.4 million AMI meters from January 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has planned to start installing over 1.4 million Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters of all tariffs in Rawalpindi circle from January 2024. Official sources told that the project would be completed within two years. Currently data back and operation centers were being set up at Gujjar Khan and IESCO Headquarters and G-10 respectively besides operational laboratory. They said that initially some 512 AMI non-billing meters were installed in March 2022 as a pilot project. Switching over to AMI system will bring about a permanent elimination of power pilferage with

a systematic control of transmission through round-the-clock monitoring of the electricity meters. This new technology, being introduced, would help reduce power sector losses, enhance quality of billing and recoveries, control power load-shedding and would also address the consumers complaints of wrong or over-billing, they said. The AMI system will end human interventions in meter reading, enhance customer support, better measurements, more accurate billing, a degree of control of consumption and help the persisting dilemma of power outage by enhancing ability of IESCO to reduce non-technical losses. This system has

already been installed at Multan and Lahore Electric Supply Companies (MEPCO and LESCO) but at a very limited scale adding that the project was launched at Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) with the financial assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). ADB had provided \$170 million for AMI project being carried out in the IESCO phase wises. In the first phase, all electricity meters installed at Rawalpindi Cantonment and City Circles were being switched to AMI with an estimated cost of \$ 95 million. Over 900,000 electricity meters would be replaced in the city with smart meters in four years, they said.

IRSA releases 161,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 161,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 96,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1539.13 feet and was 141.13 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 49,100 cusecs and 85,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1224.85 feet, which was 174.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 10,300 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 90,600, 90,000, 94,100 and 47,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 16,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council visits Gomal University’s agriculture faculty

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council team visited Gomal University to take stock of the university’s Agriculture faculty. According to the university’s spokesman the team led by its Chairman Professor Dr. Fayyazul Hasan met Vice Chancellor Gomal University Professor Dr. Shakibullah and other senior officials of the university including registrar Dr. Muhammad Shoaib, Dean of Agriculture Faculty Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Jilani, directors of various departments and teachers and discussed several relevant issues. The team also inspected classrooms, laboratories and research centers of the different departments of the Faculty of Agriculture. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor Gomal University Prof. Dr. Shakibullah informed that that the university was according special attention to the department in order to equip the students with modern research-based knowledge to gear them up for playing an effective role in development of the agriculture sector of the country. He said all re-

quired educational facilities were being provided in a conducive environment, that was why parents had confidence in the administration of Gomal University and as result the number of students of Gomal University had now exceeded 20,000. Chairman National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council Professor Dr. Fayyaz Al Hasan said that appreciated the measures taken under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Gomal University Professor Dr. Shakibullah and the efforts of Dean Agriculture Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Jilani for ensuring quality education. The team was also taken round various departments of Gomal University Agriculture Faculty, including Agronomy, Plant Breeding and Genetics, Entomology, Animal Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Central Library, Gymnasium, Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan Auditorium, Sports Complex in the main campus., Hospital, Orchard, Research Areas, Wildlife Park as well as Food and Technology, Animal Sciences, Wildlife Department at Gomal University Quaid-e-Azam Campus and inspected necessary facilities.

Rescue 1122 handles 572 emergencies in Sep

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Rescue 1122 on Monday issued a monthly performance report, featuring a total of 572 emergencies tackled with response time ranging within seven minutes by the district’s emergency service during the last month. Sharing the report, the spokesman of the Rescue 1122 said, the service provided first medical aid to about 592 patients and subsequently shifted them to hospitals while tackling different emergencies in September under the leadership of District Emergency Officer Awais Babar. He said the rescue teams promptly tackled all those emergencies and the emergency response time was recorded at seven minutes. Giving details, the spokesman added the emergencies included 426 medical, 117 road traffic accidents, nine fire eruption, 13 bullet injury or fight, two drowning, one cylinder blast and wall collapsing and three were recoveries-related emergencies. He said a total of 98159 calls were received by the emergency service, but 77746 of them were fake or irrelevant.

President directs National Savings to reimburse Rs 1.2 mln to woman fraud victim

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday directed the Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) to reimburse an amount of Rs 1.2 million with profit to a woman victim of fraud. The money was fraudulently withdrawn from the woman’s account through the issuance of a fictitious cheque book and affixing her fake signatures on the withdrawal slip. President Alvi asked CDNS to refer the matter to FIA for proper investigation so that the delinquent officials of CDNS involved in the scam may be brought to the book

and punished. The president issued these directions while deciding on a representation filed by CDNS (the Agency) against the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing CDNS to refer the matter to FIA for thorough investigation. As per details, the complainant Abida Riffat had alleged that she was maintaining a Pensioners Benefit Account with CDNS in Rawalpindi. She found out in 2021 that an amount of Rs 1.2 million had been fraudulently withdrawn from her account in 2019 through another cheque book which was never issued to her.

More 88 gas pilferers caught, 4.9m fine imposed

LAHORE (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), during its ongoing crackdown, disconnected another 88 connections over violations in Punjab, KP and Islamabad, imposing a fine of Rs 4.982 million to gas pilferers. According to a spokesman for the SNGPL, teams continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 88 connections and 82 under billing cases processed. In Lahore, the regional team disconnected six connections on illegal use of gas while another six connections on the use of compressor. In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected five connections on the use of compressor while another one against illegal use, 16 under billing cases processed. The company disconnected two connections on illegal use of gas, five connections on the use of compressor and four under billing cases have been processed in Multan. The team also lodged one FIR against gas thieves.

Polio campaign starts in 34 districts of Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): Coordinator Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) Balochistan Syed Zahid Shah has said that Anti Polio campaign will start on Monday in all 34 districts of Balochistan. All preparations have been completed for the seven days anti-polio drive in Balochistan. Government and Emergency operation Centre Balochistan would commence seven days Anti-Polio campaign in Balochistan, in which around 2.4 million children of up to five years would be administered with polio drops. Vitamin A drops also will be given to children during the campaign. All necessary arrangements have been made regarding the Anti-Polio campaign, 10472 teams would be deployed to vaccinate children under the age of five,” Syed Zahid Shah said. At least 8589 Mobile teams, 925 fixed and 547 transit teams have been deployed in whole province to make sure that all children are administered with

polio drops. He said Balochistan is polio free from last two years. He said Since Jan 2021, no polio case reported in the province (last case was reported on Jan 27, 2021, from district Killa Abdullah) and since April 2021, no polio virus found in the environmental samples in Balochistan. We have adopted strict security to prevent any unforeseen situation, Balochistan Levies force, Police and Frontier Corps (FC) would be deployed to protect the polio workers,” Syed Zahid Shah said and added that religious scholars are also taking part to persuade the parents who normally refuse to administer the polio drops. As Routine Immunization (RI) is an important pillar of polio eradication initiative, we are trying to provide adequate resources not only for vaccination against childhood vaccine preventable diseases but also working for expansion of RI service delivery in remote areas to boost coverages.

Symposium on children’s eyes health held

MULTAN (APP): Ophthamologists in a symposium on Monday discussed in length about eye diseases of kids including paediatric cataracts, inborn diseases, laser surgery, retinopathy of prematurity, eye infection and diagnostic techniques besides its cure to sensitize masses. Organized under the auspices of Ophthamology Department of Govt Shehbaz Sharif Hospital (GSSH) and a pharmaceutical com-

pany at a local hotel, the symposium underlined the need of early detection and treatment which are keys to maximize kids vision potentials. The speakers including renowned surgeon Dr Sohail Sarwar, Head of Ophthamology dept CMH, Brig Dr Kashif Ali, Children Complex Associate Prof, Dr Ajmal Chaudhary and others explained the signs, cure and surgery procedures of different diseases.

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KSA expands coffee production to further diversify economy

RIYADH (Agencies): In an effort to further diversify its oil-dependent economy, Saudi Arabia is increasing its coffee production to achieve a relative balance with crops that yield high economic returns. The country aims to plant 1.2 million coffee trees by 2026, reported the Saudi Press Agency. As the Kingdom ascends to the ranks of the world's top 10 coffee-consuming nations, the government is prioritizing this commodity through various



initiatives, aiming to stimulate sector growth and increase production. In a country where nearly 400,000 Arabica coffee trees yield over 800 tons

of coffee annually, primarily in Jazan, Asir and Al-Baha regions, this shift underscores coffee's burgeoning cultural and economic significance. In commemoration of World Coffee Day, observed annually on Oct. 1, the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture has released substantial statistics about coffee farming in the southern region. Currently, there are over 2,535 coffee farms in this area, including more than 500 model coffee farms.

OPEC optimistic on demand, calls for more oil and gas investment

ABU DHABI (Agencies): The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is optimistic on demand and sees under-investment as a risk to energy security, Secretary-General Haitham Al-Ghais said on Monday at an energy industry event in Abu Dhabi. He stressed the importance of continued investment in the oil and gas industry and said he sees calls to stop investing in oil as counterproductive. "We still see oil demand as quite resilient this year, as it was last year," Al-



Ghais said, noting the group's forecast was for year-on-year demand growth of more than 2.3 million barrels per day (bpd). He added that investment in the oil and gas sector was import-

ant for energy security. "We are...running quite low on spare capacity; we have said this repeatedly and this requires a concerted effort by all of the stakeholders to see the importance of investing in this industry," he said. The UAE's Energy Minister Suhail Al-Mazrouei echoed the call and said investment by both international and national oil companies was needed. "And these investments need the financial world to be willing to finance oil and gas," Al-Mazrouei said.

First regional sukuk meet calls for scientific approach to deal with risks

RIYADH (Agencies): Global financial experts called for a scientifically guided approach to managing the risks associated with sukuk transactions during a meeting in Cairo on Sunday. This event, held under the theme "The Importance of Strengthening the Role of Sukuks in Sustainable Development: Presentation and Analysis of International Experiences," was organized by the Arab Administrative Development Organization in partnership with the Albaraka Forum for Islamic Economy and the Egyptian Islamic Finance Association. The Saudi Press agency reported that the discussions convened



industry leaders to explore how a bond adhering to Islamic finance principles can power investments in sectors aligned with sustainability objectives. As the global economy undergoes rapid transformation, conference discussions focused on the dynamic role of sukuk in adapting to this evolving landscape.

China's power sector investments may top US\$13.7tril by 2060

BEIJING (Agencies): China's investments in its power sector may exceed 100 trillion yuan (US\$13.7 trillion) from 2020 to 2060, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Monday, citing utility behemoth State Grid Corp of China. The time-frame of the investment is in line with President Xi Jinping's pledge for China to attain net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide (CO2) by 2060. Researchers say the goal, if achieved, could curb likely global warming by 0.2-0.3 Celsius this century. Xi also pledged, in 2020, to bring China's carbon emissions to a peak by 2030. The world's second-largest econ-



omy accounts for about 30% of the world's CO2 emissions. "Energy activities are the main source of carbon dioxide emissions in China," Xinhua cited State Grid as saying in a recently published book. To achieve the dual-carbon goal, the transformation of China's mix of power generation to clean and low-carbon sources needs to pick up speed, State Grid said.

Euro zone factory activity stuck in steep downturn in Sept

LONDON (Agencies): Euro zone manufacturing activity remained mired in a deep and broad-based downturn last month, according to a survey which showed on Monday that demand kept shrinking at a pace rarely surpassed since the data was first collected in 1997. HCOB's final euro zone manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), compiled by S&P Global, dipped to 43.4 in September from August's 43.5, matching a preliminary estimate. A reading below 50 marks a contraction in activity. An index measuring output, which feeds into a composite PMI due on Wednesday and seen as a good gauge of economic health, fell to 43.1 from 43.4. "The output PMI



was well under 50 for the entire third quarter, so we are feeling pretty certain that the recession in manufacturing continued during this period," said Cyrus de la Rubia, chief economist at Hamburg Commercial Bank. "In the race to the bottom, France and Germany are leading the way in the September PMIs. Meanwhile, Spain and Italy are pulling through somewhat less scathed."

World Bank keeps China's 2023 GDP growth outlook but lowers 2024

BEIJING (Agencies): The World Bank has maintained its forecast for China's 2023 economic growth at 5.1%, in line with its previous estimate in April, but trimmed its prediction for 2024 to 4.4% from 4.8%, citing the persistent weakness of its property sector. For East Asia and the Pacific including China, the bank slightly trimmed its 2023 gross domestic product growth forecast to 5.0% from its prior 5.1% estimate, the World Bank said in its semi-annual regional update released on Sunday. For 2024, the bank lowered



its regional outlook to 4.5% growth from 4.8%, dragged down by external factors including a sluggish global economy, high interest rates and trade protectionism. "Almost 3,000 new restrictions were imposed on global trade in 2022, three times as

large as those in 2019," the World Bank said. For China, the bounce back from the reopening of the economy following three years of ultra-stringent zero-Covid policies has faded, and elevated debt and weakness in its property sector are weighing on growth, the World Bank said in the report. After months of mostly dismal data, the world's second-largest economy has started to show signs of stabilisation. China's factory activity expanded for the first time in six months in September, an official survey showed on Saturday.

Google to make laptops in India in win for Modi's tech push

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Alphabet Inc's Google will begin to make its Chromebook laptops in India, the latest among global tech companies to expand assembly in the key growth market. Google is partnering with HP Inc to manufacture Chromebooks in the South Asian country, Alphabet chief executive officer Sundar Pichai said Monday on X, formerly known as Twitter. The move will help Google boost supply in India and compete more effectively with Windows computers from companies such as Dell Technologies Inc and Asustek



Computer Inc. It's also another win for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US\$2 billion incentive plan to have tech giants make India their production base. The country of 1.4 billion people has been expanding its electronics manufacturing sector as com-

panies diversify production beyond China amid growing Washington-Beijing tensions. Local manufacturing will help Google maintain constant supply in India and avoid any potential curbs on imports. Chromebooks are typically priced at the lower end of the market and have thin profit margins, making them sensitive to any tariff measures. New Delhi is loosening its planned restrictions on imports of laptops, tablets and other IT hardware, giving manufacturers more time to prepare for potential curbs, Bloomberg reported previously.

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Thai Airways flights from China almost full after visa waiver

BANGKOK (Agencies): Thai Airways International Pcl says flights from China have been over 90% full after Southeast Asia's second-largest economy temporarily relaxed visa rules for visitors. "We have seen significant growth in terms of Chinese traffic into Thailand," the carrier's chief commercial officer Korakot Chatasingha told Bloomberg Television on Monday. Thailand is banking on Chinese visitors to lead a spend-

ing recovery as policy tweaks and new airport infrastructure bolster the tourism-dependent nation. Bangkok's busiest airport just last week opened a new terminal. Thai Airways, which is going through a debt restructuring after Covid, said last month it plans to increase its flights to five Chinese cities to 56 a week, up from 49, starting Dec 1. Chinese visitors from Sept 25 to Feb 29 can enjoy visa-free entry to Thailand as the

popular holiday destination seeks to boost flagging tourist numbers from Asia's biggest economy. Eight months into 2023, arrivals from China are only about 50% of pre-pandemic volumes, Korakot said. While Korakot said he remains confident in the long-term recovery of Thailand's largest source of foreign tourists, the airline is weighing whether to further increase China flights to pre-Covid levels.

Pfizer, GSK's new RSV vaccines on track for US\$2bil in sales

NEW YORK (Agencies): GSK Plc and Pfizer Inc are on pace to sell a combined US\$2 billion of their new RSV vaccines for older adults this year, more than five times what analysts had expected, according to Bloomberg Intelligence. Early data from US prescription sales for GSK's Arexvy and Pfizer's Abrysvo show the shots are in higher demand than expected, BI analyst John Murphy wrote in a research note. If that rate is sustained, up to 6.5 million patients will be injected this year in the US alone. The two RSV vaccines for people 60 and older have been on the market for a little over two months after scientists worked for six decades to develop immunisation



against the common, but sometimes deadly, respiratory syncytial virus. Global sales for adult RSV shots are expected to reach US\$10 billion by 2032, according to Bloomberg Intelligence. Analyst estimates of US\$340 million in 2023 revenue for both adult RSV vaccines "seems out of whack with the early prescription data we've analysed", Murphy writes in his research note.

Autonomous driving remains a distant reality in Japan

TOKYO (Agencies): Japan is pushing for 50 locations with driverless services in place within three years, but fully autonomous vehicles remain nearly nonexistent in the country. So far, Fukui prefecture on the main island of Honshu is the only place with vehicles featuring level-4 capabilities — defined when they can handle all driving tasks — but only under specific conditions with the option for humans to take over. In the town of Eiheiji, the seven-seater golf carts are only allowed to navigate a 2km course. Maximum speed: 12km per hour. The limited availability of autonomous driving in Japan stands in stark contrast to the US and China, where robotaxis already roam the streets in some cities. Waymo, backed by Google parent Alphabet Inc, and General Motor Co's Cruise are testing driverless taxi services in San Francisco. Beijing has officially allowed robotaxi operators including



Baidu Inc to charge for fully autonomous taxis in some areas. At stake is a self-driving vehicle market that could be worth as much as US\$400 billion by 2035, according to McKinsey & Co. "There are many possibilities to use these vehicles," said Hideyuki Yamada, president of Machidukuri ZEN Connect Inc, which runs the service in Fukui. Right now, their biggest hurdle is that they aren't allowed to cross intersections. Once that is removed, level-4 services could "spread across Japan, as it's a small nation", he said. While Japanese automakers may not aggressively be pursuing autonomous services in Japan, they're much more active abroad.

Blitzers, Pearls, Thunderbolts and Marvels register wins in ILT20 Development Tournament's opening weekend

DUBAI (Agencies): The Blitzers, Pearls, Thunderbolts and Marvels have recorded impressive wins in the opening weekend of the ILT20 Development Tournament. The contest is aimed at providing an opportunity for UAE players to grab 13 spots still up for grabs in the DP World ILT20 season two. In the tournament opener, player of the match Usman Khan's unbeaten 68 off 52 balls (nine fours, one six) ensured a comfortable seven wicket win for the Blitzers. The 115-run chase was delivered without any major hiccups, with 20 balls to spare. Earlier, the Marvels lost opener



Mayank Choudhry on the tournament's very first ball, and struggled to get going in their innings after being asked to bat first. Young all-rounder Aayan Afzal Khan top-scored with 24 runs while captain Basil Hameed scored 20. Uzair Khan and Muhammad Zubair took

three wickets each as the Marvels were bowled out for 114 in 18.1 overs. The Pearls recorded a 19-run win against the Dynamos in the second match on Saturday — a competitive 151 for eight in their 20 overs. Asked to bat first, the Pearls were well served by their opener Aryansh Sharma who scored a blazing 63 off 41 balls with the help of six fours and two sixes. All-rounder Zawar Farid (player of the match) had a memorable game as he first contributed 26 useful runs with the bat in a 42-run fifth wicket partnership with Aryansh before taking four wickets with the ball.

Andersson takes individual title, Team Abu Dhabi cling on to their team championship for now

SARDINIA (Agencies): Sweden's Jonas Andersson clinched the UIM F1H2O World Championship for the second time on Sunday with a convincing victory in the Regione Sardegna Grand Prix of Italy. Andersson's start-to-finish success in Olbia also puts Team Sweden in a strong position to secure the team title won for the last five times by Team Abu Dhabi. While the defending champions had a disappointing day in Olbia, with Thani Al-Qemzi finishing eighth and



Rashid Al-Qemzi 10th, they will still take the fight into December's final round in Sharjah, which has produced many dramatic finishes over the years. Anders-

son was crowned champion in Sardinia after an impressive third successive Grand Prix victory, cruising home from Frenchman Peter Morin, with Sharjah Team's Ferdinand Zandbergen taking the third podium spot to go second in the championship standings. The Dutchman will now look to secure the silver medal in Sharjah, although he can expect to come under pressure from his two closest challengers, Victory Team's Erik Stark and Morin.

Wedding bells for Cantlay and alarm bells for the Americans after another Ryder Cup loss in Europe

GUIDONIA MONTECELIO, ITALY (Agencies): Only one American truly had reason to celebrate after the Ryder Cup ended with another home win for Europe. Patrick Cantlay is getting married Monday. The rest of the US players were glum as could be as they sipped beers during the post-competition news conference Sunday. Europe's win streak at home in golf's biggest team event will now extend beyond three decades. After getting swept for the first time in Friday's opening session of foursomes — also failing to win a match on the



first day for the first time — the Americans never recovered and were beaten 16½ to 11½ by a European team that got in front early at every opportunity and produced an array of shot-making that reverberated around the designed amphitheatres that so many holes re-

sembled at Marco Simone. "They just holed a lot more putts, a few more chip-ins," Brooks Koepka said. Zach Johnson's six captain's picks — Koepka, Jordan Spieth, Collin Morikawa, Rickie Fowler, Sam Burns and Justin Thomas — combined to win four matches. Fowler's record in road Ryder Cups fell to 1-8-5. Cantlay, who finished 2-2-0, had never seen Marco Simone until this week because he had a bachelor's party planned well before Johnson decided on the dates for a team scouting trip that was held a few weeks ago.

Celtics land ex-Bucks guard Holiday from Portland

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Responding to the blockbuster NBA trade that sent Damian Lillard to Milwaukee, the Boston Celtics obtained former Milwaukee guard Jrue Holiday from the Portland Trail Blazers in a trade deal on Sunday. The Celtics confirmed they are sending guard Malcolm Brogdon, center Robert Williams, a 2024 first-round NBA Draft pick obtained from Golden State and a 2029 first-round selection to



the Trail Blazers for Holiday. "The Holiday season came early this year," the Celtics posted. "Welcome to Boston @

Jrue Holiday11." The Celtics answered the challenge issued by Milwaukee last Wednesday when the Bucks acquired superstar guard Lillard as part of a three-team deal with Phoenix that sent 33-year-old Holiday to the Trail Blazers. Holiday is a two-time NBA All-Star and five-time NBA All-Defensive Team selection who played a key role in Milwaukee's 2021 championship run, the first NBA crown for the Bucks in 50 years.

PSG players apologise for anti-Marseille chants

PARIS (Agencies): Four Paris Saint-Germain players on Sunday apologised for offensive chants aimed at rivals Marseille after a Ligue 1 game, saying they "sincerely regretted" their words. French internationals Ousmane Dembele, Randal Kolo Muani, and Layvin Kurzawa and Moroccan Achraf Hakimi were filmed singing an insulting song towards Marseille fans after a 4-0 victory at the Parc des Princes on September



24. "We let ourselves get carried away by the euphoria and we sincerely regret the words we should not have said and

would like to apologise," the four said in identical posts on social media. "We are well aware of the impact of our actions and our words on the public, notably the youngest who dream watching a football match," they continued, adding "in the future, we will do everything to further respect our duty to set an example". Homophobic chants were also sung during this match by Parisian supporters for several minutes.

Al-Ittihad's match against Iran's Sepahan cancelled due to Qassem Soleimani busts in stadium

JEDDAH (Agencies): A furious row erupted on Monday after an Iranian football club tried to use a match against Saudi opponents for political propaganda. The AFC Champions League match at the Naghsh-e-Jahan Stadium in Isfahan between Sepahan and Jeddah team Al-Ittihad was called off when the Iranian club refused to remove political banners and busts of the late Revolutionary Guard warlord Qassem Soleimani from the edge of the pitch. Al-Ittihad staff and some players noted the busts and banners at an initial pitch inspection, and



reported the issue to the referee and observers from the Asian Football Confederation. AFC rules explicitly outlaw the use of a football match to promote a political message. Confederation officials asked Sepahan staff to remove the

offending propaganda, but they refused. After requesting a delay of half an hour to assess the situation, the Saudi team and staff left the stadium to head to the airport and back to Saudi Arabia. The confederation said Monday's second round group stage match had been "canceled due to unanticipated and unforeseen circumstances. The AFC reiterates its commitment toward ensuring the safety and security of the players, match officials, spectators, and all stakeholders involved. This matter will now be referred to the relevant committees."

NBA, Mavericks and Timberwolves to engage with youth players in UAE

ABU DHABI (Agencies): The National Basketball Association has announced a series of social impact programming for youth, coaches and basketball stakeholders that will be hosted in collaboration with the Dallas Mavericks and the Minnesota Timberwolves as part of The NBA Abu Dhabi Games 2023 presented by ADQ. The week of activities, which will be highlighted by the return of Jr. NBA Week to Abu Dhabi following its debut in 2022, will run from Monday Oct. 2 until Sunday, Oct. 8



and reach more than 2,500 youth and 250 coaches from the UAE and across the Middle East and Europe. Jr. NBA Week will feature youth clinics and basketball development programming focused on teaching the game,

promoting health and wellness, and empowering the next generation of players, coaches and referees, and will feature appearances by Mavericks and Timberwolves players and coaches, NBA and WNBA legends, and USA Basketball Youth and Sport Development coach director, Don Showalter. The NBA Abu Dhabi Games 2023 will feature the Mavericks and the Timberwolves playing two preseason games at Etihad Arena on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi on Thursday, Oct. 5 and Saturday, Oct. 7.

Ronaldo targets first AFC Champions League goals for Al-Nassr against Istiklol

RIYADH (Agencies): Al-Nassr captain Cristiano Ronaldo will look to get his AFC Champions League goalscoring account up and running on Monday night when the Riyadh giants welcome Istiklol of Tajikistan to Al-Awwal Park in the second round of matches in Group E. The Portuguese legend is the all-time record goalscorer in the UEFA Champions League with 140, in a career that saw him win the competition once with Manchester United and four times with Real Madrid. The match will be Ronaldo's third in Asia's premier club competition, having taken part in a success-



ful qualifier against Shabab Al-Ahli Dubai, and on Group E Matchday 1 against Persepolis of Iran, which Al-Nassr won 2-0. Ronaldo is currently the top scorer in the Roshn Saudi League with 10 goals, four ahead of his nearest challengers, after eight rounds of matches.

Mohamed Tolu wins third Saudi medal after shot put silver at Asian Games



LONDON (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's Mohamed Tolu won the Kingdom's third medal at the Asian Games in Hangzhou on Sunday after taking silver in the shot put competition. There was further track and field success for Saudi Arabia after Abdullah Abkar qualified for the final of the 200 meters by winning his semifinal in 20.59 seconds. In the 3,000-meter steeplechase final, Badr Al-Omrani finished eighth in 8 minutes, 49.19 seconds, and team-

mate Wasim Al-Farsi ended twelfth in 9:09.27. In the 1,500-meter final, Faez Al-Subayi finished seventh in 3:42.14 and teammate Raed Al-Jadaani ended eighth in 3:42.52. Abdulrahman Al-Mousa, Mansour Alawi, Abdulaziz Al-Rawdha and Bilal Al-Awadhi qualified for the round of 32 in the men's archery competition. In the women's competition, Shaden Al-Marshod and Sara bin Salum qualified for the round of 32. Also on Sunday, the Kingdom's footballers were eliminated after losing to Uzbekistan 2-1 in the quarterfinals. Uzbekistan opened the scoring in the second minute followed by another strike in the 24th minute. In the second half Mohammed Maran grabbed a goal for the young Green Falcons in the 65th minute, but it was not enough to get back on level terms.

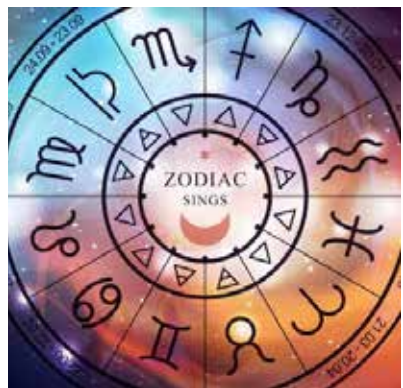
Saudi's Abdullah Abkar claims 200m silver at Asian Games

HANGZHOU (Agencies): Abdullah Abkar won the fourth Saudi medal of the 19th Asian Games when placing second in the men's 200m at the Olympic stadium in Hangzhou. Abkar led from the gun but was pipped on the line by the fast-finishing Ueyama Koki of Japan who took gold in a time of 20.60, Abkar had to settle for silver with a time of 20.63. The Saudi basketball team has qualified for the quarterfinals, in Hangzhou, after defeating Hong Kong 95-72. Saudi Arabia were without Marzouq Al-Muwallad, who had returned home following the death of his brother. Saudi runner Issa Ghazwani advanced to the final of the 800m after winning his semifinal in a time of 1:48.98. The Saudi 4x100m relay team, Sultan Al-Khaldi, Abdulaziz



Atafi, Hamoud Alwani and Mahmoud Hafiz, exited the games after finishing fifth in their heat in a time of 40.34. Sami Alyami set a new personal record in the 800m, finishing third in his semifinal with a time of 1:49.56, but failed to advance to the final. The Saudi archery team of Abdulaziz Al-Rawdhan, Bilal Alawadhi and Majdi Al-Sobhi exited the games at the quarterfinal stage after losing to Iran.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: OCTOBER 03, 2023



much mental energy. It's a good day to kick back and enjoy life!

– **VIRGO**: It's vital that you stick to logical reasoning today, no matter how coldhearted it makes you feel. Emotional thinking only gets you in deeper, and right now you need to separate yourself a bit.

– **LIBRA**: You're filled with a good buzz today, and that energy can be used for almost anything. Your mental powers are sharper than ever, so if there's a tough puzzle in your life, now's the time to solve it.

– **SCORPIO**: Something small but interesting catches your eye midday and might turn into an obsession by evening. You might not quite be equipped to figure it out yet, so keep collecting data for now.

– **SAGITTARIUS**: Your philosophical side is showing today and you might spin almost any situation into an excuse for bigger thinking. You may not have the time to get too deep, but you've got the right attitude.

– **CAPRICORN**: You've got to say something today even if the time seems totally wrong. You're not in the best of moods, but you've got a firm grip on what people need to hear and how to get the best response.

– **ACQUARIUS**: Your brain is crackling with great energy, and you may hit on a few creative brainstormers before it gets too late to do anything about them. Take notes and get to work. You have to seize the day!

– **PISCES**: You may feel a little crazed by the press of obligations that come your way today, but you can get help. All you have to do is ask! People are surprisingly open to collaboration and delegation.

Migrants are being raped at Mexico border as they await entry to US

REYNOSA, Mexico (Reuters): When Carolina's captors arrived at dawn to pull her out of the stash house in the Mexican border city of Reynosa in late May, she thought they were going to force her to call her family in Venezuela again to beg them to pay \$2,000 ransom. Instead, one of the men shoved her onto a broken-down bus parked outside and raped her, she told Reuters. "It's the saddest, most horrible thing that can happen to a person," Carolina said. A migrant advocate who assisted Carolina after the kidnapping, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity due to security concerns, confirmed all the details of her account. The attack came amid



an increase in sexual violence against migrants in the border cities of Reynosa and Matamoros, both major transit routes for immigrants seeking to enter the U.S., according to data from the Mexican government and humanitarian groups, as well as interviews with eight sexual assault survivors and more than a dozen local aid workers. "The inhumane way smug-

glers abuse, extort, and perpetrate violence against migrants for profit is criminal and morally reprehensible," U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) spokesperson Luis Miranda said in response to questions about the rise in reported rapes. Criminal investigations into the rape of foreign nationals, excluding Americans, were the highest on record in the two cities this year, according to state data from 2014 to 2023 obtained by Reuters through freedom of information requests. The U.S. State Department considers Tamaulipas, where the two cities are located, to be the most dangerous state along the U.S.-Mexico border.

US-Saudi Defense Pact Linked to Israel Deal, Palestinian Concerns Set Aside



WASHINGTON (Agencies): Saudi Arabia is resolute in its pursuit of a military agreement that entails the United States defending the Kingdom in exchange for establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. This commitment remains unaltered, even if Israel does not make substantial concessions to address Palestinian statehood aspirations, according to three sources familiar with the negotiations in the region, as reported by Reuters. The nature of the pact may fall short of the initially sought cast-iron, NATO-style defense guarantees that the Kingdom envisioned when Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and US President Joe Biden first discussed the matter during Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia in July 2022. Instead, a US source indicated that it might resemble treaties Washington has with Asian nations or, if congressional approval is not feasible, it could resemble the US agreement with Bahrain, where the US Navy Fifth Fleet is stationed. Such an agreement would

not require congressional endorsement. To sweeten the deal, Washington could also designate Saudi Arabia as a "Major Non-NATO Ally," a status already granted to Israel, according to the same US source. However, all sources emphasized that Saudi Arabia would not accept anything less than firm assurances of US protection in the event of an attack, such as the missile strikes on its oil facilities on September 14, 2019, which had global economic repercussions. Riyadh and Washington attributed these strikes to Iran, the Kingdom's regional rival, although Tehran denied involvement. An agreement providing the world's largest oil exporter with US protection in exchange for normalization with Israel would reshape the Middle East by bringing together two historic adversaries and solidifying the Riyadh-Washington alliance in response to China's growing influence in the region. For President Biden, it would represent a significant diplomatic achievement to showcase ahead of the 2024 US elections. While Palestinians might see some easing of Israeli restrictions, these measures would fall short of their aspirations for statehood. As with previous Arab-Israeli agreements forged over the decades, the core Palestinian demand for statehood would take a back seat, according to the three regional sources familiar with the negotiations.

US autoworkers expanding strike at Ford, General Motors

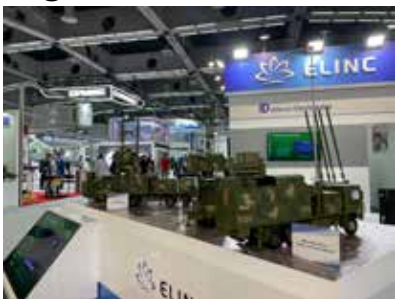


MICHIGAN (Agencies): United States autoworkers are expanding their two-week strike to additional locations, with the head of a major union saying 7,000 more workers will join the picket lines as labour talks have failed to advance significantly. United Auto Workers (UAW) President Shawn Fain said in a video appearance on Friday that negotiations have not broken down but Ford and General Motors "have refused to

make meaningful progress". The strike will expand to Ford's Chicago assembly plant and GM's assembly plant in Lansing, Michigan, at midday on Friday, said Fain, bringing the total number of workers on the picket lines to 25,000. The strike will not include any additional members at Jeep maker Stellantis. "Sadly, despite our willingness to bargain, Ford and GM have refused to make meaningful progress at the table," Fain said. "Let's stand up and win this thing - for ourselves, for our families, for our communities, for our country and for our future," the UAW president added. The union launched the partial, co-ordinated strike earlier this month, with thousands of workers across 20 states walking off the job to push for wage increases, shorter hours and improved retirement benefits.

BAE Systems to supply US Army with jam-resistant navigation tech

WASHINGTON: BAE Systems will provide the U.S. Army high-tech, embeddable computer cards used for secure navigation on foot and aboard armored vehicles in a contract worth \$318 million. The five-year contract for M-code GPS modules and related engineering support, announced Sept. 29, gives the service's positioning, navigation and timing experts direct access to the company's wares, according to the Program Executive Office for Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors, or PEO IEW&S. The cards were previously procured through "various external contracts" and the Defense Logistics Agency, which ran up costs and complicated the buying process, the office said. M-code is meant to be a stronger, more secure source of situational awareness - where a soldier is, where a soldier is headed and at what pace. It touts increased resistance to jamming and spoofing, a critical consideration for the U.S. as it prepares for potential fighting against Russia and China. Both wield significant electronic warfare arsenals that can make traversal and coordination more difficult.



Michael Trzeciak, a project manager at PEO IEW&S, said the BAE Systems arrangement "made sense" because of compatibility with existing equipment, namely Dismounted Assured Positioning, Navigation and Timing Systems, DAPS, and Mounted Assured Positioning, Navigation and Timing Systems, MAPS. The Army in April tapped TRX Systems for the former. Collins Aerospace, part of RTX, was selected last year for the latter. BAE Systems is the seventh largest defense contractor in the world when ranked by defense-related revenue. The company brought in \$25.2 billion in 2022 and \$25.7 billion in 2021, according to Defense News' "Top 100 analysis.

New York subways disrupted as more heavy rain triggers flooding

NEWYORK (Reuters): Torrential downpours after a week of mostly steady rainfall triggered flash flooding in New York City on Friday, disrupting subway service in the most populous U.S. city and turning some streets into small lakes. A flash flood warning was in effect for New York City until midday, with as much as 6 inches (15 cm) of rain falling in some locations, including Brooklyn, lower Manhattan and John F. Kennedy International Airport in the borough of Queens, said Zack Taylor of the National Weather Service. Across the region, another 2 to 3 inches (5 to 8 cm) of rain could fall throughout the day and into the night, but some locations could see even more, said Taylor, a meteorologist with the service's Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland "This is seriously a life-threatening situation," he said. Taylor warned against travel until the weather system pulls away from the coast later on Friday evening.



The extreme rainfall prompted New York Governor Kathy to declare a state of emergency for New York City, Long Island, and the Hudson Valley. "Please take steps to stay safe and remember to never attempt to travel on flooded roads," she said in a message posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. Flooding caused major disruptions to New York's subway system and the Metro North commuter rail service, according to the Metropolitan Transportation Agency. Some subway lines were suspended entirely, including the G, which connects Brooklyn and Queens, and many stations were closed.

Swedish PM seeks help from military as gang violence rocks country



STOCKHOLM (Agencies): Sweden's prime minister announced that he will hold talks with the head of the Swedish armed forces and the police commissioner to discuss ways to stem gang violence following a wave of attacks that have resulted in at least 11 people killed so far this month. Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said that he would meet with the armed forces' supreme commander and the national police commissioner on Friday to explore "how the armed forces can help police in their work against the criminal gangs". "Sweden has never before seen anything like this," Kristersson said on Thursday in a rare televised address to the nation. "No other country in Europe is seeing anything like this," he said. Two people were killed in separate shootings in Stockholm on Wednesday, and a woman in her 20s was killed when a bomb tore up a house in Uppsala in the early hours of Thursday. "This is a difficult time for

Sweden," Kristersson said in his speech. "A 25-year-old woman went to bed last night on a completely ordinary evening but never got to wake up," he said. "We will hunt the gangs, we will defeat the gangs," he added. It was not immediately clear in what capacity the military would get involved in tackling Sweden's gang problem, but previous proposals have focused on soldiers taking over protection duties from police to free up more resources for crime-fighting. Getting the military involved in crime-fighting would be a highly unusual step for Sweden, but it underscores the severity of the gang violence that has claimed almost a dozen lives across the country so far this month, including teenagers and innocent bystanders. The police estimate that about 30,000 people in Sweden are directly involved with or have ties to gang crime. The violence has also spread from major urban areas to smaller towns where violent crime was previously rare. More than 60 people died in shootings last year in Sweden, the highest figure on record. This year is on track to be the same or worse. Swedish media have linked the latest surge in violence to a feud between rival factions of a criminal gang known as the Foxtrot network.

NATO deploys AWACS surveillance aircraft to Lithuania for the first time

BRUSSELS (Agencies): AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) surveillance aircraft from NATO have been deployed to Lithuania's Siauliai Air Base for the first time, in order to monitor Russian military activity close to the alliance's borders. "Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has increased our focus on the security environment in the Baltic Sea region," said acting NATO Spokesperson Dylan White in a statement released on September 28, 2023. "Our AWACS can detect aircraft and missiles hundreds of kilometers away, making them a key early warning capability for NATO. I thank Lithuania for hosting the aircraft. This is an important contribution to our shared security." Originating from their home base in Geilenkirchen, Germany, these AWACS aircraft are part of an elite fleet of 14 surveillance planes owned by NATO. These



aircraft are specifically designed and equipped to monitor airspace activities, detect potential threats, and provide real-time intelligence to the alliance. The AWACS can stay airborne for eight and a half hours at an altitude of 9,000 meters and survey an area as big as 315,000 square kilometers (the approximate size of Poland). Around 150 military personnel will also be stationed in Siauliai to support the aircraft. The AWACS will begin reconnaissance flights over alliance territory in the coming days, with the mission set to last several weeks.

Miss Universes from Bahrain and Pakistan promote halal tourism in Philippines

MANILA (Agencies): Miss Universes from Bahrain and Pakistan have joined a campaign to promote halal travel in the Philippines, as Manila seeks to attract more visitors from the Middle East and Muslim-majority countries to meet its tourism goals this year. The Philippines' economy is dependent on tourism, which in 2019 generated about \$50 billion, contributing nearly 13 percent of the country's GDP. But that share fell to about 5 percent in 2020 and 2021, when the global travel industry ground to a halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With Manila positioning itself as a Muslim-friendly destination as part of a strategy to revive the tourism sector, the Miss Universes from Bahrain and Pakistan are part of the latest move to support the promotion of halal tourism in the Philippines. "The Department of Tourism is taking advantage of the presence of the Miss Universes from Bahrain and Pakistan to help and assist promote Muslim-friendly and halal tourism in the



Philippines," Tourism Undersecretary Myra Paz Valderrosa-Abubakar told Arab News on Sunday. Abubakar said that the Miss Universes' trip to the Philippines would be a "big boost" for the country that would hopefully influence the global Muslim community to visit the archipelago nation, which is home to white sand beaches, famous diving spots, lively entertainment, diverse cultural heritage and distinctive wildlife. With the Muslim travel market forecast to reach \$225 billion value by 2028, the Philippines' government announced in 2022 that boosting foreign arrivals from the Middle East and Muslim-majority nations was among its priority goals.

Austria selects Embraer C-390 as C-130 Hercules successor

VIENNA (Agencies): The Austrian Air Force will replace its fleet of C-130 Hercules transport aircraft with the Embraer C-390 airlifter. The decision was announced in a conference held on September 20, 2023, by Austria's Defense Minister Klaudia Tanner. "Since 2003, the three Hercules aircraft have completed many missions and have always been a reliable transport device for our soldiers," Tanner said. "Now it is time for the Embraer C-390 to replace the C-130 Hercules." The decision to transition to the Embraer C-390 comes after extensive evaluation and consideration of various aircraft options to meet Austria's military requirements in terms of versatility, range, and cargo capacity. "Embraer's aircraft system is the only one in the 20-ton [payload – ed. note] class



that meets all of our requirements," Tanner said. The Embraer C-390 Millennium stands as a versatile tactical transport aircraft, proficient in executing a wide spectrum of missions. These encompass humanitarian assistance, medical evacuations, search and rescue operations, troop and cargo transport, and even the possibility of configuring it for tasks like aerial refueling and waterbombing. Fueled by the Pratt and Whitney V2500-E5 engines, the aircraft boasts a cargo capacity of

26 tons. The Austrian Defense Minister began the procurement process to replace the C-130K in 2021, due to increasing maintenance costs. Four C-390 will be acquired to replace the current fleet of three Hercules. The estimated procurement costs for each aircraft range between €130 and €150 million. The ministry hopes to receive the first C-390 aircraft by 2026 or 2027. "Embraer is ready to support the Austrian Ministry of Defense and Air Force in order to meet the demanding requirements of their acquisition process and prepared to further strengthen the relationship with this nation," the manufacturer said in a statement. The new C-390 will be operated by the Austrian Air Force Air Transport Squadron from Vogler Air Base, which shares the runway with Linz Airport (LNZ).

China debuts its first overwater high-speed train



BEIJING (Agencies): The latest addition to the country's portfolio is a 277-kilometer (172-mile) high-speed train line along the southeastern coast, connecting the cities of Zhangzhou, Xiamen and Fuzhou, all three of which are in Fujian province. The maximum speed of the trains along this route is 350 kilometers (217 miles) per hour, according to China Railway, the state railway operator. The first train on this line debuted on Thursday, September 28, departing from Fuzhou, the province's capital, at 9:15 a.m. The new railway currently has 84 bridges and 29 tunnels, plus 20 km (12 miles) of track that goes over the sea, making it the country's first over-water bullet train. A state-owned railway in this country told women not to put on makeup on trains. Here's how they responded China Railway says that it used intelligent robots and environmentally friendly corrosion-resistant steel to build out the overwater rail sections. The new line is just one of many infrastructure projects touted by the Chinese government in 2016, when the "Eight Horizontal and Eight Vertical" rail initiative was announced. State-run media outlet Xinhua notes that ground transportation in Fujian province has been challenging due to its mountainous terrain. Fujian province is also significant for being the closest part of mainland China to the self-governing island of Taiwan.

Japanese Scientists Detect Microplastics in Clouds for the First Time



TOKYO (Agencies): In a groundbreaking study published in the journal Environmental Chemistry Letters, Japanese scientists have made a concerning discovery: microplastics are now present in clouds. To investigate this issue, the researchers collected mistwater samples from the summits of Mount Oyama and Mount Fuji, ranging from 1,300 to 3,776 meters in elevation. Advanced imaging techniques revealed the presence of at least nine different types of polymers and one type of rubber in the samples. These microplastics varied in size, ranging from 7.1 to 94.6 micrometers, and were found at concentrations ranging from 6.7 to 13.9 pieces per liter. The identified microplastics included polyethylene, polypropylene, polyethylene terephthalate, polymethyl methacrylate, epoxy resin, polyamide 6, ethylene-propylene copolymer or polyethylene polypropylene alloy, and polyurethane. This discovery marks the first report of airborne microplastics in cloud water, according to the scientists. The presence of microplastics in clouds suggests that they have entered the atmosphere, potentially leading to "plastic rainfall" that can contaminate food and water sources.

Iran, Saudi Arabia discuss cancelling visas, developing tourism

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iranian Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Maryam Jalali Dehkordi announced the continuation of Iranian and Saudi efforts to develop tourism relations and cancel visa requirements between the two countries. Maryam Jalali Dehkordi, who is currently in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, to participate in World Tourism Day activities, confirmed: "I met and talked with Sultan M. Al-Musallam, Saudi Arabia's deputy tourism minister for international affairs. We discussed ways to remove obstacles of the development of tourism relations between the two countries." Dehkordi also invited the Saudi minister of tourism to visit Iran. World Tour-



ism Day was celebrated in Riyadh, where more than 500 officials and experts from 120 countries gathered. Last March, Iran and Saudi Arabia announced an agreement to resume bilateral relations between the two countries due to a Chinese initiative, and the two countries restored their diplomatic relations after a seven-year estrangement.

British Defense Secretary Proposes Sending UK Troops to Ukraine



LONDON (Agencies): Grant Shapps, the newly-appointed Defense Secretary, has revealed discussions regarding the expansion of the UK-led training program for Ukrainian troops. He also raised the possibility of relocating British instructors into Ukraine and offering unspecified naval support in the Black Sea to Kiev. Following a visit to a training ground on Salisbury Plain, Shapps mentioned plans to bring training closer to Ukraine itself. He stated, "I was talking today about eventually getting the training brought closer and actually into Ukraine as well." His recent trip to Kiev led him to see an "opportunity" to "bring more things into the country," not limited to training but also encompassing weapons manufacturing. Shapps praised British arms company BAE Systems for its plans to localize production in Ukraine, expressing eagerness for other British companies to follow suit. During discussions with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Shapps reportedly suggested that Britain's Navy could play a role in defending commercial vessels in the Black Sea. The UK has been involved in training and arming

Ukrainian troops since 2015, with operations shifting out of Ukraine over time. While the British Royal Marines conducted discreet operations in Ukraine last year, London officially denied a significant presence in the country after the escalation of the conflict with Russia in 2022. Leaked US military documents earlier this year suggested the presence of around 50 British special operatives in Ukraine. The open deployment of British military personnel would represent another escalation. The UK became the first NATO country to supply depleted uranium shells and long-range cruise missiles to Ukraine, which were used in attacks against Russian infrastructure. Moscow has characterized the conflict in Ukraine as a battle between Russia and the "entire Western military machine." Russian President Vladimir Putin previously stated that there are military units in Ukraine "under the de-facto command of Western advisers." British intelligence experts were reportedly involved in studying ways to attack Russia's Crimea Bridge using divers or maritime drones. Although last year's attack on the bridge utilized a truck bomb, Kiev employed suicide sea drones in a July strike targeting the bridge. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova accused UK and US intelligence agencies of helping coordinate a recent Ukrainian strike on Sevastopol, Crimea, targeting the headquarters of the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

Iran ready to help Pakistan in fight against terrorism, Army Chief says

TEHRAN (Agencies): The Iranian military has stated its readiness to help Pakistan in its fight against terrorism, following a deadly terror attack in south-west Pakistan on Friday. As some Muslims marked the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad on Friday in Pakistan, twin suicide bombings targeted two mosques in the south-west Balochistan province and the neighbouring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, killing at least 57 people and injuring dozens more. According to Iranian media, Iran's military chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri sent a message to Pakistan's Army Chief Lieutenant General Asim Munir, in which he expressed his sympathy and condolences with Islamabad. Condemning the "barbaric, anti-religious and anti-humane act", Bagheri declared "the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran's armed forces for any cooperation and companionship in the all-out fight against terrorism". He further expressed confidence that the Pakistani armed forces and the security and judicial institu-



tions will be able to capture, prosecute, and punish the perpetrators. So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the attacks and their affiliations have not yet been identified, but it is likely that the perpetrators were either Balochi separatists affiliated with the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) or religious extremists affiliated with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) or other groups. Iranian general Bagheri's message of support and offer of military cooperation against terrorism comes after Islamabad called on Tehran to do more to stop the flow of terrorists through the two countries' shared border, reigniting long-held criticism between them both of taking insufficient measures to combat the issue.

Mother, daughter take Etihad to court for mishandling air rage incident



Two passengers, a mother and a daughter, are taking Etihad Airways to court over what they say is the airline's failure to handle an air rage incident. Christine Arimas and her daughter Kristina were on a flight from Geneva Airport (GVA) to Abu Dhabi International Airport (AUH) on July 25, 2022. Arimas said that two hours into the six-hour flight, she was randomly and abruptly grabbed by a male passenger, who forcibly pulled her from her seat. Arimas alleged that the passenger was intoxicated, and started hurling racial insults at her. The commotion drew the attention of fellow passengers and cabin crew. One male cabin crew member wrapped his arms around the assailant and moved him away from Arimas. Arimas also said that Kristina woke up and witnessed the incident, which left her feeling shaken and helpless. According to Arimas, the airline did not take adequate actions and measures to protect them from the intoxicated passenger because he was simply moved to another seat and was not restrained. What's worse, Arimas said, was that the

airline continuously served alcohol to the assailant through the duration of the flight. When they arrived at Abu Dhabi, Arimas said that no actions were taken by Etihad to check on the well-being or safety of her and her daughter, adding that the airline even refused to divulge the intoxicated passenger's name. The case was filed at the Makati Regional court in the Philippines, where the Arimas reside. The mother and daughter are accusing Etihad Airways of breach of contract of carriage by failing to ensure their safety and abusing their rights by neglecting proper protocol in handling air rage incidents. They are seeking compensation totaling PH22 million (\$388,000) for actual, moral, and exemplary damages. The court has given Etihad 30 days to answer to the complaint.

Multinational special forces drill concludes in Pakistan



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): A two-week multinational exercise involving special forces from Türkiye, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Qatar, and Uzbekistan concluded in northwest Pakistan on Sunday, Anadolu Agency reports. The "Eternal Brotherhood-II" exercise was begun on Sept. 17 in Brotha, in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The exercise was aimed at further harnessing the historic military-to-military relations amongst brotherly countries, as well as helping to nurture joint employment concepts against counter-terrorism and identifying areas of mutual interest for future military collaborations, according to a statement from the Pakistan Army. Lieutenant General Azhar Hassan Hayat, commander of Pakistan Army's 11th Corps, and officers from the armies of the participating countries attended the closing ceremony. On the final day, special forces from participating countries demonstrated their professional excellence.

Indian spacecraft heads towards centre of solar system



NEW DELHI (agencies): India's Sun-monitoring spacecraft has crossed a landmark point on its journey to escape "the sphere of Earth's influence", its space agency said, days after the disappointment of its Moon rover failing to awaken. The Aditya-L1 mission, which started its four-month journey towards the centre of the solar system on September 2, carries instruments to observe the Sun's outermost layers. "The spacecraft has escaped the sphere of Earth's influence," the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a statement late Saturday. Aditya, named after the Hindu Sun deity, has travelled 920,000 kilometres, just over half the journey's total distance. At that point, the gravitational forces of both astronomical bodies cancel out, allowing the mission to remain in a stable halo orbit around our nearest star. "This is the second time in succession that ISRO could send a spacecraft outside the sphere of influence of the Earth, the first time being the Mars Orbiter Mission", the agency added. In August, India became the first country to land a craft near the largely unexplored lunar south pole, and just the fourth nation to land on the Moon. Rover Pragyan surveyed the vicinity of its landing site but was powered down before the start of lunar night, which lasts roughly two weeks on Earth. India had hoped to prolong the mission by reactivating the solar-powered vehicle once daylight returned to the lunar surface, but so far has been greeted by radio silence.

Iran, Venezuela, and Syria Ink Landmark Oil Refinery Deal



TEHRAN (Agencies): Iran has revealed plans to build a new oil refinery in Syria's Homs governorate with a capacity of 140,000 barrels per day (bpd) as part of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed with Damascus and the government of Venezuela. "A tripartite memorandum was signed between Iran, Venezuela, and Syria for a new 140,000 barrel refinery to be built in Syria," Jalil Salari, the Managing Director of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) told state-run Fars News Agency this week. "The studies that were conducted found that Syria and its neighboring countries are in need of petroleum products, therefore a refinery with a capacity of 140,000 barrels was identified next to the two existing Syrian refineries of Homs and Bania," the official added, highlighting that the three nations will soon enter the financing and construction phase. Salari also revealed that the existing Homs refinery was repaired by Iranian engineers during a visit by President Ebrahim Raisi in May, and that the studies for the new refinery were conducted by a team from the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). The landmark deal comes in spite of a brutal sanctions campaign from the west that nearly decimated the oil industries of all three nations. Iran has played a pivotal role in helping both Syria and Venezuela overcome the worst of the western onslaught, providing both countries with technical, material, and military assistance. In June, Caracas resumed work at the El Palito oil refinery, which is undergoing major repair and expansion work as part of a 100-million-euro deal signed in May 2022 with NIORDC. Iranian technical teams are also working to restore Venezuela's largest oil refinery complex, the Paraguana Refining Center.

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