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Editor: Omer Rizwan

South Africa tells the UN top court Israel is committing genocide in Gaza as a landmark case begins

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (Agencies): South Africa has appealed to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), asking it to order an immediate halt to Israel's military operations in Gaza. The request was made during the first day of hearings into South Africa's allegations that Israel's actions amount to genocide against Palestinians, a claim that Israel vehemently denies. The case, brought by South Africa at the ICJ in The Hague, accuses Israel of violating the 1948 Genocide Convention. This convention, enacted after the Holocaust, mandates all countries to prevent such crimes from recurring. Israel, however, argues that its actions are a necessary defense against Hamas, the Islamist group ruling Gaza. South Africa's



legal team has likened the situation in Gaza to a "concentration camp where genocide is taking place." They argue that Palestinians under Israeli bombardment have no safe refuge, being killed in their homes, hospitals, schools, mosques, and churches. These allegations strike at the heart of Israel's national identity, and comparisons of Israel's actions in Gaza to Nazi concentration camps are likely to stir emotions in Israel. Israel sees itself as a safe-

guard for Jews, particularly in light of the Holocaust. The case underscores the escalating tensions and complex dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It also highlights the crucial role of international legal institutions in addressing allegations of human rights violations and war crimes. The outcome of this case could have significant implications for international law and the ongoing peace process in the Middle East.

China Advocates for End to 'Collective Punishment' in Gaza



TAIPEI (Agencies): China has called for an end to the "collective punishment" of Palestinians in Gaza. The statement was made on Wednesday, without directly addressing the case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), initiated by South Africa. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Mao Ning, stated that China has "noted the case" when asked if Beijing would support South Africa's lawsuit. As one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, China expressed sadness over the heavy civilian casualties resulting from the ongoing conflict between Palestine and Israel. South Africa filed the lawsuit on December 29, alleging that Israel's actions in Gaza since October 7 violated the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. They are requesting an injunction.

UK Unveils Ambitious Expansion Plan for Nuclear Power



LONDON (Agencies): The UK government has announced its intention to undertake the "biggest expansion of nuclear power for 70 years" in a bid to address the country's energy challenges and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak highlighted the green and cost-effective nature of nuclear power, emphasizing its role in ensuring energy security. This announcement follows a recent move by French energy company EDF to extend the lifespans of its nuclear power plants in the UK, with a \$1.65 billion investment to maintain current power output levels until at least 2026. Despite criticism from some climate activists, nuclear power has seen a resurgence globally, with many acknowledging its importance in achieving net-zero targets.

Traders Anticipate \$110 Oil Amid Escalating Middle East Tensions



NEW YORK (Agencies) Despite oil prices struggling to surpass \$80 per barrel, some traders are speculating on a surge to \$110 a barrel in early spring, anticipating heightened Middle East tensions. These speculators are betting on a significant escalation of conflict in the region in the coming months, even though fundamentals and analysts suggest a balanced or slightly surplus market early this year. Bloomberg reports that call option spreads on Brent

Crude, with a target of \$110/\$130, expiring in May and June, have attracted bets equivalent to around 30 million barrels. Buyers of this option spread stand to profit if oil prices reach \$110 per barrel by the end of March and end of April when the May and June option contracts expire. Analysts currently do not foresee oil prices spiking above \$100 per barrel in the first half of the year unless there is a widespread escalation of the conflict in the Middle East, threatening crude oil supply. Tensions in the Red Sea have intensified as Iran-aligned Houthi rebels fired a large barrage of drones and missiles targeting shipping. The U.S. and UK Navy ships intervened to protect cargo and crude shipping in vital sea lanes, including the Suez Canal and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Poland Expands Military Capability with Shipment of M1A1 Tanks and M-ATVs

WARSAW (Agencies): Poland has received another shipment of military equipment from the United States, including 29 M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks (MBTs) and 79 Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected (MRAP) All-Terrain Vehicles (M-ATVs). The delivery, which arrived at the Port of Swinoujscie on January 6, follows a previous shipment in November 2023 that included 26 M1A1s and nine M88A2 Hercules armored recovery vehicles. This ongoing procurement aligns with Poland's effort to enhance its military capabilities, including the acquisition



of M1A1 tanks adapted to the requirements of the Polish Armed Forces. The latest shipment also includes M-ATVs and other support vehicles and equipment.

Indian Army Seeks Thermal Imager-Based Driver Night Sights for BMP-2/2K Vehicles

DELHI (Agencies): The Indian Army has issued a request for information (RFI) for the procurement of thermal imager (TI)-based driver night sights (DNS) for its BMP-2/2K infantry combat vehicles (ICVs). The army intends to acquire approximately 2,500 TI-based DNS for BMP-2/2K and its variants, including the Carrier Mortar Tracked

(CMT) vehicle and the Armoured Ambulance Tracked (AAT) vehicle. The sights are expected to be used in various terrains, including plains, deserts, mountains along the northern borders, and island territories. The army is seeking a shelf-life of at least 15 years and an operational life of at least 10,000 hours for the driver night sights.

Swedish Defence Chiefs' war warning raises concerns

STOCKHOLM (Agencies): Swedish Civil Defence Minister Carl-Oskar Bohlin and military commander-in-chief Gen Micael Byden have issued warnings to the public, urging them to prepare for the possibility of war in Sweden. While the officials emphasize the seriousness of the security situation, opposition politicians and child rights

organizations criticize the tone, calling for age-appropriate information. The statements come as Sweden, after more than two centuries of peace, considers joining the NATO defensive alliance. Gen Byden defends the warnings, stating their intent is to encourage people to contemplate their situations and responsibilities.

San Francisco approves resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza

CALIFORNIA (Agencies): San Francisco has become the largest US city to pass a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. The resolution passed in an 8-3 vote by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors yesterday. It calls for a sustained ceasefire, lifesaving humanitarian aid to Gaza, and the release of all hostages, calling on Congress and US President Joe Biden's administration to do the same; the condemnation of anti-Semitic, anti-Palestinian, Islamophobic, xenophobic rhetoric and attacks; the condemnation of attacks on civilians by Hamas and by the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; and a resolution for a just and lasting peace holding all parties accountable. First proposed on 5 December, the motion underwent several revisions before the Board finally settled on the language of the text. After the motion was passed,



Executive Director of Arab Resource and Organising Centre, Lara Kiswani, said: "We are grateful to all the supervisors who have championed this issue, taking it as a critical matter and listening to their constituents facing hate violence." Met with roaring applause, the passing of the resolution, however, has no bearing on government policy though it falls in line with American public opinion where some 68 per cent of people agreed with a statement that "Israel should call a ceasefire and try to negotiate."

Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia Boost Trilateral Defense Cooperation



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia have strengthened their trilateral defense collaboration following a meeting of the Trilateral Defence Committee held in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, as reported by Anadolu Agency (AA). The second meeting, hosted at the GHQ, the headquarters of Pakistan's army in Rawalpindi, brought together senior military officials from the three nations. The

participants emphasized the significance of pooling intellectual, technical, financial, and human resources to achieve shared objectives and enhance self-sufficiency in the defense sector, according to a statement by ISPR, Pakistan's military media wing. The statement also noted the decision to hold the next meeting during the World Defence Show in Riyadh next month.

Mali Expands Drone Fleet with Additional Bayraktar TB2 UAVs

BAMAKO (Agencies): Mali's Armed Forces (FAMA) recently conducted a reception ceremony for a new shipment of Bayraktar TB2 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) from Turkey. The ceremony showcased five TB2 drones, some armed with MAM-L laser-guided bombs, at Bamako's Modibo Keita International Airport. The serial numbers on the newly received TB2s ranged from TZ-07D to TZ-11D, indicating Mali has now received at least 17 of these UAVs. The Bayraktar TB2s have gained prominence in Mali



for their use in airstrikes against purported terrorist targets, with frequent broadcasts of these operations by ORTM television.

IMF Board Approves Pakistan's First Review, Allows Immediate Disbursement of \$700 Million



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has completed its first review of Pakistan's economic reform program supported by a \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA). The IMF's Executive Board has approved the immediate disbursement of \$700 million, bringing the total disbursements under the SBA to \$1.9 billion. This fund-

ing, along with recent inflows from multilateral lenders, is expected to stabilize the Pakistani rupee, which has shown relative stability in recent months. The new tranche is anticipated to facilitate rollovers from allied countries and alleviate external debt repayment pressure. The IMF program is set to conclude in the second week of April 2024.

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.

Household pollution posing serious threats to public health, environment

PESHAWAR (APP): The increasing level of household pollution both in the shape of biomass and solid waste generation is posing serious threats to public health and the environment of the city. The air quality index in Peshawar in the current winter season has belled the alarm by recording a dangerous stage of more than 236 pollution levels; raising the status of the city to the most polluted in the country. According to environmental experts, the major source of air pollution is vehicular emission followed by household pollution in shape of the burning of fossil fuel, wood and waste for cooking at home. A recent study by Peshawar Clean Air Alliance (PCAA), a volunteer association of civil society individuals, found that transport is contributing 58.46 per-

cent in air pollution and is followed by household pollution making a contribution of 11.66 percent while waste burning 4.1 percent and dust 17.67 burning. It showed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has one of the highest proportions of wood fuel usage, particularly in rural households and about half of Peshawar population lives in rural area. According to 2017 census, about 138000 households in Peshawar used wood as fuel for heating. The study titled 'Status of Air Pollution in Peshawar' finds that the annual Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5) in Peshawar has ranged between 61.40 ug/m3 and 80.09 ug/mg3, exceeding the current national and provincial standards by 4 to 5 times and WHO air quality guidelines by 12-16 times. High level of PM 2.5 have a consid-

erable impacts on the population of Peshawar as the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) estimates that citizen of Peshawar can add up to 2.3 years to their life expectancy if air quality level meets the WHO's guidelines. Peshawar has been declared as the third most polluted city in Pakistan and the 9th most polluted in the world in the 2021 World Air Quality report, says Dr. Adil Zareef, a public health expert and convener of PCAA. Talking to APP, Dr. Adil said while evaluating the current year data of Peshawar air quality, the city has jumped from third most polluted city in Pakistan to number one. In November and December 2023, sometimes the air quality index of Peshawar crossed the pollution level of Lahore, the most polluted city of Pakistan.

Ongoing Repatriation of Illegal Foreign Nationals

PESHAWAR (Agencies): The process of repatriating illegal foreign nationals, including Afghans, back to their homeland is being carried out in a dignified and secure manner in Peshawar. This initiative is part of a broader effort to ensure the safe return of these individuals to their home country. To facilitate this process, transit camps equipped with all necessary amenities have been set up in various districts. These camps serve as temporary accommodation for the returning Afghans, providing them with a safe and comfortable environment during their transition. As per the latest statistics, an additional 944 illegal Afghan nationals were repatriated yesterday. This brings the total number of repatriated Afghans to 464,656. This ongoing



repatriation effort underscores the commitment to addressing the issue of illegal immigration while ensuring the safety and dignity of the individuals involved.

It also highlights the importance of international cooperation in managing migration flows and upholding human rights.

6.0 Magnitude Earthquake Shakes Multiple Cities in Pakistan

PESHAWAR (Agencies): A 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck various parts of Pakistan on Thursday afternoon, causing widespread panic among residents. The tremors were felt in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Muzafferabad, Peshawar, Chilas, Quetta, Zhob, Charat, and other cities at 2:20 pm

local time. The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) reported that the earthquake's epicenter was in the Hindu Kush Region of the Pak-Afghan border, at a depth of 213km. The coordinates of the epicenter were 70.63 East longitude and 36.16 North latitude. The sudden seismic activity

underscores the need for effective disaster management strategies and infrastructure to ensure the safety and well-being of residents in earthquake-prone regions. It is crucial for individuals to be aware of safety measures to take during such events to minimize potential harm.

Rising Political Violence in Pakistan Ahead of General Elections

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Shah Khalid, a local leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), was fatally shot in Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Thursday. The incident occurred as political figures increasingly become targets ahead of the general elections scheduled for February 8. Unidentified assailants on a motorcycle targeted Khalid's car at Swabi Adda, leading to his immediate death. The attackers managed to escape, and the police have initiated a search operation. The motive behind the murder remains unclear. This incident follows the shooting of an independent candidate and two others in North



Waziristan. Kaleemullah Khan, who intended to contest for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly's PK-104 seat, was among the victims. On the same day, Aslam Buledi, a candidate for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) NA-258

seat, was injured in a shooting incident in Turbat City. These violent incidents have raised concerns about the security situation in the country as it prepares for the upcoming general elections. Political figures, including Maulana Fazlur Rehman of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), have expressed doubts about the feasibility of conducting polls amidst the unstable security conditions. The surge in terror incidents in the past year, reaching its highest level since 2014, underscores the urgent need for effective measures to ensure the safety of political actors and the public during the election period.

IMSciences Business Fest: A Showcase of Sustainable Innovation



PESHAWAR (Khyber Mail): The Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences) Peshawar hosted a Business Fest, which was attended by budding entrepreneurs, industry leaders, and academia. The event was a vibrant hub of innovation, showcasing groundbreaking business ideas that were intricately aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Chief Guest of the event was Khalid Mahmood, Director General, Peshawar Development Authority. The students demonstrated their creativity and presented their business proposals that contribute to the global mis-

sion of achieving sustainability across various sectors. The Business Fest was an immersive experience that fostered an environment for collaboration, networking, and entrepreneurial spirit. Attendees were treated to a diverse array of innovative solutions aimed at addressing real-world challenges while prioritizing the SDGs. IMSciences' Business Fest stands as a testament to the institution's dedication to fostering innovation, sustainability, and entrepreneurship among its students. It is heartening to see the next generation of business leaders being nurtured with such dedication and passion.



KP introduces e-policing, Safe Election digital applications

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have taken another step towards e-policing and on Thursday introduced e-policing and Safe Election digital applications to prevent crimes by providing citizens with convenient access to police services. According to DIG IT Irfan Tariq, the e-policing app would include the data of suspects from all over the country, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that it would facilitate quick identification of criminals and vehicles. He said the purpose of the e-safe

election app is to secure the security plan based on all the arrangements of the election. Similarly, the purpose of e-police check posts is to solve the problems being faced by the people, as the app would also be accessible to the officers stationed at the check posts, the DIG informed. He said that so far details of the last three years of over 750,000 accused of all types have been entered in the app, which would make it easy to identify and arrest the accused of a crime through this app.

Passport Delaying

PESHAWAR (NADIR KHAN): Residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have demanded from the Interior Secretary, DG Passport and Immigration and other senior officials that the problem of delayed passports should be resolved on a priority basis. Siraj Khan and Rabia said that earlier urgent passports were received in 4 days and normal passports in 15 days, but now it has reached months due to which not only our visas are feared to be lost but also thousands of people will be deprived of Um-

rah. A senior official of the passport office said that the problem of delayed passports should be solved on a priority basis because they not only affect people's visas but has also added to the worries of those who want to leave the country. He said that if the staff of the passport office was increased then it would help the people to get ride of this issue. He hoped that soon they would overcome this issue and would enable the people to get their passport on time.

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Pakistan's deep appreciation for its ties with Germany in diverse sectors, Dr. Shahzad



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Ms. Janine Rohwer, Political Counselor at the German Embassy, called on Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem. Matters of mutual interest took center stage as the two sides deliberated on enhancing the bilateral relationship between Germany and Pakistan. Dr. Shahzad Waseem empha-

sized Pakistan's deep appreciation for its ties with Germany in diverse sectors. Expressing the shared historical bonds between the two nations, Dr. Shahzad Waseem underscored the need to further strengthen relations. He stressed the significance of fostering parliamentary ties to facilitate a broader and more robust partnership.

Pak-Qatar Joint Aerial Exercise "Zilzal-II" Kicks off in Qatar



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force are all geared up to participate in joint aerial Exercise Zilzal-II, commencing in Qatar. First held in the year 2020, Zilzal-II air exercise is the 2nd in the series of these exercises, hosted by State of Qatar. The exercise is one of the most complex joint air force exercises, which aims at promoting interoperability between the two allied nations while providing an opportunity for shared learning. The exercise will mimic a near realistic aerial warfare scenario coupled with real-time opportunity for the participating Air Forces to test their operational readiness. Exercise Zilzal-II, aimed at improving joint planning mechanism, is considered as a historical benchmark to further solidify the existing defence partnership between the two brotherly countries. During the exercise, PAF's newly inducted state-of-the-art J-10C fighter aircraft will flex its muscles against Eurofighter jets of Qatar Emiri Air Force in their first ever face-off in an aerial exercise. The successful induction and operationalization of the J-10C fighter jets in PAF's fighter fleet and their participa-

tion in yet another international exercise in an unprecedented short span of time is a remarkable achievement. The feat has been achieved in lines with modernization plan of Air Chief Marshal Zabeer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, premised on smart inductions and focused indigenization. The participation of these fighter jets in the aerial exercise marks a significant milestone in PAF's journey towards a technologically advanced and formidable air force. The rapid acquisition and operationalization of these advanced fighter aircraft showcases PAF's dedication to maintaining a cutting-edge force, capable of meeting evolving challenges and defending Pakistan's airspace with utmost proficiency. Exercise Zilzal-II serves as a platform to foster greater understanding, cooperation and friendship between Pakistan Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force, contributing to regional stability and security. Pakistan Air Force remains committed to its mission of safeguarding the skies, strengthening international alliances and promoting peace through mutual cooperation.

Ruet-e-Hilal committee to meet on Friday for Rajab crescent sighting

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Ruet-e-Hilal Committee is scheduled to meet in Islamabad on Friday to sight the crescent of Rajab al Murajab. Abdul Khabir Azad, the committee's chairman, will preside over the zonal and district Hilal committee meeting in Kohsar building, Islamabad. Likewise, zonal committees are set to convene meetings in different cities, such as Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar, on the same day. Other committee members will engage in the respective zonal committee sessions in their designated areas. Representatives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research

Commission (SUPARCO), the Department of Meteorology, and the Ministry of Science and Technology will participate in the meeting. Subsequently, the Ministry of Religious Affairs will release a notification in keeping with the customary practice. It's noteworthy that the Committee gathers on the 29th day of every lunar month, announcing the moon sighting afterwards. For any information about the crescent sighting, please communicate with Syed Abdul Khabir Azad at 0321-9410041, Syed Mushahid Hussain Khalid (DG) at 0300-6831822, Hafiz Abdul Qudoos at 0333-2697051, and Dr. Shahid ur Rehman at 0331-7681372.

National Polio Immunization Campaign Persists Across Pakistan



Islamabad (Agencies): The first nationwide polio vaccination campaign of 2024 continued on Thursday, aiming to safeguard children from paralytic polio. More than 44.3 million children under the age of five are set to receive oral polio drops during this five-day campaign, which will run until January 12. Vaccination efforts will extend to Lakki Marwat and South Waziristan Upper and Lower from January 15 to 19, Tank from January 15 to 21, and DI Khan from January 22 to 28. Over

400,000 vaccinators will visit children's homes, targeting 22.6 million children in Punjab, 10.3 million in Sindh, 7.5 million in KP, 2.6 million in Balochistan, 0.72 million in AJK, 0.28 million in GB, and 0.42 million in Islamabad. Dr. Shahzad Baig, Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Center for Polio Eradication, emphasized the importance of parents welcoming vaccinators, emphasizing the vaccine's role in protecting children from this debilitating disease.

British HC Jane Marriott Strengthens Ties with Mirpur: Fostering Trade, Celebrating Football Talent & Addressing Community Priorities

ISLAMABAD (Adnan Hameed): The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, visited the UK-Pakistani diaspora in Mirpur. She was accompanied by the Head of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Pakistan Department, Richard Lindsay. Mirpur is called by some as a home away from home for Pakistani Brits. This is due to the large number of dual nationals. The UK-Pakistani diaspora is at the heart of the UK and Pakistan's relationship. With an estimated 70% of British Pakistanis originating from Mirpur, the High Commissioner was delighted to gain insight into how cross-cultural influences have shaped Mirpur into the city it is today. This followed her visit to Birmingham on 12 December. The High Commissioner and Head of Pakistan Department met with various government officials during their visit, including the Commissioner of the Mirpur region and the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police at Mirpur. The High Commissioner thanked local officials for their continued support and co-operation. She also emphasised the importance she places on consular support for the British community living in the area. British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, CMG OBE, visited the Mirpur Chamber of Commerce. While speaking to the business community, the High Commissioner said: "This visit has reaffirmed my view that across Pakistan there is a lot more we can do together, whether it's liberalising trade, opening up investment opportunities, bringing in new technologies, or helping Pakistan on the path to sustainable growth and



clean energy – there is so much we can do. I return to Islamabad with a strong feeling that our two countries together are primed to grow even closer and continue to work hard to deepen our relationship." The High Commissioner was delighted to visit the Muslim Hands Football Academy where she met with Street Children Team runners-up at the Street Children Football World Cup in Qatar. The British High Commissioner said: "The footballing talent here at the academy is incredible, and I am pleased to know about their performance in Qatar. It is great to see so many British Pakistanis supporting this excellent organisation- Pakistanis and Brits share a huge love of sport – and the UK is committed to promoting sports in Pakistan, including football. Our Chevening scholarship on football science, sponsored by Swindon Town Football Club, is a



celebration of this shared love, helping to build the next generation of football coaches." The High Commissioner and Head of Pakistan Department also met with members of the British community in Mirpur alongside President Barrister Sultan Mahmood to discuss their priorities and the importance of people-people links. She additionally discussed the impacts of climate change on Pakistan and the region with President Barrister Sultan Mahmood.

Second phase of Bhal Safai to kick off from Jan 14

DG KHAN (Agencies): The second phase of silt cleaning of at least 14 channels of Chasma Right Bank Canal would start from Jan 14. It was said in a meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner Shahid Zaman Luk. ADC Ghulam Mustafa, XEN Sabir Hussain and other officials concerned participated in the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, DC said all officers including him would visit the site to check smooth working on the drive. He said the departmental machinery should be immediately arranged for proper cleaning of channels and bed level. Quality work should be ensured and allied departments must be active.

Bid to smuggle heroin abroad foiled; three held

PESHAWAR (APP): The Excise police station, Mardan Region on Thursday foiled a bid to smuggle heroin abroad and arrested an international drug smuggler along with two facilitators while recovering 57 swallowed capsules. According to the spokesman of Excise, the Excise police acting on a tip-off conducted an operation on Ring Road Chamtar Chowk, district Mardan and intercepted a suspected vehicle with three persons onboard and going to Islamabad International Airport. The police took the main accused Naveed, a resident of Kot Radha Kishan, district Kasur, to MMC Hospital where a health team recovered 57 swallowed capsules of heroin from his stomach. The Excise police arrested the international drug smuggler along with the real owner of the drug Habib-ul-Haq, and co-facilitator Fazl Muhammad, residents of Bara. During the investigation, the accused disclosed that they were taking the smuggler to Islamabad from where he had a flight to Dubai. The Excise police took into custody the passport of the accused and started a further investigation after registering a case.

Funeral prayers of police personnel held

KOHAT (Agencies): The funeral prayer of martyred policemen in the terrorist attack was performed in the police lines here on Thursday. Inspector General Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan, GOC Ninth Division Kohat Major General Zulfiqar Bhatti, Regional Police Officer Kohat Sher Akbar, Commissioner Kohat Division Muhammad Abid Khan, District Police Officer Kohat Farhan Khan, Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir, officials of Police, Pak Army, district administration, families of martyrs and citizens attended the prayer.

Over 500 students take entry test at Pakistan-China Institute Gwadar

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): On Monday, over 500 students from Baluchistan, both male and female appeared in the entry test to enroll in various diploma programs offered by the Pakistan-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCT&VI) at Gwadar University. The Institute conducted the entry test for admission to various three-year and one-year diploma programs in seven areas of study. 40% of the applicants who appeared in the test were female students which is indicative of a quality and conducive learning environment at the institute. As per the institute's official notification, all training programs and course curricula are developed in collaboration with the Shandong Institute of Commerce and Technology (SICT), China, and relevant accrediting bodies. It will accommodate about 300 students and will provide them with one year of learning after which they will be transferred to the Shandong Institute of Commerce and Technology in China for a one-year diploma. The courses include



maritime and port management, software technology, e-commerce, and tourism management, a diploma in electronics, an advanced diploma in Chinese language and culture, and an advanced diploma in the English language. PCT&VI at Gwadar is built to empower the youth of Baluchistan, especially women, by providing them with technical education and skills, which will help them get job opportunities in Gwadar Port, Free Zone Industry, and other projects of CPEC. It is expected to play an important role in the region's development, providing huge benefits to the youth of Baluchistan, especially Gwadar.

Eminent poet, humorist 'Ibne Insha' remembered on his 46th death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Eminent Urdu poet humorist and travelogue writer Ibne Insha was remembered on his 46th death anniversary Thursday where fans from all walks of life from media platforms have paid him rich tributes for his contribution in the entertainment industry. Ibne Insha's real name was Sher Muhammad Khan and he was born in Jalandhar district of Indian Punjab in 1927. He later migrated to Pakistan. He was given the Pride of Performance Award in 1978, the PTV news channel reported. His poetry was simple but had depth. The real cause of his popularity was his humorous poetry and columns. His masterpieces are still remembered by his admirers and his most famous ghazal 'Insha Ji Uttho' is a modern-day classic. Along with his poetry, he was



regarded as one of the best humorists of Urdu. Ibn-e-Insha's poetic works are Chand Nagar and Dile-Wehshi while travelogues are "Awara Gard Ki Diary", "Dunya Gol Hey", "Ibn-e-Batoota Kay Taqub Main", "Chaltay Ho To Cheen KO Chaliye" and "Nagri Nagri Phira Musa-fir". His humorous books are "Khumar-e-Gandum" and "Urdu Ki Aakhri Kitaab". His collection of letters is titled "Khat Insha Jee Kay".

Pakistani Zaireen Awaiting Visas for Ajmer Sharif Pilgrimage

Islamabad (Agencies): Pakistani Zaireen, who intended to visit Ajmer Sharif in India, are still awaiting visas. Despite being scheduled to depart on Saturday, the Indian High Commission has not provided information about the visas, as reported by the Ministry of Religious Affairs spokesperson. The spokesperson advised Zaireen to refrain from traveling to Lahore until further notice. Under the 1974 agreement, religious tourist delegations from



both countries facilitate the annual pilgrimage of hundreds of Hindu and Sikh pilgrims to their respective religious places.

A Brush with Art: Madrassa Students Shine in PNCA's Calligraphy Workshop Exhibition



ISLAMABAD (Adnan Hameed) : The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) is delighted to announce the successful culmination of the transformative two-week calligraphy workshop, “A Calligraphic Journey,” conducted by esteemed calligrapher Mr. Nasir Khan Seemab. Under the patronage of the Federal Minister of National Heritage & Culture Development, Mr. Jamal Shah, this workshop proved to be a remarkable exploration of the intricate art of calligraphy. The Closing Ceremony, Exhibition, and Certificate Distribution took place at the Gallery no. 3 of National Art Gallery, Islamabad showcasing the exceptional works of the talented Madrassa students who participated in this immersive program.

– Event Highlights:

Title: A Calligraphic Journey - Closing Ceremony, Exhibition, and Certificate Distribution

Guided by Mr. Nasir Khan Seemab, the two-week workshop provided a unique platform for Madrassa students to delve into the rich world of calligraphy, exploring various styles and historical contexts. The exhibition featured the culmination of their artistic endeavors, highlighting the skills and creativity cultivated during this intensive learning experience. Federal Minister Mr. Jamal Shah, under whose esteemed patronage this workshop flourished, graced the event with his presence along with M. Ayoub Jamali, Director General, PNCA. His unwavering support for artistic endeavors and cultural development was



instrumental in the success of “A Calligraphic Journey.” The Federal Minister expressed his satisfaction with the outcomes of the workshop, stating, “Witnessing the dedication and talent of these young calligraphers has been truly inspiring. This initiative reflects our commitment to nurturing artistic expression and preserving our cultural heritage. I am proud to have been part of this endeavor.” The Federal Secretary, Ms. Humaira Ahmed also provided remarks, commending the participants for their dedication. “The art of calligraphy holds a significant place in our cultural heritage. This workshop not only honed the skills of these students but also con-



tributed to the promotion and preservation of our rich cultural traditions.” The media, esteemed guests, and the public witnessed the talent and dedication of these budding calligraphers as they showcased their masterpieces. The ceremony included the distribution of certificates to the participating students, acknowledging their commitment to the art of calligraphy. This event served as a testament to the PNCA's commitment to nurturing artistic talent and providing platforms for cultural enrichment. The organization extends its sincere gratitude to Mr. Jamal Shah and Mr. Nasir Khan Seemab for their invaluable contributions to the success of this workshop.

Islamabad Airport Unveils Exclusive CIP Lounge in Partnership with Serena Hotels, Setting New Standards in Passenger Comfort



ISLAMABAD (Khyber Mail): Islamabad International Airport recently inaugurated one of its CIP Lounges operated by hospitality leader Serena Hotels. This marks a significant development in the airport's pursuit of enhancing the passenger experience. The collaboration between Islamabad International Airport and Serena Hotel demonstrates a strategic partnership between the aviation and hospitality sectors. The lounge design provides passengers a sophisticated and comfortable environment, ensuring a seamless experience while at the airport. Through this initiative, the airport aims to bring travelers the relaxing and inviting atmosphere of Serena Hotel, with an emphasis on quality service and superior amenities as it strives to set new standards for the passenger experience. Partnering with a reputed hospitality brand is part of airport's efforts to offer its esteemed travelers more options and satisfaction.



Minister advise citizens to maintain a healthy diet, use face masks as 'pneumonia cases rises in Punjab'

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health and Population Welfare Dr Jamal Nasir Thursday urged people to remain vigilant while maintaining a healthy diet and using face masks as 'pneumonia cases' were continuously rising due to smog weather. Talking to a private news channel he pointed out that people with weak immunity due to chronic cardiac, kidney and liver diseases or diabetes could easily contract the respiratory disease in cold weather. Health experts warned of an acute rise in pneumonia cases among elderly people and children, adding, citizens asked to use plenty of rest, warm beverages, steam baths or the use of humidifiers in houses for air moisture and timely consultations with doctors. He said that the major cause of increased cases was undiagnosed influenza and

pneumonia cases, adding, citizens to immediately consult doctors and receive treatment after having respiratory issues. He confirmed that the number of pneumonia cases was higher than the previous year, adding, a precautionary measure to protect young children from the harsh cold weather conditions prevailing in the province. Replying to a question, he said that the Punjab government was cracking down on vehicles emitting smoke, adding, that action would be taken against all factories causing environmental pollution with district administrations closely monitoring all industries and brick kilns. In addition to the school mask mandate, the public has been urged to use masks as well. Citizens are encouraged to take precautions to safeguard their health in the face of the ongoing smog crisis, he added.

PM Kakar to attend World Economic Forum in Switzerland on Jan 15-19

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will visit Davos, Switzerland, on January 15-19, to participate in the 54th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Foreign Office said Thursday. The WEF is an annual gathering of government and corporate leaders for discussions on contemporary trends and challenges, developments shaping the world, and charting collective policy responses. The theme of this year's meeting is “Rebuilding Trust.” Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch at a weekly press briefing said the prime minister would attend three key thematic events including preventing an era of global conflict, restoring faith in the global system, and preventing economic fracture. She said the prime minister would also deliver a keynote address on the theme “Trade Tech's Trillion Dollar Promise” and hold meetings with government and business leaders on the sidelines. The FO spokesperson said Pakistan rejected the US State Department's classification of Pakistan as a “Country of Particular Concern” (CPC). “There are serious questions about the credibility and transparency of the process of making such classifications,” she said. Baloch said, “We also believe that such unilateral, arbitrary, and subjective designations and reports are counterproductive and undermine the objective of advancing religious freedoms.” The spokesperson said Pakistan supported the application filed by South Africa before the International Court of Justice concerning Israel's violations of its obligations under the 1951 Genocide Convention about the Palestinian people in Gaza. “We consider this legal action timely and an important step towards holding Israel to account for its well-documented atrocities unleashed against Palestinian people since 7 October 2023,” she said. She said Pakistan shared the concerns raised in the application by South Africa. “Israel's ongoing military aggression

and actions against the Palestinian people constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity and amount to genocidal acts,” she said. The spokesperson said, “We reiterate our call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire; an end to Israel's unabated massacre of the Palestinian people; an uplifting of an inhumane siege; and expeditious delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.” She said Pakistan firmly believed that the only just solution to the Palestinian question is the creation of an independent, viable, sovereign, and contiguous Palestinian State along the pre-June 1967 borders with Al-Quds-Al-Sharif as its capital. Mumtaz Baloch said the fifth of January was observed as the Right to Self-Determination Day for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. On this day in 1949, she said, the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) adopted a resolution guaranteeing a free and fair plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir, to enable the Kashmiri people to realize their right to self-determination. “The right to self-determination is a fundamental tenet of international law. Every year, the UN General Assembly adopts a resolution that reaffirms the legal right of people to decide their destiny,” she said. The spokesperson expressed unequivocal support for the realization of the right to self-determination for people under foreign occupation. “For over seventy years, India has denied the Kashmiri people their inalienable right to self-determination,” she said. She urged India to respect the rights and freedoms of the people in IIOJK so that the Kashmiri people can exercise their right to self-determination as enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The spokesperson said Pakistan would continue to extend political, diplomatic, and moral support to Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.

President approves resignation of Justice Mazahir Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday approved the resignation of the Supreme Court Judge Justice Syed Mazahir Ali Akbar Naqvi. The president approved the resignation on the advice of the prime minister in the exercise of the power under Article 179 of the Constitution.

Oil tanker carrying 10,000-liter fuel overturns in Sadiqabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): An oil tanker carrying 10,000 litres of spirit fuel overturned near Taj Chowk Bypass Road in Sadiqabad on Thursday. According to details, over ten thousand litres of oil was split while two including a driver and a helper were injured in the accident, a private news channel reported. The police and rescue teams reached the spot of the accident after they were informed. Meanwhile, a fire tender also rushed to the place while a crane was also called to lift the vehicle away from the road.

Robber gang busted, two held

MULTAN (Agencies): Seetal Mari police have busted a notorious robber gang and arrested two members of the gang besides recovering looted valuables from their possession during a special operation launched here on Thursday. Taking action on the rising incidents of motorcycle robbery, a special police team was formed under the supervision of SP City Division Hassan Raza Khakhi to arrest the criminals. The police team busted the Usman gang and arrested two members of the gang including the ring leader Usman Haider and Ghulam Murtaza. The police recovered looted valuables worth over Rs one million including ten motorcycles, cash and weapons from their possession by tracing eight cases from them during the interrogation.

Empowering women can ensure sustained economic growth'

LAHORE (Agencies): Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on Thursday said that empowering women at grassroots level in Pakistan had great significance for fostering sustainable economic growth. Addressing a round-table conference on “Impact of Empowering Women in Economic Growth” here, he added that women had a pivotal role to play in the economic and overall development so prioritising their empowerment became paramount. Kashif Meher was of the view that investing in women's education, healthcare and economic opportunities not only enhanced their well-being but also propelled the nation towards prosperity. He said economic empowerment involved creating opportunities for women to enter and thrive in various sectors. Micro-finance initiatives, vocational training programmes, and support for women entrepreneurs could boost economic growth by tapping the potential of women in the workforce, he suggested. Recognizing

and addressing gender-based barriers in the workplace was crucial for fostering an inclusive environment that allowed women to contribute effectively towards strengthening the national economy, he asserted. The coordinator said that legal reforms and social awareness campaigns could challenge ingrained gender stereotypes, promoting a culture that valued and respected the rights of women. This cultural shift was fundamental for creating an environment where women could actively participate in all aspects of society without facing discrimination. “A nation can harness the full potential of its women by ensuring their more prosperous and equitable future. Educating women is a cornerstone for empowerment. By ensuring widespread access to quality education, Pakistan can equip women with the knowledge and skills needed to participate actively in the workforce. An educated female population contributes to informed decision-making, improved health practices, and a more robust economy,”he concluded.

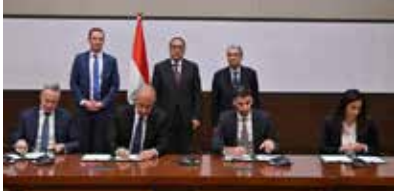
Dark night of Indian oppression in IIOJK will eventually end: APHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Thursday said that the dark night of Indian oppression in occupied Jammu and Kashmir will eventually end one day and the Kashmiri people will see the dawn of freedom. According to Kashmir Media Service, the APHC spokesman in a statement issued in Srinagar said the people of Kashmir are demanding their inalienable right to self determination but the Indian Hindutva regime is reluctant to accept the peaceful and democratic formula and is hell bent on using repression against the legitimate and indigenous resistance movement of Kashmir. He said Kashmiris are presently forced to

live under illegal military occupation of India, yet they are determined to gain freedom as they have never submitted to Indian machinations. The spokesman said that Indian colonialism used every tactic of oppression to weaken the Kashmiris' indigenous movement for freedom but it could not stop them from continuing their struggle for right to self-determination. He said that the Kashmiris had a great respect for the youth who had sacrificed their lives for the Kashmir cause and urged the international community to increase pressure on India to stop state terrorism in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and resolve the lingering Kashmir dispute.

Saudi utility company ACWA Power signs \$1.5bn wind energy deal with Egypt

RIYADH (Agencies): The Egyptian government signed an agreement on Wednesday with a consortium led by Saudi utility company ACWA Power for wind energy production in the Gulf of Suez and Gulf of Zeit. The project aims to generate 1.1 gigawatts of power and is worth \$1.5 billion in terms of investments, the Saudi Press Agency reported. Mohammed Shaker, the Egyptian minister of electricity and renewable energy, said the venture is the largest wind



energy project in the region and ranks among the top onshore initiatives of its kind globally. Each year it is expected to cut carbon emissions by 2.4 million tons, save about 840,000 tons of fuel,

and supply power to a million homes in Egypt. ACWA's chief investment officer, Thomas Brostrom, said the project will incorporate 220-meter-tall wind turbines featuring cutting-edge technology. The agreement was signed in Cairo by Mohammed Al-Khayyat, the chair of Egypt's New and Renewable Energy Authority; Mohammed Hamdouche, ACWA's vice president for business development; and Hassan Amin, the director of ACWA Power Egypt.

Asia-Pacific Jobless Rate Steady Amid Falling Poverty: ILO

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The International Labour Organisation (ILO) states that the unemployment rate in the Asia-Pacific region is expected to remain constant at 4.5% during 2024-25, considering socio-economic developments in low- and middle-income economies. The report indicates that, at around 4.5%, the regional unemployment rate fell below pre-pandemic levels in 2023, concealing variations across countries and age groups. The unemployment rate is project-



International
Labour
Organization

ed to remain stable over the next two years, significantly lower than the 2020 spike of 5.5%. It is also lower than the pre-pandemic level of 4.7% in 2019 and the long-term average of 5.1% between 2010 and 2019. The report emphasizes that although joblessness and the jobs gap have decreased below pre-pandemic levels, global unemployment is expected to rise in 2024, raising concerns about growing inequalities and stagnant productivity.

TikTok, LVMH work on plan to limit fake items sold on app

LONDON (Agencies): Luxury conglomerate LVMH is in discussions with TikTok and its parent company ByteDance Ltd on a plan for limiting counterfeit products sold on the popular video-sharing app. The aim is to work together to achieve an "elevated shopping experience" as TikTok expands its marketplace globally, said Toto Haba, senior vice president of global omni-marketing for Benefit Cosmetics, a beauty brand owned by LVMH, Europe's largest luxury company. The parent group also includes 74 other brands such as Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, Givenchy, Tif-



fany & Co and TAG Heuer. The luxury group has an agreement in place with Alibaba Group Holding Ltd to fight fake goods on its online Tmall marketplace, Haba said. The deal could be a major move to help TikTok Shop's reputation

among brands and shoppers in key new markets. The company fully launched shopping in the US last year and already has ambitious targets, aiming to increase the size of its American e-commerce business 10-fold to as much as US\$17.5 billion in 2024, Bloomberg has reported, according to people familiar with the matter. A TikTok spokesperson declined to comment. Online marketplaces like Amazon.com Inc, JD.com and Alibaba's Tmall have long seen sellers hawking counterfeit products at very low prices, combating them with varying degrees of success.

China's solar boom fuels record growth in global renewables

HONG KONG (Agencies): The world's new renewable power capacity grew by 50% last year and should keep breaking records this decade on the back of a surge in cheaper solar panels, particularly in China. Almost 510 gigawatts of renewables were installed in 2023, setting a record for the 22nd straight year, the International Energy Agency said. Driven by a huge expansion in China's solar fleet, the world is inching toward a target set at the COP28 climate summit to triple renewable power by the end of the decade. "Under current policies and market conditions, global renewable capacity is already on course to increase by two-and-a-half times by

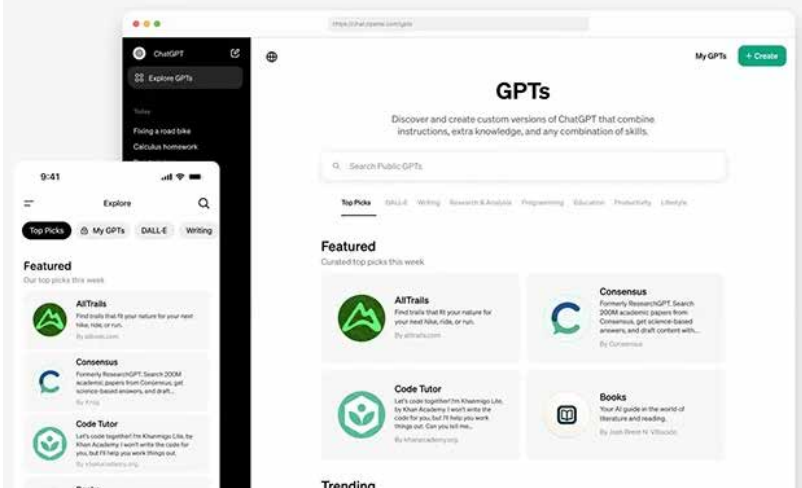


2030," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said. "It's not enough yet to reach the COP28 goal of tripling renewables, but we're moving closer - and governments have the tools needed to close the gap." Plunging solar panel prices helped China to deploy a record amount of new clean power production

in 2023, something that shows little sign of slowing. From 2023 to 2028, the IEA expects the nation to build about 30% more renewable capacity than the rest of the world combined. China's growth has been so rapid that the IEA raised its six-year clean power forecast for the country by 64%. Rooftop solar installations are key to the sector's growth, both in China and elsewhere, as homeowners and businesses turn to the technology to cut energy bills and emissions. The so-called distributed solar sector is set to grow over 200% from 2023 to 2028, compared with the previous six years, exceeding wind power additions, according to the IEA.

OpenAI launches new store for users to share custom chatbots

NEW YORK (Agencies): OpenAI has launched an online store where people can share customised versions of the company's popular ChatGPT chatbot, after initially delaying the rollout because of leadership upheaval last year. The new store, which rolled out Wednesday to paid ChatGPT users, will corral the chatbots that users create for a variety of tasks, for example a version of ChatGPT that can teach math to a child or come up with colorful cocktail recipes. The product, called the GPT Store, will include chatbots that users have chosen to share publicly. It will eventually introduce ways for people to make money from their creations — much as they might through the app stores of Apple Inc or Alphabet Inc's Google. Similar to those app stores, OpenAI's GPT Store will let users see the most popular and trending chatbots on a leaderboard and search for them by category. In a blog post announcing



the rollout, OpenAI said that people have made 3 million custom chatbots thus far, though it was not clear how many were available through its store at launch. The store's launch comes as OpenAI works to build out its ecosystem of services and find new sources

of revenue. On Wednesday, OpenAI also announced a new paid ChatGPT tier for companies with smaller teams that starts at US\$25 a month per user. OpenAI first launched a corporate version of ChatGPT with added features and privacy safeguards in August.

Autonomous driving is 'happening', but slower than expected

LAS VEGAS (Agencies): To the believers, the oft-promised autonomous car revolution is "clearly happening" — they point to the myriad displays at the Consumers Electronics Show in Las Vegas that defy the industry's bad headlines. "Companies are deploying robotaxis in larger scale than before and in more cities," insisted Kersten Heineke, partner and codirector of the McKinsey Center for Future Mobility. Even "in times where money is scarce...we're clearly progressing. It just takes a bit longer than we were expecting three or five years ago." And while "there's nothing flashy" at this



year's CES, there are noted improvements "in crucial technologies" on show, he said. Still the headwinds — and doubts — are there, with venture capital harder to secure and a series of mishaps grabbing attention, even if some data demonstrates that fears are

not merited. — Cameras, lasers and 3D, The focus now is on safety. From long-established companies to young start-ups, the aisles at CES are brimming with innovations in 3D vision, night vision, driver fatigue detectors and hand-on-wheel detection. "Technology saves lives" by improving road safety, said Christophe Perillat, head of the French Valeo group. He believes that by 2030, 90% of vehicles produced worldwide will be equipped with driver assistance systems, and half of those will be level 2 and 2+, with a few million at level 3 or 4.

Pakistan Witnesses 56% Drop in Car Sales Amid Inflation and Supply Challenges

KARACHI (Agencies): The Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association (PAMA) has reported a significant 55.55% year-on-year decline in passenger car sales for the first half of the fiscal year 2024. Facing challenges such as surging inflation, currency depreciation, diminished demand, and political uncertainty, the automotive industry is grappling with additional obstacles from recent disruptions in the supply chain. The data from PAMA shows a substantial decrease in passenger car sales, totaling 30,662 units in 1HFY24, compared to 68,912 units in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year. Production figures reveal a 56.87% year-



on-year drop in the total production of passenger cars, reaching 30,786 units in 1HFY24. The challenges include a scarcity of dollars impacting the import of crucial car parts and raw materials, leading major players like Honda and Suzuki to temporarily halt production.

FBR Restructuring Plan Faces Criticism from Tax Officials

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Tax officials in Pakistan have voiced their concerns over the proposed restructuring of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). They cite a lack of transparency, the absence of an implementation mechanism, and insufficient involvement by relevant ministries as major issues. The officials are particularly worried about potential threats to the federation's financial independence due to fragmented management and taxation without a comprehensive plan. They have threatened to take legal action if the restructuring plan is hastily approved by the interim finance minister. The current FBR structures, established with the support of foreign financial institutions in the late 1990s and ear-

ly 2000s, are well-thought-out, and the existing tax collection system is a result of these changes. However, the proposed reorganization plan reportedly lacks clarity, detailed information on administrative boards, and certainty regarding the tax charging and collecting sectors. Despite the caretaker administration emphasizing the need for restructuring to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio and improve taxpayer convenience, there is uncertainty about how the plan would incorporate the agricultural, retail, and real estate industries. Critics argue that the planned restructuring could further fragment the revenue service, disrupt the income stream, and negatively impact the fiscal objectives for the current year.

Google lays off hundreds in hardware, voice assistant teams



CALIFORNIA (Agencies): Alphabet Inc.'s Google is laying off hundreds of staff working on its digital assistant, hardware and engineering teams as it sustains a drive to cut costs. The affected workers included those working on the voice-based Google Assistant and at the augmented reality hardware team. Employees in

the company's central engineering organisation also got hit by cuts, the company said. The reductions come as Google's core search business feels the heat from rival artificial-intelligence offerings from Microsoft Corp and ChatGPT-creator OpenAI. On calls with investors, Google executives pledged to scrutinise their operations to identify places where they can make cuts, and free up resources to invest in their biggest priorities. "Throughout the second half of 2023, a number of our teams made changes to become more efficient and work better, and to align their resources to their biggest product priorities," a Google spokesperson said in a statement. "Some teams are continuing to make these kinds of organisational changes, which include some role eliminations globally."

OpenAI in talks With CNN, Fox and Time to license content

NEW YORK (Agencies): OpenAI is in talks with CNN, Fox Corp and Time to license their work, according to people familiar with the matter, in a growing effort to secure access to news content to build out its artificial intelligence products while facing allegations it's ripping off copyrighted materials. The startup behind ChatGPT, a tool that lets users quickly crank out text, code and other content with simple prompts, is seeking to cut deals with numerous producers of news, video and other digital media that can be used to make the AI chatbot more accurate, relevant and up to date. OpenAI is also battling lawsuits alleging copyright infringement. OpenAI is discussing licensing articles from Warner



Bros Discovery Inc's CNN that it can use to train ChatGPT and also feature CNN's content in OpenAI's products, according to one of the people, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private matters. CNN and Fox are negotiating not just around licensing text, but also video and image content, the people said. CNN and Fox declined to comment.

BYD's first chartered cargo ship for EVs sets sail for Europe



SHENZHEN (Agencies): BYD Co's first chartered cargo ship has set sail as the automaker ramps up exports of electric vehicles. The BYD Explorer No 1, capable of carrying 7,000 cars, is bound for Europe after making a stop in the Chinese port of Yantai and soon Shenzhen. The ship is managed by Zodiak Maritime Ltd and is being rented to BYD, according to a WeChat post

by China International Marine Containers Group Co., which built the vessel. BYD, having conquered its home market to become China's best-selling car brand, is expanding overseas at a rapid click. It clinched the crown of the world's largest EV manufacturer from Tesla Inc in the fourth quarter. Chinese carmakers' growing presence offshore has drawn retaliation from the European Union, which in October launched an investigation into Chinese EV subsidies it says distort the market. BYD Explorer No 1's maiden voyage started in Longkou, a port city in China's northeastern Shandong province. It stopped into Yantai on Jan 9 and is now headed for Shenzhen, where BYD is headquartered.

5 young talents to watch at AFC Asian Cup in Qatar

DOHA (Agencies): The beauty of international football tournaments can often be found in the unknown — in an unfancied team making a deep run, or the discovery of a new talent. On this score, the AFC Asian Cup always delivers, with each passing edition bringing to the fore a new name for legions of fans to admire. And this upcoming Asian Cup, to be held in Qatar over the next month promises to be no exception. Here are five young stars to watch this month. Abbas Al-Hasan, 19, Saudi Arabia The name



Abbas Al-Hasan was not on many people's lips before the start of this Saudi Pro League season, but so impressive has the midfielder been for Al-Fateh that he has forced his way into Roberto Mancini's squad.

Making his international debut in November's window, playing both qualifiers against Pakistan and Jordan, the 19-year-old got the nod in the Asian Cup squad ahead of more experienced players like Salman Al-Faraj. This perhaps heralds a new era for the Green Falcons as they have one eye on both the 2027 Asian Cup and 2034 World Cup, which will both be held in Saudi Arabia. While there is still competition in midfield, Al-Hasan could emerge as one of the first pillars of the new Saudi Arabia moving forward.

Ali Monfaradi and Talison Costa set for rematch at second Abu Dhabi Extreme Championship

ABU DHABI (Agencies): The second edition of the Abu Dhabi Extreme Championship will feature a rematch between Bahrain's Ali Monfaradi and Brazil's Talison Costa on Jan. 19 at Abu Dhabi's Mubadala Arena. The bout reignites their rivalry after a closely contested encounter in the Abu Dhabi World Professional Jiu-Jitsu Championship Master 1 division final last November. "I may have won our last encounter and am the current world champion in our division, but I am under no false impressions; Talison is a very capable athlete, and this is a very



different ruleset," said Monfaradi. "Our previous matches were rooted in strategy and tactics. In the ADXC ruleset, we

will see a very different match where we will both be taking more risks, and I have tirelessly prepared in my training camp accordingly." Known for his aggressive fighting style and submission-seeking approach, Costa expressed confidence in the ADXC rules, which favor his strengths. "I have had 13 MMA fights and I'm accustomed to pressing opponents against the cage. Performing Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu in the cage presents some differences. Due to my familiarity with it, I believe that in the takedown game, this will provide me with a slight advantage.

Middlesbrough stun Chelsea flops to take League Cup semifinal lead

MIDDLESBROUGH (Agencies): Chelsea boss Mauricio Pochettino bemoaned a familiar lack of cutting edge after his team lost the first leg of their League Cup semifinal 1-0 to Championship side Middlesbrough at the Riverside on Tuesday. Hayden Hackney scored the only goal on 38 minutes as Pochettino's expensively assembled array of stars again failed to perform away from home. Chelsea have lost five of their last six away games and 21 times on the road since the beginning of last season — the most of any Premier League team. The Blues must turn the tie around when the



sides meet again at Stamford Bridge on January 23 to avoid heaping more pressure on Pochettino's position during a disappointing first season in charge for the Argentine. "If we assess the performance overall we were the better side, had clear chances, but we

didn't score and weren't clinical," said Pochettino. "It happened a lot this season." Boro boss Michael Carrick could have been forgiven for cursing his luck after losing top scorer Emmanuel Latte Lath to injury after just three minutes. Carrick was also forced to withdraw Alex Bangura inside 20 minutes but the second-tier side were not fazed. "It's very special," said the former Manchester United midfielder. "I know it's a two-legged affair and there is still all to play for, but for what we've had to go through, the injuries, the setbacks we've had, to beat a team of Chelsea's quality is unbelievable."

Atletico Madrid boss Diego Simeone sets sights on Spanish Super Cup victory over Real in Riyadh

RIYADH (Agencies): Atletico Madrid manager Diego Simeone said on Tuesday his side's Spanish Super Cup semifinal clash with Real Madrid in Riyadh on Wednesday is a different proposition to their 3-1 La Liga victory when the sides last met, in September, but he still intends to emerge victorious. The Kingdom is hosting the 40th Supercopa de Espana, which will take place at Al-Awwal Park in Riyadh from Jan. 10 to 14. City rivals Atletico and Real meet in the first semifinal of the



four-club competition and Barcelona will face Osasuna on Thursday, with the final to be played on Sunday. All matches kick off at 10pm Saudi time.

"All tournaments are different and have their unique circumstances," Simeone said. "We play consistently well and are aware that we are playing against a great club like Real Madrid. I have the utmost respect for all clubs and we are here today to compete for the win." Wednesday's clash is the first between the clubs since Simeone's side achieved a memorable league victory over Real thanks to an Alvaro Morata double either side of an Antoine Griezmann goal.

Koopmeiners brace fires Atalanta past Milan into Coppa Italia semis

MILAN (Agencies): Teun Koopmeiners scored twice as Atalanta came back from a goal down to beat AC Milan 2-1 at San Siro in their Coppa Italia quarterfinal clash on Wednesday. Rafael Leao broke the deadlock for Milan just before half-time with an elegant first-time finish from Theo Hernandez's pass, but in a swift response, an unmarked



Koopmeiners received a ball from Emil Holm near the edge of the box

before guiding a low shot into the far corner. Koopmeiners then completed the comeback for Atalanta in the 59th minute when he converted a penalty after Alex Jimenez fouled Aleksei Miranchuk. Atalanta will play Fiorentina in a two-legged semifinal in April following Vincenzo Italiano's side's win over Bologna on penalties on Tuesday.

Real Madrid boss hails substitutes for 5-3 Spanish Super Cup semifinal success

RIYADH (Agencies): Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti said his substitutes "made the difference" after his side won an incredible Spanish Super Cup 2024 semifinal 5-3 in extra time on Wednesday night in Riyadh. Real Madrid went behind twice in the match only to show immense resilience to force an extra 30 minutes and eventually overcome a spirited performance from their city rivals. After Mario Hermoso headed Atletico ahead after six minutes, Real went in front through goals from Antonio Rudiger and Ferland Mendy, before a sublime



leveler from Antoine Griezmann saw the first half end at 2-2. A Rudiger own goal looked to give Atletico another derby victory this season — Diego Simeone's side won 3-1 in La Liga in September — but Dani Carvajal netted to take the game

into extra time. Ancelotti's substitutes were the heroes, with first Joselu forcing a late own goal from Stefan Savic and then Brahim Diaz completing the 5-3 win in injury time of extra time. The 40th edition of the historic Supercopa de Espana (Spanish Super Cup) is taking place at Al-Nassr's Al-Awwal Park — the home of former Real Madrid hero Cristiano Ronaldo — from Jan. 10 to 14. "This was a tight game, a tough match. The team did a really good job attacking and defending, we did a good job. It was a great effort," Ancelotti said.

Malaysia Open heartbreak for shuttlers Tang Jie-Ee Wei

KUALA LUMPUR (Agencies): National top mixed doubles pair Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei fell short of replicating their Malaysia Open quarter-final success last year as they were ousted by Japanese duo Hiroki Midorikawa-Natsu Saito in the second round of the tournament here today. Despite putting up a strong fight in the opening game, it was not enough for world No 9 Tang Jie and Ee Wei, who eventually succumbed to



Midorikawa-Saito 22-24. Their performance took a nosedive in the second game, as the world No 13 duo wrapped

it up 21-14, and the tie in 42 minutes. After the match, a dejected Tang Jie said their opponents just outperformed them. "I am disappointed with today's game; they are a very strong pair and played better than us," he told reporters. Midorikawa-Saito's next opponent will be compatriots Yuta Watanabe-Arisa Higashino, who defeated Danish pair Mathias Thyrr-Amalie Magelund 21-15, 21-11.

Ajax lose to amateur team in Dutch Cup to continue tumultuous season

RIYADH (Agencies): Real Madrid defeated Atletico Madrid 5-3 after extra-time in a pulsating battle in Saudi Arabia to reach the Spanish Super Cup final on Wednesday. Mario Hermoso and Antonio Rudiger exchanged early headed goals before Ferland Mendy sent Madrid ahead at the Al-Awwal Park stadium in Riyadh. Antoine Griezmann levelled with a milestone goal for Atletico to become their all-time leading scorer and Kepa Arrizabalaga's own goal sent the Rojilbancos ahead, but Dani Carvajal smashed Madrid level and



forced extra-time. With the game heading toward penalties, Stefan Savic's own goal nudged Madrid ahead and Brahim Diaz wrapped up the win on the counter-attack with Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak stranded out of position.

Saudi Pro League unveils new partnership with Adidas



RIYADH (Agencies): Adidas and the Saudi Pro League have unveiled a new partnership to promote football in the Kingdom and drive sustained development in the years ahead. Commencing in February 2024, the partnership will see Adidas become the Saudi top flight's official match ball supplier, enhancing the Roshn Saudi League's global interest and commercial attractiveness while supporting continuous growth throughout Saudi football. "Our partnership with Adidas represents a significant next step towards

elevating football in Saudi Arabia," said Saad Allazeez, vice chairman and interim CEO of the SPL. "By aligning with such a recognized and respected global sportswear giant, the league enhances its international visibility and benefits from greater opportunities to attract talent, inspire investment, and foster growth that positively impacts football culture and the game's national ecosystem. "This collaboration can help reshape the Kingdom's football landscape, and we're excited to be working closely with Adidas moving forward." Under the partnership, RSL teams will play with the Adidas 'Oceanz' ball for the remainder of the 2023-2024 season, from February to May. Adidas will then provide an exclusive match ball featuring an upgraded color palette for the 2024-2025 season, beginning in August.

Rory McElroy to lead strong field at 35th Dubai Desert Classic

DUBAI (Agencies): Several established stars and emerging talent are set to tee off at the 35th edition of the Hero Dubai Desert Classic from Jan. 18 to 21. World No. 2 and defending champion Rory McElroy headlines the field at the first Rolex Series event of the 2024 Race to Dubai, as he seeks to lift the famous Dallah trophy for a historic fourth time. The Northern Irishman will be joined by fellow Major winners, including reigning Open champion Brian Harman who makes his debut at the iconic event, as well as Padraig Harrington, Francesco Molinari and Adam Scott. Most recent Rolex Series winner Nicolai Hojgaard — who triumphed in Dubai at the season-ending DP World Tour Championship — is joined by his twin brother and four-time DP World Tour winner



Rasmus. Also in the lineup is Adrian Meronk, a three-time champion in 2023, and Ryan Fox, who claimed his fourth DP World Tour victory and first on the Rolex Series last season. Meanwhile rising PGA TOUR star Cameron Young is set to make his tournament debut. Victorious European Ryder Cup captain Luke Donald returns to take on the Majlis Course once again, alongside stars of that famous victory in Rome Tommy Fleetwood and Tyrrell Hatton.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: JANUARY 12, 2023



just a matter of time before you hit on something great.

– **VIRGO**: You've got a lot to say today. Once you open your mouth you surprise even yourself! Try to stay positive even if you've got some complaints, because that's the only way to get by right now.

– **LIBRA**: It's simple to get along with your peers today, much more so than usual. It may be that they're in a better mood, but even if they're grumpy, you can bypass all that with a smile and a wave!

– **SCORPIO**: Expect parent-related difficulties, even if they're not so much a part of your life any more. It could be anything from an odd request to a bureaucratic snafu, but you need to handle it with care.

– **SAGITTARIUS**: Get out in the world and see what you find. It's sure to surprise you! It's just one of those days when exploration is rewarded with fun and good times instead of disappointment and boredom.

– **CAPRICORN**: Inspiration is striking left and right today, and when it finally hits you, expect to see what you want out of the future much more clearly! You should be able to get going on it right away.

– **ACQUARIUS**: Don't hold back today. People need to hear your ideas! You're in the right place and the right time to make a real difference, but only if you're willing to take the risk of being misunderstood.

– **PISCES**: You are a little overwhelmed, at least mentally, and could really use some downtime to collect your thoughts. It's a great day to take off early or take a long walk by yourself if you can.

Israel, Hezbollah trade strikes as diplomats call for calm

BEIRUT (Agencies): Israel has continued its strikes against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon amid mounting fears of a war on the border. Hezbollah also struck back against targets in Israel despite warnings from Israeli officials. Reports in local Lebanese and Israeli media say that Israel's provocative targeting of Hezbollah could lure the group into all-out conflict. Since Oct. 8, when Hezbollah fired dozens of rockets toward Israel in support of the Hamas-led attack, the group has continued to carry out low-level strikes on Israel, alarming the Lebanese government. Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati has attempted to ease tensions. In talks with German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, he said: "Lebanon respects all international resolutions, starting with the armistice agreement, to achieve permanent stability in southern Lebanon." Mikati urged support for the



Lebanese army "to enable it to carry out its duties." He added: "The time has come to find a permanent and just solution to the Palestinian cause, starting with a ceasefire and launching an international path for a final and comprehensive solution based on the two-state principle." Meanwhile, Israel ramped up efforts on its northern border, using incendiary material to ignite forest fires in Lebanon.

The Lebanese Army Command said in a statement: "A joint army and UNIFIL patrol in the outskirts of the border town of Labbounneh found three hoses used to pump incendiary materials that were placed by the Israeli enemy, from inside the occupied Palestinian territories to Lebanese territory. A specialized army unit worked to dismantle them in the presence of UNIFIL members."

UK Foreign Secretary: China's Approach Has Become More Aggressive



LONDON (Agencies): British Foreign Secretary David Cameron has stated that China has grown more "aggressive and assertive" since his tenure as the UK Prime Minister from 2010 to 2016. Speaking before the UK Foreign Affairs Committee, Cameron cited China's alleged repression of Uyghur Muslims, policies in Hong Kong, and "wolf warrior diplomacy" as examples of this behavior. Despite the concerns, he emphasized the importance of engaging with China on issues like climate change and artificial intelligence. The remarks come amid reports of China detaining the head of an overseas consulting firm, accusing him of gathering sensitive data for MI6, which the UK has not commented on.

Boeing Acknowledges Design Flaws After 737 Max-9 Fuselage Blowout



WASHINGTON (Agencies): Boeing has admitted design faults following an incident where a large piece of fuselage broke off a 737 Max-9 plane soon after takeoff, prompting the grounding of the aircraft model in multiple countries. Alaska Airlines Flight 1282, en route from Portland to California, experienced a blowout that left a significant hole in its left side. While all 177 passengers and crew were unharmed, the incident raised concerns about Boeing's "quality control problems." CEO Dave Calhoun acknowledged the mistake, promising transparency. The FAA ordered the temporary grounding of 171 Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft for inspection. Turkish Airlines, Copa Airlines, and Aeromexico also grounded planes for technical reviews. Emirates' chief cited Boeing's longstanding quality control issues. The 737 Max series has faced challenges since two fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019, leading to a 20-month grounding.

Iraq Seeks Quick Exit of US Forces but No Deadline Set

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Iraq aims for a swift and orderly negotiated exit of US-led military forces from the country, without setting a specific deadline, according to Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani. He described the US presence as destabilizing, especially amid regional spillover from Israel's military offensive against Palestinians in Gaza. The calls for the coalition's departure have gained momentum, particularly from Shia Muslim factions close to Iran. The US currently has around 2,500 troops in Iraq. Sudani emphasized the need for reorganizing the relationship to avoid being a target for internal or foreign parties.

US School Shifts Students for Migrant Shelter Amid Storm Threat

NEW YORK (Agencies): Thousands of New York City public school students were instructed to attend remote classes on Wednesday to accommodate migrants sheltering in a Brooklyn high school gymnasium during an approaching storm. James Madison High School was activated as a temporary respite center for around 1,900 migrants from a nearby tent city. The relocation, deemed a precautionary measure due to predicted 70mph winds, raised concerns about the duration of their stay in the gym. City Hall spokeswoman Kayla Mamelak characterized the move as proactive for the safety of individuals at the center. Mayor Eric Adams had previously attempted to convert public school gyms into migrant



housing last spring, facing opposition from parents. Since spring 2022, over 162,000 migrants have arrived in New York City, overwhelming the shelter system and prompting the construction of tent complexes. Adams predicted a \$12 billion cost over three years for the resulting humanitarian crisis. The city has declared a state of emergency and experienced a significant exodus of residents in 2023.

South Korea Resumes Military Exercises Amidst Rising Tensions with North



Seoul (Agencies): South Korea has announced its intention to restart military exercises, previously halted under a 2018 security pact with North Korea. The decision comes in response to recent shows of force by North Korea, in-

cluding artillery volleys near the border, violating the terms of the 2018 agreement. The resumption of war games will involve live-fire artillery drills, land, and sea border operations. South Korea is also considering scrapping the security pact to enhance military readiness. The move follows a major North Korean artillery barrage prompting the evacuation of South Korean border islands. Tensions escalated as both sides engaged in artillery drills in response to perceived military provocations.

US Seeks Bids for Domestic Supply of Highly-Enriched Uranium to Reduce Dependency on Russia

NEWYORK (Agencies): The US Department of Energy has opened the bidding process for companies to establish a reliable domestic supply of highly-enriched uranium (HALEU) to fuel advanced nuclear reactors. Currently, the US is dependent on Russian-enriched fuel for its new-generation nuclear power plants, making it vulnerable in the atomic energy sector. HALEU is a critical component for the operation of advanced reactors, enabling smaller and more versatile designs with heightened



safety, security, and nonproliferation standards. The Department of Energy's initiative aims to bolster the nation's energy independence and strategic capabilities while adhering to the highest nuclear standards.

NASA Shifts Crewed Moon Landing Mission to 2026



NEWYORK (Agencies): NASA has postponed the scheduled Artemis program's manned moon mission until September 2026, marking a significant delay in the first US crewed lunar landing in over 50

years. The adjustment aims to provide more time to address challenges related to the development and integration of spacecraft systems. Artemis II is now targeted for September 2025, while Artemis III, the mission involving human landing on the lunar south pole, is rescheduled for September 2026. The decision is driven by the need to overcome unexpected issues, including the development of new spacesuits and problems encountered during the Artemis I mission.

UN Security Council Condemns Houthi Attacks on Vessels in Red Sea

NEW YORK (Agencies): The UN Security Council has adopted a resolution strongly condemning multiple Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea over the past two months. These attacks, numbering 24, have raised concerns about disruptions in global trade and regional security. The resolution, co-authored by the US and Japan, demands an immediate cessation of such behavior and the release of the Japan-operated cargo ship Galaxy Leader and its 25 crew members. It emphasizes respect for international law regarding navigational

rights and freedoms, allowing member states to defend their vessels from attacks. The Houthi rebels have targeted commercial vessels, threatening to continue until Israel ends its war on Gaza. The resolution also calls for respect for a targeted arms embargo and condemns the provision of weapons to the Houthis, violating UN Resolution 2216. Russia, China, Algeria, and Mozambique abstained from the vote, while Russia's proposed amendments linking Houthi attacks to the Gaza conflict were voted down.

Greek PM Pushes for Same-Sex Marriage Legalization

ATHENS (Agencies): Despite opposition from lawmakers and the Orthodox Church, Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis plans to submit legislation for same-sex marriage. The bill aims to end discrimination based on sexual orientation in marital relationships, allowing adoption but not surrogate parenthood. Mitsotakis acknowledges potential divisions within his party and seeks cross-party support. The influential Orthodox Church opposes the reforms. Public opinion is



divided, with 49% against and 35% in favor. Greece legalized same-sex civil partnerships in 2015, but same-sex couples are currently unable to adopt children.

US and China Conclude Military Talks at Pentagon Amid Rising Tensions

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US and China have completed two days of military talks at the Pentagon, aiming to re-establish military communications and prevent the risk of operational incidents or miscalculations. Michael Chase, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for China, Taiwan, and Mongolia, met with China's Major General Song Yanchao to discuss regional and global security issues. The talks come in the backdrop of escalating tensions over Taiwan, and Beijing emphasized that the US should end "provocative



actions" in the South China Sea before seeking military contacts. The resumption of military ties was agreed upon during a meeting between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping in 2023.

Ecuador Boosts Security at Energy Facilities Amid Unrest



QUITO (Agencies): Ecuadorian state-run oil producer Petroecuador has increased security measures at its facilities in response to the recent surge in armed gang violence and unrest in the country. The move follows President Daniel Noboa's declaration of an "internal armed conflict" after gunmen attacked a TV station and engaged in violent incidents across Ecuador. Petroecuador stated that refineries, oil fields, pipelines, and terminals are under special control to ensure personnel safety and uninterrupted operations. Ecuador's oil production has often been impacted by protests, and in December, force majeure was declared at the Ishpingo field due to indigenous community protests.

Italian Parliament Approves Resolution to Continue Military Aid to Ukraine

ROME (Agencies): The Italian Parliament has passed a resolution in both houses, with 190-49 votes in the lower house and 103-24 votes in the Senate, to continue providing military aid to Ukraine. The resolution calls on the Italian government to support Ukraine's state authorities through the transfer of materials and military equipment, aligning with NATO, EU, and international commitments. Simultaneously, a resolution to halt arms supplies to Ukraine, submitted by the opposition Five Star Movement and the Greens and Left Alliance, was rejected. Italy has previously adopted eight packages of military aid for Ukraine, with the latest approved in December.

US State Department Approves \$329 Million Military Sale to Egypt



CAIRO (Agencies): The US State Department has granted approval for two military equipment sales totaling \$329 million to Egypt, according to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA). The approved sales include Light Tactical Vehicle Chassis and Fleet Build, estimated at \$200 million, and 28-Meter Patrol Craft Kits along with related equipment valued at \$129 million. The DSCA has certified the required documentation to Congress for both sales. These proposed deals aim to enhance Egypt's security capabilities, supporting US foreign policy and national security objectives by strengthening Egypt's ability to conduct security operations both internally and externally.

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