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Pages 8 Price: Rs. 25/-

Vol 11, No 319 - Wednesday 13 March 2024 Ramazan 02, 1445 A.H.

Editor: Omer Rizwan

Pakistan urges UNSC to be more transparent, inclusive to address conflicts, crises

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies): The Security Council must be more transparent and inclusive in conducting its business to meet the challenges posed by current global, regional conflicts and crises, a senior Pakistani diplomat has stressed, and called for improved working methods as also steps to ensure the implementation of its resolutions, especially on longstanding issues and disputes. "Nothing undermines the credibility of the Security Council more than 'selective' implementation and non-implementation of its resolutions," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member body on Monday. "Failure to en-

force its resolutions undermines the credibility of the Security Council and erodes confidence in its ability to fulfill the responsibilities assigned by the UN Charter," he said while speaking in a debate on: The Working Methods of the Security Council. Ambassador Jadoon underscored the imperative for the Security Council to respond decisively to the increasingly complex challenges to global peace and security by acting in an effective, transparent, accountable, and democratic manner. In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy highlighted key areas for improvement in the Council's working methods, including the need for full adherence to openness and transparency, as provided

under the rules. Ambassador Jadoon referred to the absence of interactive discussions in open meetings, saying it compromises the Council's mandated role, particularly its duty to act on behalf of all Member States. He also advocated for enhancing the quality and frequency of reporting to the General Assembly and allowing automatic participation of non-Council members in deliberations upon request, and called for the elimination or reform of the "penholder" system to ensure greater inclusivity and fairness. In this regard, he emphasized the need to uphold and respect the General Assembly's role as the principal deliberative, policy-making, and norm-setting organ of the UN.

Israel checks reports Hamas military No.2 Issa killed in Gaza

TEL AVIV (Agencies): Israel was checking, on Monday, whether Hamas's deputy military leader had been killed in an airstrike in Gaza, Israeli media said, as prospects faded of talks securing a ceasefire to coincide with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Reuters reports. If his death is confirmed, Marwan Issa will be the highest-ranking official from the Hamas movement killed by Israel in five months of war that have pulverised the coastal enclave and killed thousands of Palestinians. Issa, known as the 'Shadow Man' for his ability to stay out of sight, was one of three top Hamas leaders who planned the 7 October attack on Israel that triggered the war and are believed to have been directing Hamas's military operations since then. Israeli Army Radio said the Al-Nusseirai camp in central Gaza had been bombed on Saturday night following intelligence about the location of Issa, second-in-command of Hamas's military wing, the Izz el-Deen Al-Qassam Brigades. The attack killed five people, the report said. The Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, reported that Israel was checking whether the fatalities included Issa. A Palestinian source said the Israelis had hit a place where they thought Issa was hiding, but could give no details of his fate. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and Hamas officials did not immediately comment on the media reports. On Sunday, in a statement rounding up operations from the previous 24 hours, Israel said its forces had killed militants in central Gaza, but did not mention the camp.

China backs Maldives in protecting sovereignty: Wang Wenbin



BEIJING (Agencies): China supports Maldives in safeguarding the sovereignty and working with other countries on the basis of equality, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Tuesday. In response to a question about withdrawal of the first batch of Indian troops from Maldives during his regular briefing, the spokesperson said, don't know the specifics. He, however, said that the Chinese side supports Maldives in safeguarding the sovereignty and working with other countries on the basis of equality. President of Maldives, Mohamed Muizzu came to power in September on a pledge to kick out Indian security personnel deployed in the country to patrol its vast maritime border.

New air route between Shanghai and Riyadh to launch in April

RIYADH (Agencies): A new air route between Riyadh and Shanghai has been established thanks to a collaboration between the Saudi Air Connectivity Program and China Eastern Airlines. The pair entered into a partnership directly linking Pudong Airport and King Khalid International Airport in the Kingdom's capital, the Saudi Press Agency reported. Commencing on April 8, the route is set to operate with an A330-200 aircraft, offering an annual capacity of 35,880 inbound seats. This move is set to enhance air connectivity between Saudi Arabia and China and falls in line with the growing interest and demand for travel between the two nations. Additionally, the deal also aligns with the Kingdom's endeavors to deepen bilat-

eral ties with the Asian giant, achieving a connection that promotes cultural understanding and opens new opportunities for growth. "The introduction of this new route with one of the world's largest airlines is another step towards enhancing connectivity between Saudi Arabia and China, a key priority market for us," ACP CEO Majid Khan said. He added: "We look forward to working with China Eastern Airlines to enable tourists and businesses to explore the attractions and opportunities both nations have to offer." As a result of the new collaboration, the two parties are anticipating amplified trade, people-to-people exchanges, and dialogues across various sectors through this Air Silk Road initiative.

First aid ship to Gaza leaves Cyprus port in pilot project

LARNACA (Agencies): A ship taking almost 200 tons of food to Gaza left a port in Cyprus early on Tuesday in a pilot project to open a new sea route for aid to a population on the brink of famine. The charity ship Open Arms was seen sailing out of Larnaca port in Cyprus, towing a barge containing around 200 tons of flour, rice and protein. The mission, mostly funded by the United Arab Emirates, is being organized by US based charity World Central Kitchen (WCK), while Spanish charity Proactiva Open Arms is supplying the ship. "Our goal is to establish a maritime highway of boats

and barges stocked with millions of meals continuously headed toward Gaza," said WCK founder Jose Andres and chief executive officer Erin Gore in a statement. The charities intend to take aid directly to Gaza, which has been sealed off from the outside world since Israel began its offensive in response to an Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas militants. With the lack of port infrastructure, WCK has said it was creating a landing jetty in Gaza with material from destroyed buildings and rubble. It has said it had another 500 tons of aid amassed in Cyprus which would also be dispatched.

India-made fighter jet Tejas crashes for first time; pilot ejected safely



NEW DELHI (Agencies): A domestically made fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force crashed on Tuesday in the western state of Rajasthan, the first such incident since the jet was inducted nearly eight years ago. The pilot ejected safely, the Indian Air Force said in a statement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has been pushing for local manufacturing as India seeks to shed its reputation as one of the world's biggest importers of defence equipment. The light combat jet, called Tejas, meaning flame or brilliance in Sanskrit, was inducted into the force in 2016 after a long wait in India's efforts to modernise its

largely Soviet-era fleet. Tuesday's crash breaks the jet's safety record since its first test flight more than two decades ago, an Indian Air Force officer told Reuters. Modi set out big ambitions last year to more than triple the value of annual defence exports to \$5 billion by 2025 from 2023 levels and his government has been making diplomatic efforts to export the Tejas. The Indian government in 2021 gave a \$6bn contract to state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, opening a new tab for 83 Tejas jets. The Tejas has been beset by design and other challenges and was once rejected by the Indian Navy as too heavy.

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شیع تراویح

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

شروع اللہ کا نام سے جو بڑا مہربان نہایت رحم کرنے والا ہے

سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْمَلَكُوتِ سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْعِزَّةِ

پاک ہے وہ ذات جس کی بادشاہی زمین و آسمان میں ہے، پاک ہے وہ ذات جو عزت

وَالْعُظَمَاءِ وَالْهَيْبَةِ وَالْقُدْرَةِ وَالْكِبْرِيَاءِ وَالْجَبَرُوتِ

و عظمت اور ہیبت و قدرت اور بڑائی اور دہے والی ہے

سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ وَلَا يَمُوتُ

پاک ہے وہ بادشاہ جو جی ہے جو نہ کبھی سوتا ہے اور نہ مرے گا

سُبُّوحٌ قُدُّوسٌ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ

بہت ہی پاک ہے بہت ہی مقدس ہمارا رب اور فرشتوں و روح کا پروردگار ہے

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَجِرْنَا مِنَ النَّارِ يَا مُجِيبُ دُعَائِ الْمُحْسِنِ

اے اللہ! ہمیں آتش دوزخ سے نجات دے اے نجات دینے والے! اے نجات دینے والے!

Microsoft says it hasn't been able to shake Russian state hackers

BOSTON (Agencies): Microsoft said Friday it's still trying to evict the elite Russian government hackers who broke into the email accounts of senior company executives in November and who it said have been trying to breach customer networks with stolen access data. The hackers from Russia's SVR foreign intelligence service used data obtained in the intrusion, which it disclosed in mid-January, to compromise some source-code repositories and internal systems, the software giant said in a blog and a regulatory filing. A company spokesman would not characterize what source code was accessed and what capability the hackers gained to further compromise customer and Microsoft systems. Microsoft said Friday that the hackers stole "secrets" from email communications between the company and unspecified customers — cryptographic secrets such as passwords, certificates and authentication keys — and that it was reaching out to them "to assist in taking mitigating measures." Cloud-computing company Hewlett Packard Enterprise disclosed on Jan. 24 that it, too, was an SVR



hacking victim and that it had been informed of the breach — by whom it would not say — two weeks earlier, coinciding with Microsoft's discovery it had been hacked. "The threat actor's ongoing attack is characterized by a sustained, significant commitment of the threat actor's resources, coordination, and focus," Microsoft said Friday, adding that it could be using obtained data "to accumulate a picture of areas to attack and enhance its ability to do so." Cybersecurity experts said Microsoft's admission that the SVR hack had not been contained exposes the perils of the heavy reliance by government and business on the Redmond, Washington, company's software monoculture — and the fact that so many of its customers are linked through its global cloud network.

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.

Minister chairs meeting of health deptt; seeks details of Sehat card

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for health Qasim Ali Shah on Monday chaired the meeting of the department after assuming charge of the Minister office. Upon the arrival, the Minister was welcomed by the Secretary and the DGs and heads of different programmes. An introductory

session was held with the staff of the Health Department. Secretary Health Mehmood Aslam Wazir presented a detailed review of the health department, an overview of all ongoing development projects and the current situation in the health department. The Minister was also briefed about health card,

ten MTIs and other independent institutions. The health minister was told that the budget of the health department has exceeded Rs 207 billion, adding that more than Rs 88 billion have been spent so far under the heads of electricity and development projects. The Minister sought details of Health Card Plus.

Inter colleges science, art exhibition held

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Peshawar Model degree colleges organized an inter colleges science and art exhibition here at City University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar. The aim and objectives of the event was to bring together the scientific and artistic abilities of the students and to encourage them for creativity

and innovation in specific fields. Students from different colleges enthusiastically participated in the event and showcased their scientific ideas and artistic models including drawing, sketching and live painting. Professor Nasrullah Khan Yousafzai, Chairman BISE Peshawar was the chief guest on the occasion. He admired the sci-

entific concepts and artistic idea of the students and appreciated the efforts of administration for arranging such an innovative event. The chief guest awarded certificates and shields to the winners' students. At the end, Director Peshawar Model Degree Colleges Muhammad Sohail presented college souvenir to the Chief Guest.

Agriculture infrastructure handover ceremony held in district Mohmand

PESHAWAR (Agencies): The USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (USAID-ERDA) on Monday formally handed over nine completed agriculture infrastructure schemes to the farming communities of tehsil Safi and Ambar, District Mohmand in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The ceremony was attended by representatives from USAID-ERDA, the local government, and community members. These interventions irrigating 200 acres of barren land in tehsil Ambar and Safi of Mohmand District, will significantly improve the agricultural productivity of the region. USAID-ERDA provided vegetable and maize seeds to the farmers community, further supporting the program's goal of enhancing agricultural productivity. On this occasion, Shakil Ahmad, Additional Deputy Commissioner, District

Mohmand said, the Government of Pakistan deeply appreciates the continued support of USAID-ERDA in developing our communities. These infrastructure projects will have a lasting positive impact on the lives of the farmers in Mohmand District. This project is a game-changer for our community, he said. He said, the improved watercourses and storage tanks will allow us to cultivate our land more efficiently and increase our yields. Malik Sahib Khan, Farmer, Tehsil Ambar, District Mohmand said, we are grateful to USAID-ERDA for their support. "USAID-ERDA is committed to working with local communities to improve their livelihoods and build resilience. We are confident that these projects will empower the farmers of Mohmand District and contribute to the long-term development of the re-

gion, Engr. Behram Jan, Water Management Specialist, USAID-ERDA said. Most of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's population, including those in the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs), rely on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods. However, these sectors face challenges due to inadequate water supply, inefficient water management and poor resource utilization. In response to these challenges, USAID-ERDA has been actively working in Mohmand, Khyber, Buner, Kohat, Bajaur, Orakzai and Dera Ismail Khan Districts to improve water management infrastructure and promote sustainable agricultural practices. The handover ceremony marks a significant milestone in these efforts and paves the way for a more prosperous future for the farming communities of the region.

KP CM sets up complaint cell

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur has established a complaint cell at CM Secretariat to address public issues. According to CM Secretariat special staff has

been deputized at the cell to receive complaints, CM Secretariats on contact numbers: 091-9222461 or 091-9222464. As per the directives of the CM, immediate action would be taken on citizens' complaints.

KP CM for inclusion of Madrassas in solarization plan

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Monday chaired a meeting of Energy and Power Department and ordered inclusion of religious seminaries in the plan of solarization of mosques and worship places. The CM instructed the concerned authorities to take necessary steps to also include the religious Madrassas of the merged districts in the project. He said that thousands of students were studying and living in madrassas and it was very important to solarize the religious seminaries. The CM was briefed on the development projects of the department, admin-

istrative and financial matters and other matters by the concerned authorities. He directed early appointments of Chief Executive Officer and members of the Executive Committee of PEDO. Gandapur also directed to ensure timely completion of ongoing hydropower projects and warned that unnecessary delay in these projects would not be acceptable in any case. He said that penalties should be imposed on contractors who failed to complete projects within the stipulated time. The CM further said that priorities should be given to projects of early completion with a view to generate revenue.

MBBS Students From Abbottabad Secures 17 Gold Medals And Got First Position

PESHAWAR (Agencies): An accomplished student from Nawansher Abbottabad Dr. Manoosh Saleh on Monday has got significant recognition for her academic excellence at Girls Khyber Medical College Peshawar. Dr. Saleh was honored with an impressive total of 17 gold medals for securing the first position in 12 subjects throughout her MBBS program. The prestigious awards were presented to Dr. Saleh by the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haaji Ghulam Ali, during a special ceremony held at Girls Khyber Medical College Peshawar's convocation event. Dr. Saleh's outstanding academic journey spans from the years 2014-15 to 2019-20, during which she consistently excelled in various disciplines. Notably, she achieved the top position in subjects such as Biochemistry, Physiology, Forensic Medicine, and several others. Her remarkable achievements extend beyond academic excellence, as she also secured first positions in multiple academic years and professional examinations, culminating in her recognition as the Best Graduate for the educational year 2019.

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Mushaal Hussein Mullick Extols Resilience of Kashmiri Women in Freedom Movement

MUZAFFARABAD (Khyber Mail): In a compelling address during a seminar on “World Women’s Day,” former special assistant to the prime minister for human rights and women empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, paid a heartfelt tribute to the courageous Kashmiri women. These resilient women, despite facing Indian state terrorism, are actively leading the just movement for freedom against all odds. Addressing the gathering, Mushaal underscored the deplorable treatment of women in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), where they are subjected to inhumane conditions. She expressed grave concern about the use of rape as a weapon of war by Indian forces, exacerbating the challenges faced by Kashmiri women in their pursuit of self-determination.



Mushaal, also the wife of imprisoned Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik, called on world powers, UN bodies, and human rights organizations to extend their focus beyond the women’s rights issues in Western countries. She urged them to pay attention to the plight of women in Kashmir and



Palestine, emphasizing the urgent need to address the atrocities committed against them. The hurriyat leader highlighted India’s involvement in heinous war crimes against women in IIOJK, labeling Kashmiri women as the most oppressed section of society. Referencing UNHRCO reports from 2018-19, she noted that over 8000 Kashmiri women live as half-widows, their husbands disappeared after being arrested by Indian forces.

Embassy of Nepal Commemorates 261st Nepali Army Day in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Adnan Hameed): The grand celebration of the 261st Nepali Army Day was inaugurated with patriotic fervor at a local hotel in Islamabad. The event commenced with the stirring national anthems of both Nepal and Pakistan, resonating among esteemed guests, including defense officers, ambassadors, media, and civil society members. Hosted by Mr. & Mrs. Tapas Adhikari, Ambassador, and Mr. & Mrs. Col Bhes Bahadur, Military Attache, the reception witnessed the gracious presence of Chairman National Disaster Management Authority Lt. General Inam Haider, Chief Guest representing the armed forces of Pakistan. Distinguished envoys, Defense Attaches, and representatives from various countries also joined in the commemoration. A symbolic moment unfolded as the Nepali Ambassador, accompanied by Chief Guest Lt. General Inam Haider and Nepali



Military Attache Col Bhes Bahadur, cut a traditional cake. High Commissioner of Sri Lanka and India, among others, added to the international representation at this prestigious event. Ambassador Tapas Adhikari shared insights into the historical significance of Nepali Army Day,



highlighting its establishment in 1762 AD. He emphasized the Nepali Army’s enduring legacy, being one of the world’s oldest and unwavering military institutions, dedicated to a rich history of bravery and service as a vital organ of Nepal’s national security.

Markets, grocery stores bustling ahead of holy Ramazan

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Ahead of holy month of Ramazan, markets, malls and grocery stores all around the country were witnessing significant buying activity where enthusiastic shoppers specially women eagerly looking for the best discount deals on eatables whether it is dates, spices, or other Ramazan staples. Utility Stores Corporation has also reduced the prices of various items ahead of the month of the Ramazan where families in large were seen rushing towards grocery marts, said a report aired by a private news channel. Everyone is happy and enjoying the Ramazan activities while

purchasing essential kitchen items at grocery stores, said a customer. Routine essentials kitchen items such as rice, pulses, eggs, milk and basic spices have been selling like a hot cake and the quantities which people have been purchasing have been higher than usual, the storekeepers added. Food, poultry products and beverage consumption rise considerably during the fasting month due to a change in eating patterns, said another customer while visiting utility store. “Ramazan is marked by high demand on basic products such as vegetables, eggs and meat,” said a shopkeeper.

GM Syngenta stresses smart agriculture to deal with climate change, improve productivity of farmers

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The General Manager of Syngenta Pakistan Zeeshan Haseeb Baig Monday stressed for holistic and multi-dimensional approach to tackle food insecurity, increase agricultural productivity, and promote sustainable agriculture where Syngenta Pakistan was leading role for innovation seeds and crop-enhancement products. Talking to PTV news channel, he explained that smart farming has become a reality as well. Digital devices can analyze weather conditions, monitor plant growth, improve irrigation efficiency and reduce groundwater consumption. Making agriculture

climate smart through integrated approach is also an ideal solution to ensure the food security of the ever-increasing global population at a time when there are twin problems of land degradation and carbon emissions, he mentioned. Syngenta’s main aim is to achieve sustainable higher productivity, ensure livelihood and food security, adapt to climate change and bring down emission of greenhouse gases, he added. “Integrated farming has immense potential to make farmers climate smart through the cultivation of different crops on the same land and using farm resources sustainably”, he mentioned.

CCRI suggests measures to get bumper cotton crop

MULTAN (Agencies): Director Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) Dr. Muhammad Naveed Afzal said that selection of suitable land for cotton cultivation was very much important to achieve maximum yield. In a statement issued here, he observed, the fertile land, which efficiently absorbs water and maintains moisture for extended periods, is ideal for cotton cultivation. Dr. Afzal stressed that not all types of land, such as clayey, sandy, or saline, are suitable for cotton cultivation, but with the expert advice of agricultural specialists, cotton can be grown on ridges within such lands. Dr. Afzal advocated for the use of laser land levelers to ensure

uniformity in land surface as the laser levelers facilitate easy water flow and provide consistent irrigation to all crops in the field. This approach not only conserves water up to 15-20% but also leads to a 10-15% increase in yield, he added. He advised farmers to prepare the land thoroughly by deep ploughing to enable roots to penetrate deeper and sustain moisture for longer durations. Instead of burning residues from previous crops, Dr. Afzal recommended incorporating these into the soil to enhance its fertility. Dr. Afzal suggested using rotary tillers, disk harrows, or moldboard plows to ensure proper incorporation without any difficulty.

YDA boycotts OPDs over non-payment of salaries

MULTAN (Agencies): The Young Doctors Association (YDA) boycotted the Outdoor Patient Departments (OPDs) of the Nishtar hospital as a protest against non-payment of salaries on Monday. President of the Association, Nadeem resolved that the boycott would continue until payment of the salary. Talking to APP, he said YDA, Lahore chapter called on Special Health Secretary on behalf of them who assured that the matter would be resolved until Friday but there was no progress at all. He said Nishtar hospital among many others is striped of salaries for the last 11 days ahead of Ramzan. Despite repeated assurance by the Health department as well as the local administration, it couldn’t sort out the strife, he added. Dr Ali Abuzar Raza said Young doctors included postgraduate trainee and house officers, are backbone of hospitals performing 24/7. Getting them deprived of the wages isn’t less than tyranny in the on-going time of inflation, he said. It may be important to mention that MS Nishtar hospital, Dr Kazim assured the scribe twice that the salary would be released next day as he had deposited check in the bank.

A gambler held, 6 escape in police raid

MUZAFFARGARH (Agencies): Police arrested a gambler with recovering the stake money, while six others of the accomplices escaped the scene. According to police source, a team from Daera Din Panah police station conducted raid at Chah Misri Walla, Muza Hajrani and arrested the accused identified as Ghulam Abbas, son of Khuda Bukhsh. The other six accomplices including Muneer and Sagir, son of Abdul Majid, Latif, Son of Mohammad Bakhsh, Shoaib, son of Nabi Bakhsh with two others unidentified persons fled the crime scene. Police seized the stake money worth thousands of rupees what it’s said, with cards and two motorbikes on the spot. Separate cases were registered against the arrested accused and his accomplices being declared as proclaimed offenders on report of SHO of the police station. Police constituted multiple teams to arrest the escaped criminals, it was said.

Ambassador Cohodarevic Reflects on Bilateral Ties & Srebrenica Genocide at Islamabad Screening of ‘Quo Vadis, Aida’ on Bosnia’s Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): On the 32nd anniversary of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Independence Day, the Bosnian wartime film “Quo Vadis, Aida?” captivated audiences in Islamabad. Hosted by the Pakistan National Council of the Arts, the screening was graced by the presence of Ambassador Emin Cohodarevic, who described the film not only as a cinematic masterpiece but as a poignant reminder of the Srebrenica genocide, marking the darkest chapter in European history since World War II. Ambassador Cohodarevic seized the moment to reflect on the enduring and special bilateral ties between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Pakistan. He acknowledged Pakistan’s unwavering support in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s pursuit of freedom and democ-



racy. The Ambassador emphasized the extraordinary dynamics in the relations, spanning cultural, defense, political, economic, and social spheres. Highlighting the film’s significance, Ambassador Cohodarevic noted that “Aida’s emotions are the heart of the story,” urging the audience to delve into the profound feelings and questions the film raises. He expressed confidence that the enduring friendship between the people of both nations and the bilateral ties between the governments will continue to flourish.

NDMA collaborates with KSrelief to deliver 875 tonnes of aid to rain-affected Gwadar

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Under auspices of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) Pakistan, has mobilized an emergency relief convoy to support the flood victims of Gwadar. This humanitarian initiative saw the dispatch of five containers loaded with 9,000 food packages and 9,000 shelters, totaling 875 tonnes, from Islamabad to the rain-impacted areas of Gwadar. The departure ceremony, held at the Jinnah Stadium, Sports Complex, Islamabad this morning, was graced by the presence of Honourable Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mr. Sarfraz Bugti, H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al Maliki, Saudi Ambassador, along with esteemed officials from NDMA. NDMA has diligently coordinated with Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan, ensuring seam-



less liaison with local authorities, facilitating inter-provincial transit, and securing the necessary clearances to guarantee unimpeded delivery of this crucial aid. Upon arrival, the consignment will be entrusted to the PDMA Balochistan and local administration, who will oversee the equitable distribution of the relief item to the communities ravaged by the rains in Gwadar.

British High Commission Celebrates International Women’s Day in Pakistan, Showcasing Women’s Achievements in Tech & Business

ISLAMABAD (Khyber Mail): The UK has convened women in tech, business and trade to highlight their achievements and discuss shared challenges. The theme for this year’s International Women’s Day is: Invest in women; accelerate progress. At a trade fair in Islamabad, female entrepreneurs demonstrated the work they are doing on artificial intelligence, medical technology and smart apps. Umama Nadir, a student from Lahore who was selected to be “Ambassador for the Day”, shadowed the High Commissioner around her engagements. The British High Com-



missioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE during her speech said, “The UK and Pakistan are working closely together to further gender equality. It is a priority that runs across all of our work. It is as important as ever to place the economy at the heart of progress in Pakistan, and women at the heart of the economy.”

38 arrested, 54 cases registered over profiteering

LAHORE (Agencies): Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider intensified price control measures following the Chief Minister’s directives and arrested 38 individuals besides registering 54 cases against them during last 24 hours in the city. In an effort to ensure the sale of essential commodities at prescribed rates, stringent monitoring underway across the city and Price Control Magistrates were conducting rigorous operations. The officers checked 1872 locations and found 138 violations within the last 24 hours, as confirmed by DC Lahore, Rafia Haider and added that fines totaling

Rs 140000 imposed while 4 locations sealed due to severe violations. DC emphasized zero tolerance on profiteering as per directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and she urged the Price Control Magistrates to remain proactive, strict legal action to follow if found negligent. Effective actions by Price Control teams aimed at providing relief to the public, DC Lahore Rafia Haider also advised public to check prices on the Price Check app before making purchases and in case of any profiteering, contact Punjab Chief Minister Helpline or tag us on social media.

ECP sets March 26 hearing for Gandapur disqualification petition

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) accepted the petition to disqualify Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and set the formal hearing for March 26 after the preliminary hearings. A two-member bench of the Election Commission comprising Nisar Ahmed Durrani and Shah Muhammad Jatoti issued a notice to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). The bench directed the District Election Commission of DI Khan to submit a report concerning false statements on 735 kanal property in the nomination papers

and allegations of asset concealment by Gandapur before March 26. In the preliminary hearing on the application filed by Jamiat Ulema Islam (JUI) Kafeel Nizami, the bench was informed that 735 kanals of land in DI Khan had been temporarily transferred to Ali Amin Gandapur, despite Asif Khan being the original owner of the land. According to the written decision, based on the asset details provided by Ali Amin in 2020, he acquired a Land Cruiser vehicle by selling the same land, which makes him ineligible for the Provincial Assembly seat due to false information.

All housing projects of industrial workers to be completed in stipulated time periods: WWF

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): All housing projects for registered workers in the industrial sector would be completed in stipulated time periods across the country with all required facilities. An official source told APP, that a mega project of 2056 residential flats in Peshawar for industrial workers had been completed and handed over to the workers since last year. The sources said that the price of each flat was Rs 2.6 million, out of which a Rs 300,000 subsidy would be provided by the government and the remaining amount would be paid by the beneficiaries through easy installments. A three percent quota has been allocated for widows and two percent for persons with disabilities. Those working in industries for three years are eligible for flats to

be awarded on an ownership basis through a lucky draw in a transparent manner. It is the mega housing project of the KP Government, completed in line with the vision of the federal government to provide affordable and low-cost housing facilities for people. The Labor Complex, having these residential flats, is equipped with all facilities, including drinking water, roads, mosques, schools, parks, grounds, electricity, and gas. Four large tube wells and overhead tanks have been constructed for uninterrupted water supply to its inhabitants. The project has the facility of a school with 30 classrooms, constructed to provide quality education to the children of industrial workers and other segments of society at their doorsteps.

Students escape unhurt after school van catches fire in Jhelum

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Around 20 students rescued safe after their school van caught fire on Monday in Jhelum district of Punjab. According to rescue officials, a school van was heading towards Pind Dadan Khan

from Khewra, when a sudden fire erupted in the vehicle due to short circuit. The fire tender was called to the spot and put the blaze under control, according to a private news channel.

ANF recovers 991 kg drugs in 12 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 12 operations across the country managed to recover 991 kg drugs and arrested 10 accused, said an ANF official here on Monday. He informed that 1914 intoxicated tablets and capsules were recovered from the possession of two suspects arrested at Karachi Airport. 4.8 kg heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for UK at Lahore Airport and two accused were arrested. 4 kg Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Doha at Peshawar Airport. 600 grams weed was recovered from a parcel sent from UK at a courier office in Multan. 600 grams heroin was recovered from

a passenger going to Doha at Lahore Airport. In another operation at Lahore Airport, 92 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a Jeddah-bound passenger. 270 kg heroin and 238 kg morphine were recovered from Chaman area and 350 kg hashish was recovered from an area near Chaman Road Quetta. 100 kg opium was recovered from Nokundi Chagai and 21 kg hashish was recovered from South Asia Pakistan Terminal Karachi. In 11th operation, 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects netted near Expresses Highway, Islamabad. In 12th operation, 250 grams hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up in Haripur.

CPWB rescue 279 beggar children, registers 35 cases

LAHORE (Agence): The Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) rescued over 279 beggar children in the provincial capital during the last 40 days. The rescue operations were conducted at Punjab University (PU) Campus Bridge, Main Market Gulberg, Johar Town, Akbar Chowk, Bhatta Chowk, Defence, Barkat Market, Karim Block Market, Moon Market, MM Alam Road, Shahdara, Data Darbar and other spots of the city. In a press statement issued here on Monday, CPWP Chairperson, Sarah Ahmed said that child rescue operations were being carried out in the

city on a daily basis due to which a decrease in child beggars was observed at major thoroughfares. The chairperson said a total of 659 beggars were taken into custody from various districts of Punjab during the same period, while 35 FIRs have been registered against guardians and parents who forcibly involving their children in begging. The chairperson said and added that the citizens could report child beggary on the helpline 1121 of the CPWB. Following the complaints of citizens, the rescue operations were being carried out on Saturday and Sunday as well.

Dera's Rescue 1122 service handles 195 emergencies last week

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (Agencies): The district's emergency service- Rescue 1122 provided services in total of 195 emergencies during the last week under the supervision of District Emergency Officer Awais Babar. According to the weekly performance report issued here on Monday, the Rescue 1122 tackled different kinds of emergencies over the week including 134 medical, 37 road accidents,

two fire eruptions, four violence and one other. During those emergencies, a total of 178 patients were rescued. It says that the service received a total of 12667 emergency calls including 10203 fake or irrelevant calls. He said that Rescue 1122 also tackled 24 referral-related emergencies during this period and shifted patients to different hospitals for medical treatment.

Dumper crushed two person including women in Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): A dumper crushed two persons, including a woman on Monday near Power House, North Karachi. According to a private news channel, after the incident happened, the heated mob set

the dumper on fire. As soon as the incident was reported, the rescue teams reached the accident site and shifted the dead bodies to the hospital. The fire brigade vehicle reached the spot to extinguish the fire in the dumper.

COMSTECH, LRBT successfully complete Cataract Eye Camp in Muzaffargarh

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), in partnership with the Layton Rahmatulla Benevolent Trust (LRBT) and the local community, has successfully completed a 12-day free Eye Camp in the remote area of District Muzaffargarh at Basti Merani, Mori Saharo, Tehsil Ali Pur. The objective was to provide essential eye care services to the marginalized segments of society, raise awareness about eye health and restore vision

by conducting cataract surgeries enabling individuals to regain their sight. The committed medical team from LRBT attended to over 1,000 patients, providing them with free medicines and eyeglasses. Additionally, 188 individuals were identified for further investigation and cataract surgery. According to the COMSTECH, the selected patients were transported from the remote locations to the LRBT Secondary Hospital in Larr, Multan.

We should use word of ‘independence’ with pride instead partition: CJP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa on Tuesday during hearing of a case stopped the lawyer to use the word of ‘partition’ instead of independence of Pakistan. The CJP remarked that words of partition can be used by the people of India be-

cause they have never been rulers. We should use the words of freedom with pride, he said. A three-member bench of the top court presided by Chief Justice Isa heard the case pertaining to a property dispute. The CJP said that we can't run the case on basis of assumptions. If

there is any proof of property ownership then show it, he asked the petitioner. The court subsequently turned down the appeal of petitioner. It may be mentioned here that the petitioner even couldn't present an ownership proof before lower and high courts.

Shah Alla Ditta caves preservation work underway

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Shah Alla Ditta Caves development, conservation, preservation and restoration work is underway, situated on the southern side of the Margalla hills, 14 kilometers northwest of the capital city. The Department of Archaeology & Museums (DOAM), National Heritage and Culture Division has declared the site a “Protected Antiquity” under the Antiquities Act 1975 on 13-08-2016. DOAM, National Heritage & Culture Division, has started conservation, preservation, restoration & development of the caves during the current financial year, an official of DOAM told APP.

Road mishap claims one life in Lahore

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): At least one person was killed and another was injured after two trucks ran over a motorcycle in wee hours on Monday. According to rescue and police, the accident occurred at the Lytton Road where two racing truck ran over a motorcycle, killing one person on the spot and injuring another. Police and rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead and injured to a nearby hospital. According to rescue sources, the deceased was identified as 51-year-old Abdul Ghafoor, said a private news channel.

Youth support program concluded

LAHORE (Agencies): The “Youth Support Program: A Transnational Partnership for 21st Century Skills” concluded successfully after a nine-day engagement in Lahore, focusing on global citizenship, digital skills, and transferable skills. Funded by the Warwick Institute of Engagement, University of Warwick, UK along with community partner Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) and Academic Leaders Innovation Forum (ALIF), Pakistan, this transnational project aimed to equip participants with essential skills for the modern era. In the concluding ceremony, certificates of participation were awarded to all 25 participants, while shields were presented to the program trainers, teams, and volunteers. On this occasion, participants also showcased their posters and short videos.

Missing boy recovered safely

FAISALABAD (Agencies): Saddar Jaranwala police recovered a missing boy safely after three days of his abduction. Police said here on Monday that 14-year-old Sharafat alias Babo r/o Chak 108-GB was kidnapped under mysterious circumstances. The police lodged a complaint and started investigation on scientific lines. The police traced out whereabouts of the accused and after a successful raid recovered the teenager boy safely while the accused managed to escape. The police handed over the boy to his parents, while further investigation was underway, he added.

ANP President Asfandiyar Wali's wife passes away

ISLAMABAD (Khyber Mail): Awami National Party (ANP) President Asfandiyar Wali Khan's wife passed away in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday. According to private news channel, She was the mother of ANP's provincial president Aimal Wali Khan. She will be buried in Wali Bagh, Charsadda. Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday expressed condolence over the death of Awami National Party leader Asfandiyar Wali's wife.

Punjab CM has zero-tolerance policy towards violence against Women: Uzma Bukhari

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Punjab Information Minister Uzma Bukhari Monday said that the Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards gender based violence and that the government under her leadership has launched “Never Again” app aimed at enhancing women's safety. Talking to a private news channel, she said that violence on women is a horrendous crime and strict action will be taken against the people involved in violence against women. She said CM recognizes the important role women play in the development of society and growth of the nation. She said on the chief minister's dedication to women's safety, stating the “Never Again” app would be a crucial tool in monitoring and addressing

women's rights and security concerns. Maryam Nawaz, the first female Chief Minister in the country's history, is deeply committed to safeguarding the rights of women, she said. Replying to a query, she said that Punjab government will constitute special women desk in all police stations to facilitate them, adding, a proper mechanize was being implementing in the province for the protection of women. She said that CM Punjab will herself monitor the women related app, adding, all those who use smartphones should download it to stay connected with the police in case of emergency. She further maintained that the mobile application will be launched in all districts of Punjab soon while a special squad will also be formed in this regard.

Federal Ombudsman disposes of 193,030 complaints

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Federal Ombudsman office (Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat) has disposed of 193,030 complaints, which is 22 percent higher than the previous year. Briefing the delegation of Associated Press of Pakistan's (APP) Youth Media Training Program (YMTP), Senior Advisor, Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Moiz Bokhari said that during the outgoing year 2023, this office received and processed a record number of complaints which stood at 194,106 that is 18% higher than the preceding years. He said that a system of strict monitoring, follow up and verification of the implementation of each and every decision was in place and an impressive implementation rate of 85.4% was recorded in 2023, adding that 88% complaints were

disposed of within the prescribed limit of 60 days. The senior advisor informed the delegation that the officers of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Office were dispensing justice to the people at their doorsteps. Our Investigation Officers visited the remote and far off areas of the country and decided 3149 cases, which spared the complainants from taking the trouble of visiting the Wafaqi Mohtasib office at the headquarters or the major cities of the country, he added. Dilating on the international linkages of this office, the senior advisor observed that the office of the Wafaqi Mohtasib was an active member of the International Ombudsman's Institute (IOI) the OIC Ombudsman Association (AOA) (OICOA) and the Asian Ombudsman Association.

Wah Medical College's 12th convocation; 95 graduates awarded degrees

WAH CANTT (Agencies): At the 12th Convocation of Wah Medical College held at the College's auditorium on Monday in Wah Cantt, 95 graduates were conferred degrees. According to detail, Lt. Gen. (R) Waseem Alamgir, HI (M), Vice Chancellor of the National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS), graced the event as the chief guest. Principal of the College, Maj. Gen. (R) Prof. Abdul Khaliq Naveed, HI (M), presented the annual report, highlighting

the institution's achievements. The NUMS Vice Chancellor conferred the degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery to the graduates. Outstanding students, including Dr. Memoona Sattar, Dr. Amna Zaka, and Dr. Aaena Pasha, were honored, and cash awards were presented to the top three performers. Lt. Gen. (R) Wasim Alamgir, HI (M), the guest of honor, emphasized the importance of maintaining excellence and ethical practice in their medical careers.

HEC notifies DAIS regarding implementation of revised institutional affiliation policy 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has revised 'HEC Institutional Affiliation Policy-2024' and notified to all public sector Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIS) regarding key parameters/guidelines for implementing revised policy. According to official sources, HEC has developed an online portal (<https://edustats.hec.gov.pk/>) for the collection of data from the affiliating DAIS for soft desk review and subsequent authoriza-

tion to proceed. The affiliating DAIS shall ensure the implementation of this policy along with their policies and procedures at their respective affiliated colleges in terms of admissions, examination, and curriculum etc, the sources said. However, the POR data of already affiliated colleges/institutions duly verified by the Registrar and Countersigned by the Head of the DAI is required to be furnished within two (02) weeks at smemon@hec.gov.pk.

Turkish President congratulates President Asif Ali Zardari

KARACHI (Agencies): President of Turkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan Tuesday called President Asif Ali Zardari and congratulated him on assuming the office of the President of Pakistan. Both the leaders exchanged views on matters of bilateral importance and underscored the need for further improving cooper-

ation in all areas of mutual interest, a press release issued by the President House said. President Asif Ali Zardari thanked the Turkish President for his telephone call and warm wishes. President Asif Ali Zardari wished Happy Ramadan to Turkish nation and desired to see role of Turkish women in Islamic world.

Classified

It is to notify that I have corrected the spellings of my name from " Tamoor Sagheer s/o Muhammad Sagheer " to "Taimoor Sagheer s/o Muhammad Sagheer ".Please read and write my name " Taimoor Sagheer s/o Muhammad Sagheer." CNIC: 81202-9263683-5 ADDRESS:Gala Bazar,Teh Khuiratta, Dist Kotli, Azad Kashmir.

Saudi bank loans surge to \$700bn, fueled by real estate, corporate expansion

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi banks extended loans totaling SR2.62 trillion (\$700 billion) in January, marking an 11 percent rise from the same month in 2023, according to official data. Figures released by the Kingdom's central bank showed an increase in personal loans accounted for 33 percent of this growth, while the remaining 67 percent was attributed to the expansion of corporate lending, particularly for real estate activities, as well as electricity, gas, and water supplies. The surge in real estate loans within corporate activities can be credited to Saudi Arabia's expansive giga-proj-

ects, which have mitigated the impact of rising borrowing rates associated with high interest rates. Personal loans, which include all types of credit provided to individuals, amounted to SR1.25 trillion in January, showing an annual rise of 7 percent. The personal loan market in Saudi Arabia has been on a significant growth trajectory, as reported by market research company SPER. This expansion is propelled by various key factors, including the demand for residential properties from expatriates entering the Kingdom, as well as government initiatives focused on modernizing the finan-

cial system. The rapid advancement of digitization, resulting in swift lending and approval processes, is also a significant contributor to the market's growth. Furthermore, the growing number of new entrants in the personal finance sector in Saudi Arabia is poised to create lucrative opportunities for further expansion in the near future. Advisory and consulting firm Ken Research highlighted that the rising number of working women in Saudi Arabia is on a steady incline, a trend that is forecasted to propel growth in the market and yield positive outcomes for the Saudi personal finance market.

Egypt's sees trade deficit rise 17.8% amid export decline, import fluctuations

CAIRO (Agencies): Egypt's annual trade deficit rose by 17.8 percent in December due to a decline in the value of key commodities such as fertilizers and petroleum products. According to the report from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the North African nation registered a trade deficit of \$3.03 billion in the final month of 2023, up from \$2.57 billion in December 2022. The report indicated a 23 percent year-on-year decline



in export value, totaling \$3.48 billion. Imports also decreased by 8.2 percent over the same period, reaching a total of \$6.51 billion. The decline in exports is primarily attributed to the reduced

value of certain commodities, including a 48.8 percent reduction in fertilizers, a 46.8 percent decrease in petroleum products, and an 88.1 percent drop in natural and liquefied gas. Additionally, plastics in their primary forms also experienced a 35.5 percent fall in export value during the period. However, despite these declines, the export revenue of specific commodities increased during the same month compared to the previous year.

EU to start sending Russian money to Ukraine this summer

NEW YORK (Agencies): The European Commission is pressing ahead with its plan to give Kiev up to €3 billion (\$3.2 billion) from profits generated by frozen Russian assets amid waning financial support from the US, the Financial Times reported on Tuesday. Brussels is fast-tracking the decision to seize the interest earned from the assets held at clearing-house Euroclear, starting from February onwards, the article stated. A first tranche of money could be sent to Kiev as early as July if Brussels



can secure the approval of all bloc members, the outlet said, citing EU officials. The proposal is reportedly expected before a summit of EU leaders next week. The West has frozen roughly \$300 billion in holdings belonging to the Russian central bank

since the start of the Ukraine conflict two years ago. Brussels-based clearing house Euroclear holds around €191 billion (\$205 billion) of them and has accrued nearly €4.4 billion in interest over the past year. According to the report, Brussels would disburse between €2 and €3 billion in revenue generated by frozen assets this year, depending on interest rates. EU officials estimate that overall profits derived from Russian funds held by Euroclear could reach €20 billion by 2027, the FT said.

Lexus beats Tesla, Mercedes in driver-assisted safety ratings

VIRGINIA (Agencies): One of the auto industry's most closely watched evaluators of safety has put carmakers' driver-assistance systems to the test, and the results aren't pretty. A system Toyota Motor Corp offers on the Lexus LS sedan is the only one of 14 that the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety tested and deemed "acceptable," the independent nonprofit said Tuesday. Tesla Inc, Mercedes-Benz Group AG and Volvo Car AB systems were among the 11 that IIHS rates "poor." The IIHS



evaluated how systems perform tasks including monitoring drivers and reminding them that they need to pay attention. The group also graded systems on the procedures they follow in

emergencies, including when alerts intended to reengage drivers are ignored. Most systems lack adequate measures to prevent misuse and keep drivers focused, IIHS President David Harkey said. "Some drivers may feel that partial automation makes long drives easier, but there is little evidence it makes driving safer," Harkey said in a statement. "As many high-profile crashes have illustrated, it can introduce new risks when systems lack the appropriate safeguards."

Vietnam's trade surplus may reignite US tensions if Trump returns

HANOI (Agencies): Vietnam's large trade surplus with the US may reignite tensions with Washington in the event of a second Trump presidency, analysts warned, as exports of solar panels and other sensitive electric products boom. Super Tuesday results last week confirmed the November US-election is set to pitch incumbent Joe Biden against Donald Trump who in his first presidential term was less lenient than Biden towards trade imbalances. Last year,



the Southeast Asian manufacturing hub posted a US\$104 billion trade surplus with Washington, lower only than China, the European Union and Mexico, US data show. "Vietnam (is) most exposed to US protectionism,"

said BMI, a research firm and part of the Fitch Ratings group. It noted that among countries with no free trade deals with Washington, Vietnam was the most reliant on exports of electrical equipment and other "goods that are more likely to be targeted by tariffs in the event of a second Trump administration". Electronics, such as computers or smartphones, accounted for about 36% of Vietnam's US\$114 billion-worth of exports to the US last year.

Airbnb bans security cameras inside guest homes

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): Airbnb on Monday said it is banning security cameras inside guest homes so as to prioritise privacy. The home rental platform previously allowed indoor security cameras in common areas such as hallways and living rooms if they were clearly visible and disclosed in listings before people booked such properties. However, people have complained on social media about finding seemingly hidden cameras in Airbnb lodgings,



some of them in areas where privacy is expected. "Airbnb is banning the use of indoor security cameras in listings globally as part of efforts to simplify our policy on security cameras and other devices and to

continue to prioritise the privacy of our community," the San Francisco-based company said in a blog post. The new policy, along with a tightening of rules on outdoor security cameras at Airbnb properties, will go into effect on April 30. "Our goal was to create new, clear rules that provide our community with greater clarity about what to expect on Airbnb," head of community policy and partnerships Juniper Downs said in an online post.

Nord Stream sues insurers over 2022 pipeline blasts

LONDON (Agencies): Nord Stream is seeking more than €400 million (US\$436 million) from its insurers over explosions in 2022 which ruptured pipelines designed to transport Russian gas to Germany, court filings show. Nord Stream names Lloyd's Insurance Company and Arch Insurance (EU) as defendants in its lawsuit, which was filed at London's High Court last month. Court filings state that Nord Stream's current preliminary estimate of "the costs to dewater and stabilise the pipeline, to undertake a full repair and to replace the lost gas inventory" is between €1.2 billion and €1.35 billion.



Nord Stream's lawsuit also says one of the pipelines looked "mangled and deformed" in one area where it had been damaged, but "appeared smooth and to have been cut" in another. Lloyd's declined to comment. Nord Stream and Arch did not immediately respond to a request for

comment. The lawsuit focuses on the explosions in September 2022 which ruptured the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines. Sweden – which last month dropped its investigation – and Germany have both found traces of explosives relating to the incident, suggesting it was a deliberate act. Russia and the West, at loggerheads over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, have pointed fingers at one another. Each has denied any involvement and no one has taken responsibility. Nord Stream in its lawsuit is suing all insurers subscribing to its offshore operating all-risks policy as well as its excess all-risks policy.

Technology strengthening financial system in UAE, says central bank

DUBAI (Agencies): The financial system in the UAE is more secure and efficient than ever before thanks to the widespread implementation of technology, according to the country's central bank. In its report for the fourth quarter of 2023, the institution said that technological and structural advancements in the country's banking system have elevated operational efficiency and accessibility of mobile applications and online banking. The Central Bank of the UAE revealed that the number of automated teller machines in the country increased to 4,654 by the end of 2023, compared to 4,426 in the same period of the previous year. At the end of the fourth quarter of 2023, the number of locally incorporated banks, excluding those focused on investment, remained constant at 22,



while branches of these financial institutions in the country decreased to 489, compared to 498 at the end of 2022. Similarly, the number of electronic service units of these banks fell to 46 units by the end of 2023, while the number of cash offices remained constant at 21 compared to the preceding year. The number of Gulf Cooperation Council banks stood at six by the end of the fourth quarter of 2023. The branches of these banks also remained constant at six branches at the end of December 2023.

Russia bars UK fleet from vital fishing grounds

MOSCOW (Agencies): The UK's fishing fleet has been denied access to Russia's resource rich Arctic fishing grounds, after Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law that ends a longstanding agreement allowing British vessels operate in the Barents Sea. The document was published on Russia's official website for legal information on Monday. The so-called 'Fisheries Agreement,' signed by the USSR, the UK, and Northern Ireland in 1956, which allowed British ships to operate in the rich fishing grounds along the coast of Russia's Kola Peninsula and east of Cape Kanin Nos, has been terminated. The Barents Sea is widely known to be one of



the world's most important fishing grounds for cod and haddock. According to the Daily Mail, citing UK Fisheries data, Britain sourced more than 560,000 tons of fish from the Barents Sea last year alone. Commenting on the legislation, Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin said that rescinding the agreement would allow Russia to retain vital fish stocks in its waters.

UK unemployment edges higher as wage growth eases

LONDON (Agencies): Unemployment in recession-hit Britain has nudged higher as growth in wages falls further, according to official data Tuesday that supports analyst expectations of an upcoming cut to UK interest rates. The unemployment rate rose to 3.9% in the three months to the end of January, up from 3.8% in the final quarter of last year, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. Average regular pay growth, excluding bonuses, fell to 6.1% from 6.2%, the ONS added. Taking into account Britain's annual inflation rate during the reporting period, real wages rose by only 2%. Like the Federal Reserve and



European Central Bank, the Bank of England is seen possibly cutting interest rates as soon as June as inflation cools and following multiple hikes to combat soaring prices. "The easing in wage growth... is probably still a bit too slow for the Bank of England's liking," said Paul Dales, chief UK economist at Capital Economics research group.

Moody's downgrades major Chinese property developer Vanke

BEIJING (Agencies): Moody's has downgraded one of China's largest housing developers' credit rating, as woes in the country's property sector show no sign of abating. China's real estate market is grappling with unprecedented challenges, with some developers on the verge of bankruptcy and lower property prices deterring consumers from making investments. Vanke — long considered to be financially stable — is one of several major Chinese developers to run into trouble, with Moody's on Monday downgrading its rating to "Ba1", indicating it has "substantial credit risk". It said the firm's contracted sales had fallen around 40% — to 34.5 billion yuan (US\$4.8 billion) in just the first two months



of the year. "Moody's expects volatile operating and funding conditions for China's property sector to continue to drag on China Vanke's contracted sales, access to funding and liquidity," the rating agency said Monday. The hurdles facing the firm would continue for "the next 12-18 months", it added. It did not rule out further downward revisions to Vanke in the future.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain discuss joint cooperation in social housing and urban planning

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are exploring partnership opportunities in the social housing and urban planning sectors following a high-level meeting. The discussions took place on the sidelines of the Bahrain Smart Cities Summit 2024 held in the country's capital, Manama, with the Saudi Deputy Minister for Urban Planning and Lands Engineer Fahad Al-Mutlaq in attendance, along with the Minister of Housing and Urban Planning Amna Al-Rumaih. A number of topics were discussed, including the formation of a joint technical committee to develop planning solutions for residential neighborhoods and the exchange of professional and specialized expertise and experiences that would

increase opportunities for cooperation, according to the Saudi Press Agency. The event delved into recent trends in smart cities, with a particular focus on models of sustainable smart government projects, the national afforestation plan, and the integration of artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things in urban infrastructure. Furthermore, it highlighted aspects such as the smart electricity network, the utilization of AI for security and safety in smart cities, and strategies to combat electronic fraud. The private sectors of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are poised for growth following the signing of a cooperation and investment agreement between the sovereign wealth funds of the two countries.

Tour de France champion Jonas Vingegaard wins the weeklong Tirreno-Adriatico race

SAN BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO, Italy (Agencies): Two-time defending Tour de France champion Jonas Vingegaard secured overall victory in the weeklong Tirreno-Adriatico race on Sunday after winning the two big climbing stages. Showing strong early season form, the Danish rider with the Visma team has now won both races he's entered in 2024, after also taking the overall title and winning three of the four stages in the Gran Camino in Spain last month. After winning the sea-to-sea race, Vingegaard raised the giant trophy shaped like Neptune's three-pronged trident. "Neptune's trident is one of the best and most iconic trophies in cycling," Vingegaard said. "It's perfect for an



ex-fisherman like me." It was a strong response to Tadej Pogacar's dominating win in the Strade Bianche last weekend. Pogacar finished second behind Vingegaard at the Tour the last two years after winning cycling's biggest race in 2020 and 2021. The pair likely won't race against each other again until this year's Tour starts in Florence, Italy, on June 29. While Pogacar has added the Giro d'Italia to his program for this season, Vingegaard is still centering his season around the Tour.

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Sinner, Alcaraz trounce Indian Wells Masters opponents

INDIAN WELLS (Agencies): Reigning Grand Slam champions Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz turned in dominating performances on Sunday to roll into the fourth round of the ATP-WTA Indian Wells Masters. The two hottest young racquets in the sport showed no mercy in quickfire victories with Australian Open champion Sinner overwhelming Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-4. "Almost perfect" Alcaraz, the reigning Wimbledon champion, stepped up his 2023 title defense with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime. The world No. 2 Spaniard allowed his Canadian opponent no room to move, reaching the fourth round with his eighth match



win in a row at the event. "It was almost the perfect match for me," said Alcaraz, who broke Auger-Aliassime's serve four times. "I moved well, played aggressive and had less mistakes." Sinner was equally ruthless as he attacked Struff, with the Italian winning his 17th match in succession dating to his country's Davis Cup victory in November.

2026 Commonwealth Games will incur 'minimal' spending, says Norza

PETALING JAYA (Agencies): The Commonwealth Games Association (CGA) of Malaysia has claimed that the proposed hosting by the country of the 2026 Commonwealth Games will incur "minimal" government spending. CGA Malaysia president Norza Zakaria, who is also Olympic Council of Malaysia president, said organising the games would yield socio-economic benefits and put the nation back on the global sporting map. "The last time Malaysia hosted the Commonwealth Games was in 1998, thus CGA Malaysia is of the opinion



that the government should consider this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity – and the associated support and financial investment – which will build on the success of Kuala Lumpur 1998. "With the existing world-class facilities, Malaysia is well-equipped to

host an international event of Commonwealth magnitude involving 74 nations and territories. It will also elevate the standard of Malaysian sports much like the way it did following the 1998 Games. "To this end, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) and CGA Malaysia have offered an attractive proposal to the government," he said in a statement. Norza said CGF had offered Malaysia the chance to replace Victoria, Australia, as hosts of the quadrennial games involving athletes from the Commonwealth of Nations.

Real Madrid regain 7-point lead over Girona in Spanish league after routing Celta Vigo



MADRID (Agencies): Real Madrid made peace with their fans with a comfortable win over Celta Vigo and reclaimed a seven-point lead at the top of the Spanish league on Sunday. Vinicius Junior scored his third goal in four games as Madrid eased to a 4-0 victory that followed consecutive draws that included a lackluster

performance against Leipzig in the Champions League, which prompted jeers from the home crowd at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. "We improved in attitude and intensity. It wasn't too hard to do better than we did on Wednesday," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "We're happy, focused and motivated because it's an important stage of the season. At Real Madrid, a draw is the first step toward a crisis." Madrid had drawn four of their last seven matches in all competitions. They advanced to the quarterfinals of the Champions League on Wednesday despite a poor performance in a 1-1 draw against Leipzig.

Lee Kang-in named in S. Korea's squad despite bust-up with Son

SEOUL (Agencies): Lee Kang-in was named in South Korea's squad today for World Cup qualifiers this month despite a bust-up with skipper Son Heung-min at the Asian Cup. Tottenham star Son was left with a dislocated finger after clashing with Paris St Germain attacker Lee before South Korea's semifinal loss to Jordan in Qatar last month. Lee subsequently apologised after Yonhap news agency said the 23-year-old had tried to punch Son. Lee's representatives have denied there was a punch. Son later posted a picture on social media of the pair



smiling and arm in arm, alongside a message urging fans to forgive Lee. The conflict was reportedly triggered by younger players — including Lee — rushing through their dinner so they could leave early and play table

tennis. This angered some of the older players, including Son, who wanted to honour long-standing tradition that the pre-game dinner be a team-bonding experience, triggering the brawl. Lee and Son both played in the 2-0 loss to Jordan, the latter with two of his fingers strapped together. Both players were named in new interim coach Hwang Sun-hong's squad to face Thailand home and away in World Cup qualifiers on March 21 and 26. Hwang was appointed last month to replace Jurgen Klinsmann, who was sacked after South Korea's Asian Cup exit.

'Unreal' Bagnaia cruises to season-opening Qatar MotoGP win

LUSAIL (Agencies): Defending double world champion Francesco Bagnaia cruised to victory in the season-opening Qatar MotoGP on Sunday. The Ducati rider made a storming start from fifth off the grid to hit the front and take total control of the first race in MotoGP's 75th anniversary season. Brad Binder finished second for KTM with pole-sitter Jorge Martin (Ducati-Pramac) in third. Bagnaia, fourth behind Martin



in Saturday's sprint, reflected: "We knew our potential, we tried to do our maximum yesterday, but changed the

set up — today was totally different." South African Binder said he was "super stoked" after also filling second in the sprint. "We knew it was going to be tough to get to the end. I tried to get so close to 'Pecco' (Bagnaia) but he did an unreal job, he didn't make one mistake." Martin, who had claimed pole after a record lap in qualifying, was more than happy with his weekend's work at the Lusail International Circuit.

Honours, respect shared as Klopp, Guardiola rivalry ends on a high

LIVERPOOL (Agencies): And so the curtain came down on one of the greatest Premier League managerial rivalries as Jurgen Klopp and Pep Guardiola hugged heartily after their sides had slugged each other to a standstill at Anfield on Sunday. A compelling 1-1 draw between Liverpool and Manchester City left the honours shared, a three-way title race wide open and further proof of the football philosophy that unites two men who have stamped their trademark all over their respective clubs. Klopp will walk away at the end of the season after a glittering near decade-long



reign on Merseyside that has seen the club scoop every major prize and go head-to-head with Guardiola's City in several epic title races. This was the 16th Premier League clash between the pair and it felt somehow appropriate that when the fulltime whistle

sounded on a glorious advert for the English top flight, there was nothing to separate them. Former Spain midfielder Guardiola has enjoyed mastery over just about every coach in world football since making his name in charge of Barcelona, but will end his Premier League series with Klopp with five wins, four defeats and seven draws. While similar rivalries involving the likes of Alex Ferguson, Arsene Wenger and Jose Mourinho were often laced with bad blood — the warmth with which Klopp and Guardiola embraced on Sunday spoke volumes for the respect they share.

Alcaraz mows down Auger-Aliassime in Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS (Agencies): "Almost perfect" Carlos Alcaraz stepped up his ATP-WTA Indian Wells Masters title defence with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime on Sunday. The world No. 2 allowed his Canadian opponent no room to move, reaching the fourth round in just 77 minutes with his eighth match win in a row at the event. "It was almost the perfect match for me," said Alcaraz, who broke Auger-Aliassime's serve four times. "I moved well, played aggressive and had



fewer mistakes. "This was my first day match and conditions are completely different from the night. The ball moves through the air faster, it's totally

another tournament." Alcaraz won the last five games of the opening set and broke to start the second on his way to repeating his win over Auger-Aliassime from the 2023 quarterfinals. The second seed finished off victory on his first match point as Auger-Aliassime hit the net with his 23rd unforced error. It was a welcome show of strength from Alcaraz, who hasn't won a title since winning his second Grand Slam with a stunning triumph over Novak Djokovic at Wimbledon last year.

Ronaldo's Al-Nassr go down fighting in AFC Champions League

RIYADH (Agencies): In then end, after a night full of drama, penalties and eventual heartbreak, it was just not enough for Al-Nassr. Cristiano Ronaldo and co will have to wait a year for their next shot at continental glory, but at least they gave their fans a performance to be proud of on Monday as well as a sense of what might have been. On an epic Riyadh night, the Saudi Arabian club found themselves 3-0 down on aggregate to Al-Ain early in this second leg



of this AFC Champions League quarter-final. What seemed like ages later, and when needed most, Ronaldo kept his cool from the penalty spot late into extra time to give Al-Nassr a 4-3 win on

the night (and 4-4 draw on aggregate) and take the game to penalties, when they finally succumbed to the United Arab Emirates powerhouse. Defensively there were issues once again. In attack Al-Nassr, especially Ronaldo, were wasteful but there can be no complaints about their desire and determination. In the past week or two however, they have dropped out of the title-race in the Saudi Pro League and now have only the King's Cup to challenge for this season.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: MARCH 13, 2024



– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.
– **ARIES**: You and your teammates or family need to stand tough throughout this phase. You've got some serious business to attend to, but that should take care of itself in the not too distant future.
– **TAURUS**: If your kids or friends are running you down, you don't mind. You're too full of good energy to worry! In fact, you may be a little too indulgent now, but you can compensate for that tomorrow.
– **GEMINI**: You need to face up to that one big issue. It's coming down today or very soon, ready or not! The good news is that you have the focus you need to get it together to take care of this.
– **CANCER**: Open up and surprise people today. There's a lot more going on than anyone else knows about, but you've got the inside scoop. You may be shocked by how positive the collective response is.
– **LEO**: Today is great for endings, those you are looking forward to, anyway! Close out that project at

work or cross something big off of your personal to-do list. It should feel fantastic!
– **VIRGO**: You feel much more closely connected with who you really are today, so much so that you might feel the need to stretch yourself out in a new direction, one that feels a little truer to you.
– **LIBRA**: Someone is not coming clean with you and you need to figure out what's really going on! It may not take much more than a simple question, but get ready to do your homework until it's done.
– **SCORPIO**: You may be just a wee bit too attached to someone or something, but today offers you the perfect chance to shake free, at least a little. What you do after that is entirely up to you!
– **SAGITTARIUS**: The devil is in the details today, or at least that's how it feels to you! It's too hard to totally avoid the small stuff, but you may want to try delegating it or seeing who can help you out.
– **CAPRICORN**: There's no need to get complicated today. Just chill out and take care of the basics. Your good energy is just right for practical pursuits, and you can simplify your life in just the right way.
– **ACQUARIUS**: Though you are usually more forward-thinking, right now you're focused squarely on the past, maybe that of your family? It's a good time for genealogical pursuits or calling up your parents.
– **PISCES**: You can't help experimenting with new ideas and creations today. It's in your nature! You may stumble across something that's so cool you have to share it with the world, or your corner of it.

Boeing whistleblower found dead amid legal case

WASHINGTON (Agencies): A former Boeing employee was found dead in the US when he was scheduled to give evidence in a whistleblower lawsuit against his former employer, the BBC reported on Tuesday. The US aerospace giant's production standards in the US and worldwide have come under increased scrutiny recently following a mid-air door blowout on one of their planes in January. The 62-year-old former Boeing quality manager was found dead in his car in a hotel parking lot – seven years after his retirement from a 32-year career with Boeing. In the days prior to his death, he had been giving a formal deposition in a lawsuit against the company.



The local coroner confirmed Barnett's death to the BBC, saying he died of a self-inflicted wound on March 9. A police investigation is ongoing. In 2019, Barnett told the BBC that he saw Boeing employees pressured into deliberately fitting sub-standard parts in aircraft to cope with increased demands. He said he uncovered problems with

the oxygen systems in 2016 during his stint as quality manager, where up to a quarter of the breathing masks did not deploy properly during emergency scenario testing. The failure to follow procedures at the factory led to some components going missing, sometimes with non-compliant parts being taken from scrap bins and fitted to planes on the production line to prevent delays, he told the news corporation. According to Barnett, his complaints to management did not lead to any action being taken. Boeing denied the whistleblower's assertions, conceding that some oxygen bottles were defective, but claiming that none of them were installed in their aircraft.

Poland: the Biggest Army in the EU And the Biggest Risks in the Making



WARSAW (Agencies): The Polish ministers love surprises. This week, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski stunned the public when he said “several NATO countries already have their troops in Ukraine.” Sikorski represents the pro-EU “liberal” party Civic Platform, which recently replaced the “anti-European” nationalists from the Law and Justice (PiS) party. By voicing the shocking remark, Sikorski was effectively attempting to outdo the media star of the previous cabinet formed by the PiS. That media star was Mariusz Blaszczak, the former minister of defense who promised Poland would have “the strongest army in Europe” in two years. In fact, Sikorski's statement about NATO troops in Ukraine was not much of a secret for Russia. Even Sikorski's attempt to create intrigue by saying he would not reveal the troops' countries of origin was a failure. Maria Zakharova, the official representative of Russia's Foreign Ministry, acknowledged that Russia knew about the presence of Western servicemen and which countries they came from. She said: “It does not make sense for NATO to deny it's sending soldiers to Ukraine any more.” However, German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius again denied the presence of NATO troops in Ukraine recently, in this way one more time exposing himself or Sikorski as a liar. Sikorski made his revelation about NATO troops at a celebration devoted to the 25th anniversary of Poland joining the NATO alliance alongside Hungary and the Czech Republic in 1999.

CAA: India to enforce migrant law that excludes Muslims



NEW DELHI (Agencies): India's government has announced plans to enact a controversial citizenship law that has been criticised for being anti-Muslim. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) will allow non-Muslim religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan to seek citizenship. The authorities say it will help those facing persecution. The law was passed in 2019 - sparking mass protests in which scores of people died and many more were arrested. Rules for it were not drawn up in the wake of the unrest but have now been, according to the country's home affairs minister Amit Shah. He made the announcement on Monday, writing on social media that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had “delivered on another commitment and realised the promise of the makers of our constitution to the Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians living in those countries”. India's home ministry in a statement said that those eligible can now apply online for Indian citizenship. An online portal for receiving applications has already been set up.

Pilots fell asleep mid-flight with 157 people onboard – report

JAKARTA (Agencies): Both pilots of a domestic Indonesian flight from Kendari to the capital Jakarta on January 25 were asleep for almost half an hour during the two-hour and 35-minute-long flight, a preliminary investigation has found. The plane veered off its designated course during the 28 minutes that both the pilot and co-pilot were asleep, according to the report. The country's National Transportation Safety Committee (KNKT) probe into the Batik Air flight, which carried 157 people, acknowledged that the plane eventually landed safely at its destination. The KNKT report did not identify the pilots, only describing the captain as a 32-year-old and second-in-command as a 28-year-old. Both are Indonesian citizens and both had reportedly passed health checks



and tested negative for alcohol. However, according to media reports, the co-pilot had notified the captain earlier in the day that he had not had “proper rest.” The KNKT report highlighted that the man had one-month-old twins and had moved residences the day before the flight and was thus struggling with a lack of sleep. According to the report, about 30 minutes after takeoff the captain asked his co-pilot for permission to rest and woke up just under an hour later.

US, UK Carry Out 15 Strikes on Yemen Over Past 24 Hours - Reports



DOHA (Agencies): The United States and the United Kingdom carried out at least 15 airstrikes on Yemen as a response to Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea, Yemeni media reported. US and UK aircraft carried out five raids on the Sa'dah province in northern Yemen, Al-Masirah broadcaster reported. In

addition, they carried out about 13 strikes in western Yemen, including Hodeidah province, the report added. The Houthi movement, which controls large parts of northern and western Yemen, vowed in November 2023 to attack any ships associated with Israel until it halts military actions in the Gaza Strip. This led US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin to announce the creation of a multinational operation to secure navigation in the Red Sea. US and UK forces later launched major strikes against Houthi positions in a bid to degrade the rebels' ability to target commercial vessels.

FAB-1500: The Russian Air-Dropped Bomb 'Tilting the Balance' Against Ukraine



WASHINGTON (Agencies): The past three months have seen a series of surprise breakthroughs by Russian forces against heavily reinforced Ukrainian positions in Donbass, with troops cracking fortifications and entrenchments which Ukraine's NATO-backed army spent a decade creating. Russia's secret? A modernized take on a Soviet-made super-heavy aerial bomb. Western legacy media have discovered a “new” Russian super weapon that threatens to crack virtually any fortification. In a piece on Sunday, CNN warned that Russia has “begun using a powerful aerial bomb that has decimated Ukrainian defenses and tilted the balance on the front lines,” using “a basic Soviet-era weapon” converted “into a gliding bomb that can cause a crater fifteen meters wide.” The munition, which Ukrainian media had previously characterized as a “monster bomb” “more powerful than the Iskander” missile, is the FAB-1500 – a air-launched, 1,525 kg aerial bomb developed during the Cold War, and designed to blast through hard targets. The FAB-1500 was first introduced into service with the Soviet military in 1954, and comes packed with 675 kg of TNT – enough to level a fortification or bunker and leave a crater up to 20 meters deep, smash through up to three meters of reinforced concrete, and cause destruction across an area

up to 500 meters. FAB-1500's Secret: The UMPK While the FAB-1500 is powerful, its status as an unguided, free-fall munition limited its utility against near-peer or peer adversaries, particularly as anti-aircraft air defense became more sophisticated through the second half of the 20th century. Russia's military engineers were able to get around this weak spot using a UMPK – Russian acronym for “Unified Planning and Correction Module” – transforming free-falling FAB series bombs into laser and satellite-guided controlled munitions with an extended range. UMPK-equipped FABs feature fold-out wing and rudder components and a computer targeting system improving the bombs' accuracy to within five meters of their target. The closest US analog is the JDAM-ER smart bomb kit. Equipped with the UMPK, FAB-1500s can reportedly be launched by their carriers distances up to 50 km from the target and up to 10 km up, and be carried both by strategic bombers, like the Tupolev Tu-95 and the Tupolev Tu-160, and by tactical strike jets like the Sukhoi Su-27 and Sukhoi Su-34. UMPK-equipped FABs began to be fielded last year, with an informed source confirming to Sputnik in September that the modules had made it possible to use Su-34s, which can carry up to eight tons' worth of weaponry on their 12 external hard points, to strike Ukrainian positions using the modernized FAB-250, FAB-500, and FAB-1500 bombs. Ukrainian and Western media began sounding the alarm about the FAB-1500's use last fall, with Newsweek running a piece on the “Russian bunker-busting glide bomb [with a] 1,600ft blast radius” in late October.

Russia, China and Iran launch joint naval exercise

TEHRAN (Agencies): Russian, Chinese, and Iranian navy ships are holding a joint exercise in the Arabian Sea this week, staging from the Port of Chah Bahar in the Gulf of Oman. The wargames – Maritime Security Belt – are scheduled to run from March 12-15 and involve vessels and aircraft from the three countries. Envoys from the militaries of Azerbaijan, India, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, and South Africa are in attendance as observers. “The practical part of the exercise will take place in the waters of the Arabian Sea, specifically the Gulf of Oman,” the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement on Monday. “The main purpose of the maneuvers is to ensure the safety of



maritime economic activities.” Two Pacific Fleet ships, the Slava-class guided missile cruiser Varyag and the Udaloy-class frigate Marshal Shaposhnikov, make up the Russian contingent in the exercises. According to the Chinese Defense Ministry, the People's Liberation Army Navy has dispatched the guided-missile destroyer Urumqi, the guided-missile frigate Linyi, and the supply ship Dongpinghu.

Ukrainian drones strike several Russian oil facilities – officials



MOSCOW (Agencies): The Russian military intercepted at least 25 hostile targets over seven regions overnight, but at least one Ukrainian drone crashed into an oil facility in the western city of Oryol early Tuesday morning. Several more UAVs targeted a refinery on the outskirts of Nizhny Novgorod. The attack in Oryol targeted a “fuel and energy complex facility” in the city around 350km south of Moscow, Governor Andrey Klychkov announced in a statement at 3:30am

local time. There were no casualties or injuries on the ground, according to the official. One oil tank caught fire as a result of the strike, an emergency services source told RIA Novosti. Photos and videos circulating on social media show fire and smoke rising from the facility, apparently visible from several kilometers away. Klychkov said firefighters are working to contain the blaze, adding that the situation is under control and urging residents to remain calm. Several hours later, yet another attack by unmanned aerial vehicles targeted a fuel and energy complex in the Kstovskaya industrial zone outside Nizhny Novgorod, around 400km east of Moscow, according to Governor Gleb Nikitin.

Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigns as law and order collapse



Port-au-Prince (Agencies): Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry has agreed to resign following weeks of mounting pressure and increasing violence in the country. It comes after regional leaders met in Jamaica on Monday to discuss a political transition in Haiti. Mr Henry is currently stranded in Puerto Rico after being prevented by armed gangs from returning home. In a video address announcing his resignation, Mr Henry urged Haitians to remain calm. “The government that I am leading will resign immediately after the installation of [a transition] council,” Mr Henry said. “I want to thank the Haitian people for the opportunity I had been granted. I'm asking all Haitians to remain calm and do everything they can for peace and stability to come back as fast as possible.” Mr Henry, who had led the country supposedly on an interim basis since July 2021 following former President Jovenel Moise's assassination, had repeatedly postponed elections, saying security must be restored first.

Banana prices to go up as temperatures rise, says expert

LONDON (Agencies): Bananas are set to get more expensive as climate change hits a much-loved fruit, one of the world's top experts from the industry tells BBC News. Pascal Liu, senior economist at the World Banana Forum, says climate impacts pose an “enormous threat” to supply, compounding the impacts of fast-spreading diseases. The forum meets in Rome on Tuesday to tackle challenges facing the fruit. Some UK shops have recently experienced banana shortages due to sea storms. The UK alone imports around 5 billion bananas every year, with around 90% sold through the major supermarkets. Last week saw shortages of bananas in several UK supermarkets, which retailers said were down to storms at sea, delaying supplies. Most consumers won't have noticed, according to Prof Dan Bebber from the University of Exeter, who has studied efforts to make bananas more sustainable.

China technology giant Xiaomi starts electric car sales



BELJING (Agencies): Chinese technology giant Xiaomi says it will start deliveries of its first electric vehicle (EV) this month - its first ever foray into the competitive automotive industry. The car's price is expected to be announced on 28 March. China's fifth-largest smartphone maker says it has 59 stores in 29 cities around the country to take orders. It comes as a price war intensifies between firms like BYD and Tesla in China, the world's biggest car market. At the unveiling of the Speed Ultra 7 (SU7) last year, Xiaomi's chief executive Lei Jun said the company aims to become one of the top five car makers in the world. The smartphone giant has said it will invest \$10bn (£7.8bn) in its vehicles business over the next 10 years. Mr Lei said the SU7 was “super electric motor” technology which is capable of accelerating faster than Tesla and Porsche EVs. Xiaomi is also hoping that the car's shared operating system with its phones and other devices will appeal to existing customers. It is one of the few new prospective entrants to the China's electric car market to gain approval from authorities as officials try to curb a flood of new players. The SU7 will be made by a unit of state-owned car manufacturer BAIC Group at a plant in Beijing that can produce as many as 200,000 vehicles a year.

This Newspaper has been digitally printed at



Khyber Prints

- Instant Digital Printing Solutions -

First Floor, Town Heights, Old Bara Road,
University Town - Peshawar
Cell/Whatsapp: 0309-0055000
E-mail: khyberprints@gmail.com