



# Islamabad POST

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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**President Zelensky apologised to Trump after Oval Office fallout**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Pak sugar exports to Afghanistan fully regulated**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Swiatek serves up bagels at Indian Wells**

Detailed News On Page-06



**OVER A DOZEN TERRORISTS KILLED: ISPR**

## Passengers taken hostage

According to ISPR, 80 passengers including 43 men and 26 women rescued; operation to continue; BLA claims responsibility; claims to have captured over two hundred passengers; train service between Quetta and other parts of the country suspended

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The ISPR claimed on Tuesday that the forces had rescued over 80 passengers including men and women while operation was in progress for the recovery of other passengers. It may be mentioned that the terrorists launched an attack on the Jaffar Express, a passenger train traveling through the Bolan Pass near Dhadar, holding several passengers hostage inside a tunnel, the military's media wing reported on Tuesday. According to sources from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the attackers stopped the Jaffar Express inside Tunnel No 8 and took control of the train, holding passengers hostage. Despite the challenging terrain and the remote location, security forces have swiftly surrounded the area and initiated a clearance operation to neutralise the attackers and free the hostages. The hostages include a significant number of women and children, with security sources confirming the terrorists are in contact with their foreign facilitators. The operation will continue until all the terrorists have been eliminated and the hostages are safely rescued, the ISPR stated. Security sources have condemned the targeting of innocent civilians, noting that the actions of the terrorists are entirely disconnected from any cause related to Islam, Pakistan, or Balochistan. The clearance operation is ongoing, and further updates will be provided as the situation develops, they added. ISPR confirmed that the terrorists responsible for the cowardly attack on the Jaffar Express are in contact with their mastermind in Afghanistan. According to sources, the terrorists have been using women and children as human shields, further complicating the operation. The use of human shields and the challenging terrain has led to the operation being carried

## Iran condemns train attack

Violent measures against civilians and disturbing vital transportation system is a cowardly crime against humanity

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Iranian embassy in Islamabad has condemned the terrorist operations against a train passenger in Balochistan taking the innocent civilians including children, women & elderly as hostage. Violent measures against civilians and disturbing vital transportation system is a cowardly crime against humanity, the embassy statement further said.

out with extreme caution, the sources said. Security forces have vowed to continue the operation until the last terrorist is eliminated. Following the attack, sources reported that Indian and anti-state social media have become unusually active. Since the time of the attack, Indian media, social media platforms, and anti-state accounts have been relentlessly spreading misleading, false, and fake propaganda. Efforts to create panic through the distribution of fake news have been noted, with sources revealing that old videos,

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz chairs the federal cabinet meeting. – DNA

## FO says investigating diplomat's deportation

Local media reported a day ago that "Ambassador K K Wagan was deported from the US" due to an immigration objection.

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In response to media speculations regarding the deportation of a Pakistani diplomat from the United States, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday said that the matter was "under investigation". Local media reported a day ago that "Ambassador K K Wagan was deported from the US" due to an immigration objection. In a statement issued by the Foreign Office today, the ministry said that the diplomat was travelling to the US for a private visit. "The matter is being investigated by the foreign ministry," it said.

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## Announces Danish university IMF programme vital for national progress, says PM

Deserving students to receive research-based education at Daanish University, says Premier Shehbaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday announced establishing Daanish University of Applied and Emerging Sciences in Islamabad by utilising £190 million amount that was transferred from the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) to the Supreme Court of Pakistan's account. Incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi were convicted in £190m case in January this year. Accountability Court handed down a 14-year sentence to the PTI founder and a seven-year sentence to his wife, while also slapping heavy fines on them. PM Shehbaz, while chairing the Steering Committee meeting for the establishment of Daanish University, expressed his gratitude to the chief justice of Pakistan for ensuring the smooth transfer of the £190 million to the federal government account. The UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) had

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## Bilawal condemns dictatorship

Bilawal Bhutto praised Nawab Yousaf Talpur, calling him a principled and ideological politician

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has stated that he has always perused politics based on ideology and principles while firmly resisting the dictatorship. During a National Assembly session chaired by Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, members expressed condolences on the passing of PPP MNA Nawab Yousaf Talpur and martyrdom of former JUI-S MNA Hamid-ul-Haqqani. Speaking in the assembly, Bilawal Bhutto

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## Briefs

### Pakistan condemns aid suspension by Israel

Prime minister further said, such repressive measures during the holy month of Ramadan are highly condemnable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan strongly condemned Israel's latest suspension of humanitarian aid, including food and medicines from entering Palestinian Territories and cutting off power supply that threatens to limit water supplies in the area. In his X message the prime minister further said, such repressive measures during the holy month of Ramadan are highly condemnable as they endanger the lives of millions of innocent Palestinians including women and children.

### Pakistan needs Imran, says Aleema

Crisis-stricken Pakistan needs Imran Khan back in power: Aleema Khan

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Aleema Khan, sister of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder, said Pakistan desperately needed Imran Khan back in power. Right now, she noted the situation of the country has turned worse as terrorism has again engulfed the country. Talking to the media, she said, "after a week we have been allowed to meet the PTI founder while adding Imran Khan has not received books which were sent for him in the last week." She said responsibility of all petitions has been given to Salman Akram Raja and Salman Akram and today, the real lawyers of PTI founder was not allowed to meet him.

## Supreme Court questions

### 'If super tax will continue indefinitely'

SC bench adjourns super tax case hearing till tomorrow, seeking further clarification from govt

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: During the Supreme Court hearing on the super tax case, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar questioned whether the super tax, initially imposed for a specific purpose, would now continue until the end of time. A five-member constitutional bench, led by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, heard the case, with lawyer Makhdoom Ali Khan representing the companies involved. Makhdoom Ali Khan informed the court that the government introduced the super levy tax in 2015 to fund the rehabilitation of areas affected by Operation Zarb-e-Azb. He said that the government imposed the super tax through the 2015 Money Bill as a one-time measure. However, it remained in place from 2015 to 2022. Initially, the government aimed to collect an estimated Rs80 billion, but it remains unclear how much revenue was actually generated under this tax. He urged the court to question the government about

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### Can civilians be tried in a military court, asks SC

Justice Afghan observed that the decision in the FB Ali case was made under the 1962 Constitution

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail on Tuesday said in his remarks that if civilians have fundamental rights, can they be tried in military courts? Justice Mandokhail asked the question during the hearing of intra-court appeal against the military trial of civilians by the seven-member constitutional bench of the Supreme Court. The bench includes Justice Amin-ud-din Khan,

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## Report reveals ADB's aid 'misuse'

Dogar questioned whether NDMA is authorized to allocate foreign aid to other countries

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The \$30 million aid provided by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Pakistan's flood victims was allegedly diverted to assist disaster-affected regions in Turkey and Syria, an audit report revealed on Tuesday. According to the audit report presented before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the National Assembly, the ADB's aid was granted for flood relief, but it was 'used'

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## Kabul is complicit in cross border terrorism

TTP becoming umbrella organisation for regional terror groups: Pakistan warns UNSC

CENTRELINE REPORT

NEW YORK: As Pakistan continues to reel from the increased terror attacks in recent months, the country has warned the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is emerging as an umbrella organisation for regional terror groups. The warning was highlighted by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Munir Akram during a UNSC meeting on Tuesday concerning the situation in Afghanistan wherein the envoy accentuated that the greatest threat to security and stability to the region arose from more than 20 terrorist organisations present in the neighbouring country. Envoy Akram's remarks come against the backdrop of Pakistan's ongoing efforts to curb the menace of terrorism as the country, as per a Global Terrorism Index 2025 report, has emerged as the second-most terrorism-affected nation in the world. Placed at the second spot from its previously fourth position – witnessed an

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## Gender pay gap in Pakistan among highest worldwide

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's gender pay gap (GPG) remains a significant issue, with the country exhibiting a wide disparity in remuneration between men and women, states a report issued by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). As per the report, Pakistan presents one of the highest gaps worldwide between male and female employment rates. When considering the workforce composition, the GPG in Pakistan is 25% based on hourly wages, meaning women earn Rs750 for every Rs1,000 earned by men.

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## IT varsities to be setup in 6 districts of Sindh: Tessori

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori on Tuesday said that Information Technology (IT) universities will be established in six districts of the Sindh province. He said that the universities would be inaugurated by the provincial ministers. While addressing the participants of Iftar and Dinner hosted by the Sindh Governor at the Governor House, he said that the students of IT were earning around Rs0.8 or Rs0.10 million at Governor House. Kamran Tessori said that there was no limitation of age for IT courses. He invited the people to take IT courses and they would be enrolled free of cost and without any fee.—APP

## KP releases details of development projects in Peshawar

DNA

PESHAWAR: In response to recent criticisms from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Peshawar chapter, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has released a comprehensive list of ongoing and completed development projects in Peshawar. The report claimed significant investments aimed at enhancing the city's infrastructure, transportation, and recreational facilities. It said that government allocated Rs 450 million in the current fiscal year to bolster Peshawar's development, beautification, and recreational offerings. This funding had been directed towards the construction and improvement of pathways, service areas, and the preservation of historical heritage sites. The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system had been expanded with 70 new buses servicing the Nasir Bagh and Pabi Ternab routes. This addition was expected to accommodate an extra 55,000 passengers daily, supplementing the current 300,000 daily ridership. Similarly, a new bus terminal was also under construction, projected to serve 2 million passengers and create over 5,000 employment opportunities upon completion. In addition, the construction of the Peshawar-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway was underway, aiming to enhance regional connectivity and promote economic activity. Economic development was being fostered through projects like the Zoo Business Center in Chamkani, which was set to host over 50 businesses and generate approximately 2,000 jobs.

## Court Notice

IN THE COURT OF YASIR BILAL LEARNED CIVIL JUDGE RAWALPINDI  
Suit for recovery dowry articles etc. Mst. Fazia Batool Versus Ali Ahmed. Notice to, Ali Ahmed son of Qari Naseer Ahmed, resident of House No. 4, Street No. 3, Mohallah Ayoub Colony, Chaklala Scheme 3, Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 12.03.2025 at 9 am avoid ex-parte proceeding.

## Ambassador-designate to Netherlands visits ICCI

# Haider pledges focus on strengthening trade ties

ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi stated that while trade relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands are positive, significant potential still exists to expand the trade volume

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador-designate to the Netherlands, Syed Haider Shah, has expressed his commitment to enhancing trade and investment relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands. He emphasized that strengthening bilateral trade ties will be his top priority during his tenure. He made these remarks during a meeting with Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), at the Chamber House on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, and several executive members, including Imran Minhas, Raja Naveed Satti, Muhammad Kaleemullah, Chaudhry Nadeem Ahmed, Irfan Chaudhry, Senior Advisor to ICCI President Naem Siddiqui, and former Executive Member Chaudhry Mohammad Ali. Ambassador Shah stressed the importance of teamwork in promoting Pakistani goods and services. He assured the ICCI members that he would thoroughly examine the Dutch market and share valuable insights with Pakistan's business and industrial community. He encouraged exporters to capitalize on trade opportunities in the Netherlands by diversify-



ing their product range beyond traditional exports. The Ambassador invited ICCI to provide recommendations on improving trade and investment ties with the Netherlands. He particularly highlighted the potential for collaboration in key sectors such as agriculture, textiles, software exports, and high-tech value-added products. Welcoming the Ambassador-designate, ICCI President

Nasir Mansoor Qureshi stated that while trade relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands are positive, significant potential still exists to expand the trade volume. Qureshi pointed out that rising costs of doing business in Pakistan have put exporters at a disadvantage compared to neighboring countries. He stressed the need for a level playing field to enable Pakistani exporters to

maximize the benefits of trade incentives like the GSP Plus Scheme. He also recommended the possibility of organizing exhibitions for Pakistani products at prominent business hubs in the Netherlands to offer Dutch businesses a closer look at Pakistan's high-quality goods and services, ultimately boosting exports. During the meeting, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Senior Advisor to ICCI President

Naem Siddiqui, and former Executive Member Chaudhry Mohammad Ali also underscored the importance of collective efforts to promote Pakistani exports, ultimately driving economic growth and prosperity. The ICCI leadership assured Ambassador Shah of their full cooperation in fostering stronger trade and investment ties with the Netherlands to unlock new opportunities for Pakistani businesses.

## Illegal rickshaws, Qingqi, taxis overrun Peshawar's traffic system

PESHAWAR: The increasing number of illegal rickshaws, Qingqi motorcycles, and taxis in Peshawar has thrown the city's traffic system into complete disarray. Once known for its historical heritage, beauty, and organized urban life, Peshawar is now facing chaos due to the unchecked proliferation of unauthorized public transport. The city dwellers who regularly pass through these commuting problems said the negligence of concerned authorities and poor planning, has turned the city roads into parking lots and free-for-all zones. This situation is not only disrupting daily life but also ruining the city's charm and order. The number of illegal rickshaws and Qingqi motorcycles on Peshawar's roads is growing at an alarming rate. These vehicles frequently violate traffic laws and illegally occupy main roads, leading to severe traffic congestion. Citizens complain that there are no restrictions on these illegal drivers, allowing them to operate recklessly. The lack of regulation results in frequent accidents caused by Qingqi drivers' reckless driving and disregard for traffic rules.

Additionally, parking issues in the city's main areas have worsened as shopkeepers and residents increasingly park their vehicles on the roads, further hindering smooth traffic flow.—APP

## Call for urgent action to close Pakistan's GPG

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Women in Pakistan continue to earn significantly less than men, with the gender pay gap (GPG) standing at 25% when measured using hourly wages and 30% when assessed on a monthly basis, according to a new policy brief by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The policy brief highlights the structural barriers and discrimination contributing to these disparities and calls for immediate policy interventions to ensure equal pay for work of equal value. The report finds that the average hourly wage for employed women in Pakistan is PKR 750, while men earn PKR 1,000 per hour. Since men tend to receive more working hours than women, the monthly wage gap expands to 30%. The findings indicate that while Pakistan has made some progress in reducing the GPG—down from 33% in 2018—the country still lags behind regional peers such as Sri Lanka (22%), Nepal (18%), and Bangladesh (5%). The report underscores that most of Pakistan's GPG is un-

explained by observable factors such as education, skills, or occupation, suggesting that discrimination plays a key role in wage differences. According to the report, the gender pay gap widens for employees over the age of 35, as women returning to work after maternity leave often require more workplace flexibility, which comes at the cost of lower wages. Weak enforcement of labour laws is a major factor behind the gender wage gap in Pakistan. In the formal economy and public sector, where labour laws are better enforced, women receive wages equal to men when performing the same work. The informal sector experiences a much larger gender pay gap (40%) compared to the formal sector. Similarly, the gap is wider in private sector jobs, where labour laws are often not fully enforced. However, the report also notes that educated workers face a smaller wage gap than illiterate workers, suggesting that education helps women access better-paying jobs. ILO Country Director for Pakistan, Geir T. Tonstøl, emphasized the urgency of addressing these inequalities, stating, "Lack of adherence to labour laws significantly contributes to the gender pay

gap in Pakistan, especially in the informal economy. Strengthening compliance and promoting social dialogue are key to ensuring fair wages and better working conditions." Pakistan has committed to aligning its labour laws with ILO Conventions, and recent labour codes in Punjab and Sindh reflect these principles. However, enforcement and implementation remain key challenges. The policy brief suggests that wage policies can also help reduce gender-based pay disparities. Raising the minimum wage disproportionately benefits women, as they constitute a significant portion of low-wage workers. Therefore, wage-setting mechanisms—whether through legislation or collective bargaining—should consider this factor. The brief concludes that strengthening labour law enforcement would significantly reduce the gender wage gap, as much of the disparity is driven by systemic discrimination against women. One key recommendation is to formalize the informal economy, where wages are lower, working conditions are poor, and social protection for workers—especially women—is minimal or non-existent.

## Education, eminence cards to promote education in Punjab

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has introduced transformative initiatives to enhance the education system in Punjab. The CM Education Card will be launched to facilitate school education, while students scoring above 80 percent marks will receive the CM Eminence/Star Card as recognition of their academic excellence. Chairing a special meeting on school education here on Tuesday, the CM was briefed on the positive impact of outsourcing schools, which has led to a 52 percent increase in student enrollment and an 89 percent rise in the number of teachers. The Public School Reorganization Program has resulted in a student population surge from 242,000 to 368,000, while the teacher workforce has grown from 8,037 to 15,114. Additionally, teacher salaries have tripled, and classroom facilities,

including chairs and desks, have increased from 371,000 to 523,000. The government has decided to establish modern Schools of Eminence across Punjab, ensuring that every tehsil will have a high-standard institution. A state-of-the-art lab for Matriculation Tech will also be set up, and technical education will be introduced as a subject from grade five onwards. The Textbook Board has recorded savings of one billion rupees, and a 90-day deadline has been set for the provision of drinking water, furniture, and school maintenance. The CM has also set an annual enrollment target of two million children. To address nutrition in schools, a school meal program will be launched in Bhakkar, Layyah, and other districts. A KPI-based performance monitoring system will be implemented for education officers and teachers. Fol-

lowing the CM's directive, a pilot project for English conversation classes has been launched in 338 schools in Lahore, and plans are underway to introduce international English courses with certification in government schools. The CM emphasized road safety by directing strict implementation of zebra crossings in front of schools. She also highlighted that, for the first time in Punjab, textbooks have been successfully distributed at the beginning of the academic session in March. With British Council support, five government school teachers will be sent on a study tour of Scotland. The school meal program, currently active in Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, and DG Khan, has led to improved physical development, attendance, and enrollment. The number of students has risen from 631,050 to 416,803.—APP

## Sindh to introduce initiatives to strengthen poultry, fisheries, livestock

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Shah emphasized the need for the Fisheries and Livestock Department to implement initiatives that strengthen the poultry, fisheries and livestock industries to bolster the livestock sector, stabilising the economy and bringing prosperity to related businesses. He said that during his meeting with provincial Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Muhammad Ali Malkani, who called on him here at the CM House to discuss strategies for modernising and improving the fisheries and livestock sectors through advanced technology. During the meeting, Minister Muhammad Ali Malkani told the CM that steps are being taken to enhance these sectors. The CM instructed the minister to provide proper guidance to those involved in fisheries and livestock. Murad Shah underscored the necessity for the Fisheries and Livestock Department to introduce initiatives aimed at strengthening the poultry, fisheries, and livestock industries. He said that bolstering the livestock sector would not only stabilise the economy but also bring prosperity to businesses associated with it. Mr Shah directed officials to implement modern fish farming practices in the province and ensure that fishermen have access to necessary facilities. He further stressed the importance of promoting fish farming in coastal areas and urged the adoption of modern techniques to increase fish exports. The CM highlighted the need to upgrade fishing harbours with modern amenities to enhance exports and called for environmentally sustainable fishing practices to protect marine ecosystems. Murad Shah directed improvements in veterinary hospitals to ensure quality healthcare for livestock. He also emphasised the need to enhance animal breeding and vaccination systems across the province. Immediate measures were urged to prevent animal diseases, along with strict monitoring of livestock farms and actions against the sale of substandard animal feed. The CM called for the adoption of advanced technology to boost the production of milk, eggs, and meat, recognising the Livestock Department's crucial role in ensuring food security. He concluded by emphasising the need for practical steps to enhance the overall performance of the department.—DNA

## Food street in blue area on the cards

Muhammad Ali Randhawa Chairman CDA said that all out efforts should be made for making Federal Capital Islamabad, more beautiful, environment friendly as well as to improve modern travel facilities for the public, as well as tourists visiting from Pakistan but abroad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Muhammad Ali Randhawa Chairman CDA/ Chief Commissioner Islamabad regarding establishment of state of the art Food Street at Blue Area besides initiating other projects. The meeting was attended by Member Planning, Member Engineering, Member Finance, DG Environment, DG Building Control Section (BCS) and other senior officers of CDA. During the meeting, Muham-

ad Ali Randhawa Chairman CDA said that all out efforts should be made for making Federal Capital Islamabad, more beautiful, environment friendly as well as to improve modern travel facilities for the public, as well as tourists visiting from Pakistan but abroad. Establishment of a state-of-the-art Food Street in Blue Area with high-quality Food Street at the centre of city which is Blue Area will not only provide citizens with access to delicious and tasty food of high-quality local and international brands at a one place but will also be ensured

adequate parking facilities so that people should not only enjoy quality and delicious food but they will be provided ample place for parking which is very rare as compared to other food outlets in Islamabad. Food Street in Blue Area will feature beautifully designed pathways. Electric carts will also be provided for the convenience of the elderly and children. Chairman CDA directed that the Food Street be completed and made operational in the shortest possible time. He also instructed that the Food Street be designed with modern and attractive

layouts to ensure it meets international standards. All transactions at the Food Street will be cashless. The Food Street will be adorned with modern and beautiful lighting. Common seating areas will be constructed, keeping in mind the convenience of visitors. The best arrangements will be made to ensure food is prepared in accordance with health and hygiene standards. Chairman CDA directed the relevant Wings to expedite work on the Food Street and pedestrian tracks according to the estimated timelines. The meeting also discussed the

cable car project for Islamabad. Chairman CDA instructed that the feasibility report for the cable car be prepared promptly. Chairman CDA also directed the initiation of work to introduce a zip line in Islamabad. During the meeting, instructions were given to take all necessary steps to make the Art and Craft Village operational. Chairman CDA stated that work should be carried out on projects such as the Safari Park and the establishment of a Cultural Center to promote tourism in Islamabad.

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### MARCH

- March 01/Bosnia National Day
- March 03/Bulgaria National Day
- March 06/ Ghana Independence Day
- March 12 /Mauritius National Day
- March 17/Ireland St. Patricks Day
- March 20/Tunisia Independence Day
- March 21/Namibia National Day
- March 25/Greece National Day
- March 26/Bangladesh National Day
- March 27/Myanmar Armed Forces Day

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Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122  
Motorway Police.....9266044  
Motorway Police.9270601-20  
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Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

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Cantt Hospital..9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



### Departments

CDA.....9221334-43  
CDA.....9208301-04  
Met Office.....9250360-6  
RDA.....5555864  
TMA.....5770886  
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

## NUML students depart for Turkiye under student exchange program

This exchange program is a direct outcome of the Rector NUML's recent visit to Turkiye, during which he visited top universities and signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to establish collaborative opportunities for student and faculty exchanges

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The first batch of students from the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) is set to leave for Duzce University, Turkiye this week under the Student Exchange Program, a milestone initiative aimed at providing students with international academic exposure. These students were selected through a competitive process, emerging successful from among hundreds of applicants. They will now have the opportunity to pursue their studies in Turkiye, gaining invaluable cross-cultural learning experiences. This exchange program is a direct outcome of the Rector NUML's recent visit to Turkiye, during which he visited top universities and signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to establish collaborative opportunities for student and faculty exchanges. This initiative underscores NUML's commitment to expanding global academic partnerships and enhancing the learning experiences of its students.



Rector NUML expressed his gratitude to the Government of Turkiye and Duzce University for their support in facilitating this academic exchange. He emphasized that such collaborations strengthen educational ties

between Pakistan and Turkiye, providing students with access to world-class learning environments and fostering long-term academic cooperation. In a candid interaction with the departing students, Director General

NUML extended his best wishes and prayers, encouraging them to make the most of this opportunity. He urged them to act as ambassadors of Pakistan, showcasing the country's rich culture, values, and academic excellence

on the international stage. NUML continues to play a pivotal role in facilitating its students' access to international study programs, equipping them with the skills and perspectives needed to thrive in a globally connected world.

## China makes remarkable strides safeguarding cultural heritage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China in recent years made remarkable strides in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, according to Report carried by China Economic Net on Tuesday. To date, 43 Chinese cultural traditions have been recognized by UNESCO, including the Nanjing Yunjin brocade weaving technique, the Twenty-Four Solar Terms, and Tai Chi, showcasing the ingenuity of the Chinese people to the world. When Spring Festival was officially inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Bamo Qubumo, a researcher at the Institute of Ethnic Literature under the Chinese Academy

of Social Sciences and a deputy to China's National People's Congress, could hardly contain her excitement. This milestone not only underscores the global significance of Chinese traditional culture but also injects new vitality into the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). ICH is not just a vessel of cultural transmission—it is also a powerful driver of economic development. From the phenomenal success of the video game Black Myth: Wukong to the animated blockbuster Ne Zha, the fusion of ICH with modern cultural and creative industries has not only captivated global audiences but also opened new pathways for its industrialization. Coming from the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yuexi County,

China, Bamo Qubumo is particularly passionate about how ICH can empower women in impoverished rural areas. She believes that as a "living" culture, ICH can provide sustainable livelihoods for women in these regions. Through initiatives such as heritage craft workshops and embroidery training programs, rural women can both preserve traditional skills and achieve financial independence. This model not only contributes to rural revitalization but also offers a "Chinese approach" to global ICH preservation.

One compelling example is Yi embroidery, a centuries-old craft in Nanhua County, Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. With the rise of modern textile manufacturing, fewer women possess the traditional needlework skills, putting this heritage at risk. Witnessing this decline, Ding Lanying, a Nanhua native, launched an entrepreneurial initiative in 2006 with 13 fellow embroiderers. They traveled across villages to learn and document embroidery techniques, mastering 72 stitching methods and laying the foundation for Nanhua Yi embroidery's revival. "Today, it's not just local women engaging in Yi embroidery—men who appreciate the craft are joining in as well," Bamo Qubumo noted. Since 2020, Nanhua County has hosted 235 Yi embroidery training sessions, training 14,304 artisans and recognizing 45 embroiderers as official ICH inheritors.

## Rana calls for collective dialogue

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah Tuesday emphasized that the prevailing destructive attitude of PTI will remain a major obstacle to national progress and stability unless a collective dialogue is initiated among political leaders. In a recent conversation with a private news channel, Adviser to PM stressed that collective dialogue is vital to shift away from harmful attitudes, foster progress and propel the nation forward. "We have always extended an olive branch for dialogue, but PTI has shown reluctance to engage with other political parties", he mentioned. Despite our repeated offers, PTI remains unwilling to sit with other political parties for a constructive dialogue, he said, adding, a change in attitude is imperative for PTI to engage in meaningful dialogue and work towards the betterment of Pakistan. Sanaullah criticized PTI's persistent focus on past political narratives regarding the November 26 incident in Islamabad and posed a question as to how the government can assist PTI when they were stuck on past issues? Rana Sanaullah reiterated his commitment and said "Our doors are still open for dialogue with PTI, but they refuse to come to the table." The adviser reaffirmed that the government remains resilient and steadfast in its commitment to uphold the principles enshrined in the constitution, ensuring the country's progress and stability. "The Prime Minister is personally overseeing the performance of all ministers to ensure they meet the expected standards and deliver exceptional results", he added.—APP

## Uzbek products exhibition to be held in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Pakistan is organizing a trade mission to Pakistan in cooperation with the Plant Quarantine and Protection Agency and the Association of Exporters of Uzbekistan on March 14-17 of this year. A trade fair of Uzbek products will be held at the Centaurus Mall in Islamabad, Pakistan. Enterprises exporting fresh and dried fruits and vegetables, food, and processed products grown in Uzbekistan will participate in this event. Long-term, large-scale orders from supermarket chains and other potential importing enterprises in Pakistan are expected for the products successfully sold at the trade fair. The Embassy of Uzbekistan invites Pakistani entrepreneurs engaged in agriculture and food product trade to participate in this visit!

## Commerce minister embarks on official Oman visit

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan embarked on an official visit to Oman, with his itinerary packed with high-level meetings, industrial visits, and cultural engagements. Arriving at Muscat International Airport, the Minister was warmly received by diplomatic dignitaries from the Pakistani Embassy—Ambassador Syed Naveed Sadfar Bokhari, Deputy Head of Mission Bilal Hassan, and Commercial Counsellor Ishrat Hussain Bhatti—as well as Omani officials including Minister Counsellor Rashid Al Rashdi and Relations Specialist Abdullah Al Jabri, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. As part of his visit, On March 11, the minister will undertake a guided tour of Sohar Port and Sohar Free Zone, the largest industrial zone in Oman, where he will be briefed by the CEO of Sohar Port about the facilities. He is also scheduled to meet with the Chairman of Sohar Chamber of Commerce to discuss investment and trade opportunities. During his stay on March 12-13, the Minister will engage with key Omani leaders, including a meeting with H.E. Qais Al Yousif, Minister of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion, and a session with H.E. Dr. Saud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. He will also hold discussions with H.E. Faisal Al Rawas, board chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, followed by an official Ifar dinner. On March 13, the Minister will visit Invest Oman Lounge and meet with H.E. Said Al Mawali, Minister of Transport, Communication and Information Technology to explore avenues for enhanced cooperation in trade and logistics. The visit will also include a tour of cultural landmarks, including the Royal Opera House Muscat and Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, reflecting the Minister's commitment to deepening cultural ties between the two nations. His official engagements will conclude on March 14, marking a significant step toward strengthening Pakistan-Oman bilateral relations and fostering trade, investment, and cultural exchanges.—DNA

## NGIA awards Rs 3.2b contract

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Management of New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) has finally awarded contract to Qavi Engineers Ltd to construct state of art living facilities to Airports Security Force (ASF) at the cost of Rs. 3.2 billion. ASF is a federal department under administrative control of Aviation Division which is responsible for safeguarding aviation industry in Pakistan under ASF Act 1975. The accommodation facilities include five residential buildings, family apartments, hostels, library, mess, hospital, mosque, and sports complex Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) official told Gwadar pro that according to signed documents, entire construction work will complete in two years. Meanwhile, NGIA management has already constructed Modern Residential Complex for designated officers of CAA. With facility of centrally air-conditioning system, NGIA's Modern Residential Complex has been facilitated by uninterrupted power dispensation, Wi-Fi system, sewerage network and potable water pipelines. Besides, green area is also being developed around the residential complex to ensure healthier and livable infrastructure and to make the outlook environment-friendly for the dwellers. In first phase, trees have been planted inside and outside the complex. Tree plants on designated patches are being grown to bolster the green ecosystem. According to official of CAA, maximum plants have been taken from Plant Tissue Culture Lab and Green House, integral parts of Belt and Road Engineering Research Center for Tropical Arid Non-Wood Forest built and being run in cooperation with Central South University of Forestry and Technology, China Overseas Port Holding in the premises of Gwadar port.

## Senate offers Fateha for death of Senator's brother

ISLAMABAD: The Senate of Pakistan on Tuesday offered Fateha for the sad demise of the brother of Senator Mush-taq Ahmad. Senator Shahadat Awan led Fateha at the request of Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani. He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant patience to the bereaved family members to bear this loss.—APP

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## Briefs

## SAPM slams PTI's false narratives

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Huzafa Rahman Tuesday condemned the PTI's false narratives, urging them to focus on fostering national dialogue instead to promote unity and address the country's challenges through constructive conversation. In an exclusive interview with PTV News, he accused the party of consistently spreading false narratives to undermine institutions and harm the country's image. Huzafa emphasized that our armed forces have made immense sacrifices for the country's defense, and it is essential to respect and honor them instead of resorting to baseless criticism that damages their reputation. Responding to a query, SAPM Huzafa Rahman expressed willingness to engage with PTI, stating that if they approach the national dialogue with sincerity, their concerns will be heard and considered through democratic processes. SAPM asserted that the nation will never forget the heinous attack on the armed forces on May 9, emphasizing that such incidents are etched in the collective memory of the country. He further emphasized that PTI needs to rise above its personal interests and agendas for the greater good. By doing so, PTI can engage in constructive dialogue and contribute to the legislative process, rather than choosing chaos and alienating itself, he added. —APP

## SC adjourns hearing of appeals challenging levy of Super Tax

ISLAMABAD: The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan has adjourned, for tomorrow, hearing of appeals of the leading business companies of Pakistan challenging levy of Super Tax. The five-member larger (Constitutional) Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan and comprising Justice Jamal Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mahar, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Shahid Bilal Hasan was conducting the proceedings.

The Levy of Super Tax is challenged by 332 leading business companies Pakistan including DG Khan Cement Company Ltd, Maple Leaf Cement, Ibrahim Fibers Limited Lahore, Habib Rafiq Pvt Ltd, Reliance Commodities Pvt Ltd, Saif Holding Ltd., Pacific Exim Pvt Ltd, AGVEN Pvt Ltd, Be Energy Ltd, Colgate Palmolive Pakistan, National Investment Trust Ltd, Atlas Honda Ltd, Engro Corp Ltd, Engro Vopak Terminal Ltd, Imperial Sugar Ltd, Kohat Cement Company Ltd, Habib Construction Services Ltd, Alim Khan & Sons Pvt Ltd, Oppo Mobile Technology Pakistan Ltd, Daewoo Pakistan Express Bus Service, Abdullah Sugar Mills Ltd, Quaid-e-Azam Solar Power Ltd, M/s Qarshi Industries (Pvt.) Ltd., Lahore, Nishat (Chunian) Ltd., Lahore, M/s. Orient Energy Systems (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Hinopak Motors Ltd, M/s. Advance Telecom, Lucky Textile Mills Limited, M/s. Garbsons (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Chawla International, Karachi, Dawood Hercules Corporation Limited, Pakistan Beverages Limited, Karachi, Searle Pharmaceuticals (Private) Limited and others.—APP



ISLAMABAD: L to R, Raja Omar Kamran (Sarai Alamgir), Raja Bilal Mehmood Janjua (Jhelum), Azlan Khan, H.E. Mohammad Karmoune Ambassador of Kingdom of Morocco, Raja Haseeb Iqbal (Bari Imam), Shahzada Murad Nazir (Mohra Sharif Murree) and Raja Tariq Mustafa at Iftar hosted by Mr. Waqas, Kashmala Tariq and Azlan Khan.—DNA

## Senate body alarmed at growing concerns about increasing fees

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination, chaired by Senator Amir Waliuddin Chisti, convened at the Parliament House. The Committee members engaged in an extensive discussion regarding the compliance report based on the Committee's previous meeting held on October 9, 2024. After a thorough update on the increase in the number of dental colleges, the Minister of State, Coordinator to the Prime Minister, informed that starting next year, candidates appearing for the MDCAT will only be eligible for registration. The Committee members raised concerns about the authenticity of institutes, mentioning that although

large colleges are established, students often struggle to obtain their attestations from these institutions. The Chairman of the Committee, Senator Amir Waliuddin Chisti, recommended the implementation of a uniform MDCAT system across the country. He emphasized that the tests should be IT-based, as paper leaks often lead to malpractice. The Minister of State highlighted that achieving uniformity would require standardizing the curriculum across provinces. Senator Irfan ul Haq Siddiqui argued that uniformity in the curriculum could contradict basic educational principles. He also raised concerns about the increasing fee structure, stressing that the PMDC must address this issue within its domain. He further recommended examining the fee in-

creases and establishing a mechanism to control them. The Committee members unanimously called for resolving the issue of escalating fees and for cross-checking the discrepancies in the system that exploit and negatively impact poor students. The Chairman of the Committee recommended conducting a cost analysis of private sector fee structures and suggested a surprise visit by Committee members to the PMDC to assess the situation on the ground. Chairman Committee further stressed that the fee structure should be according to a rationale set by the Ministry. Additionally, he proposed that the Committee gather details from colleges regarding those that do not provide CSR scholarships. The Committee also discussed the Private Mem-

ber's Bill, "The Islamabad Healthcare Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2025," introduced by Senator Mohsin Aziz during the Senate session on January 20, 2025. Senator Aziz highlighted that the Bill aims to regulate diagnostic centers and address the significant variation in prices at laboratories, where charges can differ by 50% to 100%. He stressed the need for the Bill's implementation as it serves the public interest, noting that without fixed rates and prescriptions, patients often end up paying more. The Committee was informed that a new team will decide the framework for pricing different tests within the next month. The Minister of State suggested holding the Bill in abeyance for a month until new reports are received and any issues or gaps are addressed.

## ICT admin arrested 100 on over pricing

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration escalated its crackdown on overpricing during Ramadan, conducting 535 inspections and arrested 100 shopkeepers, imposed fines exceeding Rs 157,000, and sealed one store for violating government-mandated prices. Meanwhile, 20 subsidized fair-price shops and six Ramadan bazaars reported record sales in the first nine days of the holy month, with citizens praising the measures. According to the spokesman of ICT administration here, eight Assistant Commissioners (ACs) and 30 Magistrates accompanied by district administration teams present in markets for price checks. On Tuesday, district teams launched targeted raids across markets to curb overpricing. Authorities sealed a shop in a prominent commercial area for selling essentials above official rates, marking the strictest action this Ramadan. Price Control Magistrates issued fines totaling Rs 157,000 to violators, while 100 retailers faced arrests for repeated breaches. On the occasion, residents expressed relief as subsidized stalls and Ramadan bazaars maintained stable prices. Over 20 government-run fair-price shops and six seasonal markets witnessed unprecedented footfall, with officials attributing the surge to strict price monitoring. "The administration's visibility has deterred overcharging," said a customer at a Ramadan bazaar. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Memon, led daily inspections of markets, directing staff to resolve complaints immediately. "No grievance will be deferred to tomorrow. Action must be instant," he stated. All Assistant Commissioners and Price Control Magistrates remained on-site across zones to enforce compliance. The DC warned that no exceptions would be made for overpricing. "Legal action will continue indiscriminately," he emphasized. Teams were instructed to prioritize public complaints, with a dedicated helpline operational 24/7. The administration highlighted its commitment to providing affordable essentials during Ramadan. Over 6,000 price checks have been conducted since the month began, with fines totaling over Rs 1.2 million.—DNA

## Zardari committed to Pakistan's stability, progress: Marri

ISLAMABAD: Central Information Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Shazia Atta Marri Tuesday said that President Asif Ali Zardari remains dedicated to the country's unity and prosperity, consistently upholding the slogan "Pakistan Khappyay." Talking to media persons outside the Parliament House, Shazia Marri said that President Asif Zardari has always prioritized Pakistan's national interests. She highlighted his recent address to Parliament, where he shed light on key national and international concerns, including the situations in Palestine and Kashmir. President Asif Zardari, she said, urged the global community to recognize the hardships faced by the Palestinian people. She said that President Asif Zardari has never harbored political animosity or engaged in political revenge. "As part of the coalition government, he ensures that no actions are taken that could jeopardize Pakistan's stability or the federation's unity," she added. —APP

## Committee nears conclusion on CSS exam reforms

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday informed the Senate that a high-level committee, led by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, is in the final stages of drafting reforms aimed at improving the Central Superior Services (CSS) examination. Replying to a question of Senator Anusha Rahman in the Senate Session, the minister said the committee has already consulted with key stakeholders, and its final recommendations are expected to shape the upcoming reforms. Tarar stressed that competitive exams play a key role in shaping the country's bureaucracy, providing a skilled workforce that is essential for effective governance. "Our education system has split into two streams," he remarked, pointing to the traditional matriculation-based system and the Cambridge O and A Levels. He highlighted the growing number of students in Pakistan opting for the Cambridge education system, including O and A Levels.—APP

## Moot on research and practices to be held at AIOU

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is set to host the 8th International Conference on "Research and Practices in Education" (ICRPE) on April 8 and 9, 2025. Organized by the Faculty of Education, this prestigious two-day event aims to encourage meaningful research and familiarize participants with modern educational trends. The ICRPE has established itself as a significant platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation in the field of education. Building on the success of its previous editions, this year's conference will address the urgent need for transforming education systems to meet the evolving demands of an ever-changing world. With the theme "Revamping Education for a Changing World," the 8th ICRPE 2025 will explore

innovative practices and policies that prepare learners, educators, and institutions for the challenges and opportunities posed by technological advancements, socio-economic transformations, and environmental shifts. The focus will be on inclusivity, sustainability, and the integration of technology to ensure a progressive and adaptable education system. The conference will bring together global education experts, policymakers, and researchers to discuss ways to enhance the education system in response to contemporary challenges. It will also introduce new educational dimensions aimed at laying the foundation for a better and more sustainable future. By integrating research with practical applications, the 8th ICRPE 2025 will serve as a key milestone in presenting actionable solutions that contribute to positive social change through education.

## ISSI hosts round table commemorating Int'l Women's Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), organized a round table discussion titled "Accelerate Action: Strategic Imperatives for Advancing Gender Equality" to commemorate International Women's Day 2025. The keynote speaker at the event was Dr. Najeeba Arif, Chairperson, Pakistan Academy of Letters. Foreign Secretary Ambassador Anna Baloch participated through a special video message for the occasion. In his welcome remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted both the progress

and challenges in advancing gender equality. Citing UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, he acknowledged that while women and girls have broken barriers and defied stereotypes, their rights remain under attack due to violence, discrimination, economic inequality, and emerging threats like algorithmic bias. He reaffirmed Pakistan's historical commitment to women's empowerment, inspired by Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's vision, and recognized the contributions of trailblazers like Mohatma Fatima Jinnah, Raa'na Liaquat Ali Khan, and Begum Shaista Ikramullah. Pakistan has achieved significant milestones, including electing the first female Prime Minister in the Is-

lamic world and appointing women to key positions in diplomacy, government, judiciary, and international organizations. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the gaps and deficits in the way of gender parity in Pakistan and worldwide and stressed the need for accelerated action to bridge the gaps. He also underscored the importance of the government, Parliament, civil society, media, academia and think-tanks working synergistically and stated that the ISSI would continue to serve as a platform ensuring that women's voices are heard and their rights are protected. In her message, Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch underscored the vital role of Pakistani women in global

peace and cooperation, noting that over 500 Pakistani women peacekeepers have served in UN missions. She also recognized the achievements of women entrepreneurs and artists who continue to inspire. However, she acknowledged persistent challenges, often compounded by economic instability, climate change, and conflict, with women in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine facing severe hardships and human rights violations. She emphasized the need for urgent action, calling for the enactment and enforcement of laws protecting women's rights, increased women's leadership representation, bridging the gender pay gap, and ensuring access to quality education.

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## Peace in Ukraine

If there was any doubt about where the US stands on Ukraine after its UN vote against a resolution condemning Russia on February 24, it was dispelled by the stand-off between US President Donald Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky at the White House just days later, further countered by the suspension of military aid and intelligence support. Now that the US has disqualified itself, the role of peacemaker has fallen on the shoulders of a European "coalition of the willing" – led by France and the UK. European powers recognise their responsibilities for Ukraine's predicament. France and Germany were part of the Normandy format which negotiated the failed Minsk agreements after Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. After the Soviet Union's collapse, together with the US and Russia, the UK gave security assurances to Ukraine for giving up its nuclear arsenal in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. While the US and UK might have complied with the letter of the agreement after Russia invaded Ukraine, some would feel they fell short of upholding its spirit. Moreover, Ukraine is fighting not just for its sovereignty, but also for Europe's collective security, having paid a staggering price in blood and destruction. The US has supplied critical resources to sustain Ukraine's war effort – although perhaps not decisively and swiftly enough. But the conflict can be seen as a proxy war between US and Ukraine with Ukrainian lives as the primary currency. The US has leveraged Ukraine's sacrifices to exhaust Russian military capacity while avoiding American casualties. To whom should gratitude be owed – isn't the answer obvious? Instead, the Trump administration has sought to extort mineral resources in exchange for supporting Ukraine. While the US wants to be in the driver's seat for the peace settlement, the world can see it is not a trustworthy arbiter given its self-serving agenda. The misaligned interests of the US and Europe demand a different coalition of peacemakers. Ukraine does not need the US as an armistice broker, especially one that has steered negotiations against its interests. What Ukraine needs from the US is a security guarantee as part of a lasting peace settlement, but this has not been forthcoming. While external stakeholders bring resources and influence, Ukraine must remain in control of its destiny, charting its own vision for sustainable peace and lasting security based on the aspirations of its unyielding people. Europe is uniquely positioned to take the lead in advancing the peace process. The continent controls the bulk – more than half of about 300 billion (US\$325.05 billion) – of frozen Russian assets after its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, which could be used in strategic bargaining or funding reconstruction in a Ukraine peace settlement. In this context, Europe would naturally be the principal underwriter for peace in Ukraine, shouldering responsibilities for security guarantees and peacekeeping while pushing the US to provide a backstop. China can also play a pivotal role. The peacekeeping force in Ukraine cannot be limited to Europeans, which may be perceived by Russia as a Nato deployment. A multilateral peacekeeping force including the Global South would be more palatable to Moscow. As the US pulls away from Europe, the doctrine of European peace based primarily on military deterrence should be revisited. European rearmament would be necessary but hardly sufficient. Lasting peace cannot be built on mere legal agreements or security guarantees.



## How the global south can rise

US President Donald Trump's penchant for shaking things up is fracturing the Global North. The Global South must remain steadfast in its commitment to peaceful development and seize this moment to advance a more equitable and just global order. One of the central focuses of last week's "two sessions", China's annual parliamentary meetings, is the increasingly prominent role of private technology companies in driving the country's development. Indeed, a decade after the launch of the "Made in China 2025" initiative, most of its targets have been achieved, positioning the country as a global technological powerhouse. Through the Digital Silk Road and companies like DeepSeek, China's advancements are helping to propel the Global South's Fourth Industrial Revolution, enabling countries in Africa, for example, to leapfrog development stages in their race to embrace the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution. If President Xi Jinping's "Made in China 2025" initiative has met most of its goals, President Trump's second attempt to "Make America Great Again" (Maga) is off to a contentious and rocky start. For instance, efforts to improve government efficiency through the Department of Government Efficiency (Doge) programme have drawn criticism, with some accusing the Trump administration of steering US democracy towards authoritarianism. Last month's altercation between Trump and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky in the Oval Office was, for many, a watershed moment. It marked the unravelling of the transatlantic alliance and signalled the decline of US leadership in the post-World War II liberal international order. For some, the post-Cold War era is transitioning from Francis Fukuyama's idealistic vision of the "end of history", where liberal democracy triumphs, to Samuel Huntington's ominous view of a "clash of civilisations", where race and religion become flashpoints and "might makes right" prevails. Trump's Maga world view has undoubtedly fuelled the rise of a far-right global movement, hinting at the potential for conflict along civilisational lines. Trump's retreat from US global leadership has also had more immediate consequences: pulling out of the Paris Agreement and World Health Organization, as well as defunding USAID, the US Agency for International Development, has weakened efforts to tackle pressing humanitarian crises. Nonetheless, Trump's disruptive policies have also generated unexpected outcomes. The scaling back of USAID could also signal the closing of a dark chapter: US covert operations aimed at promoting democracy through sowing dissent and regime change. Indeed, the American global campaign to advance rights and freedom has not only relied on illicit tactics but also led to disastrous wars, as seen in Iraq and Afghanistan. The demise of the US-led world order is unlikely to be mourned by countries in the Global South. But what will emerge to replace the crumbling Western-centric international order remains uncertain. One thing seems clear: Trump's aversion to war. During the recent tense meeting, Trump warned Zelensky against risking a third world war. For Trump, it is evident that a direct conflict between the United States and Russia could escalate into nuclear war.

# China and India: Ready for economic global dominance

Qamar Bashir



This prediction is based on the IMF's recently released fact sheet. According to this data, if India continues to grow at 7.7% per year, while Germany (1% per year), Japan (0.6% per year), the UK (1.4% per year), and France (1.2% per year) maintain their current growth rates, India would surpass both Germany and Japan to become the third-largest economy in the world in approximately three years, by 2028. However, if we factor in the Russia-Ukraine war, which is likely to slow down European economies...

THE most stunning challenges to both the USA under Trump and to Europe under threat of a third world war are two Asian giants, China and India. Both China and India are rapidly challenging the West's dominance in the fields of economy, defense, technology, and space exploration. Over the last ten years, according to the IMF, the Chinese economy grew by about 74%, whereas the Indian economy grew by 77%. Comparatively, the USA's economy grew by about 28%, while European economies grew between 7% to 17%, and Japan grew at just 6%. Now that the reins of the world's most formidable economy are in the hands of one of the most unpredictable leaders, Donald Trump, the future of the U.S. economy remains uncertain. Trump, being in the driving seat, can either cause the economy to nosedive or lift it to unprecedented levels, depending on whether his out-of-the-box policies and his promise to obliterate the deep state succeed or fail. In these two scenarios, one may lead to the USA retaining its first place, while the other, if the economy cannot sustain Trump's shock therapy, could result in China emerging as the world's top economy within the next ten years. With the recently available data, these trajectories are not difficult to predict. If China continues to grow at 74% per decade (or about 7.4% per year) and the U.S. grows at 28% per decade (or about 2.8% per year), it would take approximately 11 years for China to surpass the U.S. in GDP. This means China could overtake the U.S. around the year 2036. Despite the world's focus on China's growth and efforts to slow down its rise, another Asian giant has been making significant progress and is on track to surpass the European and Japanese economies within the next three years. This prediction is based on the IMF's recently released fact sheet. According to this data, if India continues to grow at 7.7% per year, while Germany (1% per year), Japan (0.6% per year), the UK (1.4% per year), and France (1.2% per year) maintain their current growth rates, India

would surpass both Germany and Japan to become the third-largest economy in the world in approximately three years, by 2028. However, if we factor in the Russia-Ukraine war, which is likely to slow down European economies and impact their prosperity, this period could be shorter. In such a scenario, India—continuing at 7.7% per year—would surpass both Germany and Japan to become the third-largest economy in just two years, by 2027, instead of 2028. While the USA faces an imminent threat from China in maintaining its top position, Europe and Japan—both of which have dominated global economic power for centuries—are showing signs of yielding their dominance to other growing economies. Not only is India poised to overtake them, but other rapidly growing economies, such as Turkey and Indonesia, are also set to challenge their positions. Under Erdogan, Turkey has grown at a rate of 59% over the last decade, while Indonesia has grown at 51% in the same period. Even after factoring in the Russia-Ukraine war, which is expected to slow down European economies with Germany and Japan growing at just 0.5% per year, the timeline for Turkey and Indonesia to rise in global economic rankings remains unchanged. If Turkey continues to grow at 5.9% per year, it would take 29 years to surpass Germany, making it the fourth-largest economy by 2054. Similarly, Indonesia, growing at 5.1% per year, would take 20 years to surpass Japan, securing the fifth position by 2045. While Europe's economic slowdown makes it easier for these emerging economies to catch up, the overall timeline remains the same due to the significant gap they still need to close. As of 2025, Pakistan's nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is projected to be \$357.0 billion, up from an estimated \$345.9 billion in 2024, reflecting a modest growth rate. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recently revised Pakistan's GDP growth outlook for 2025, downgrading it from 3.2% to 3.0%, indicating ongoing economic challenges. In an ambitious bid to transform its economic landscape, Pakistan has unveiled the "Uraan Pa-

kistan" initiative, aiming to elevate the nation's economy to \$1 trillion by 2035. This comprehensive plan focuses on the "5Es Framework," targeting key sectors such as exports, equity, empowerment, environment, and energy to drive sustainable growth. However, achieving this ambitious target requires a significant acceleration in economic growth. According to projections, without substantial reforms, Pakistan's economy is expected to reach only \$573 billion by 2035. To realize the \$1 trillion goal, the country would need to implement transformative policies that substantially boost economic performance. Given its current nominal GDP projections and growth rates, Pakistan is unlikely to ascend to the top five global economies within the next decade. While Pakistan's economic position may improve slightly over the decade, it is unlikely to break into the top 10 global economies unless substantial reforms and accelerated growth strategies are implemented. The world geo-economics landscape is changing at a rapid pace. Traditional powers like the USA and Europe are fast yielding to emerging powers. Both the USA and Europe must introduce creative and out-of-the-box policies and initiatives to remain relevant on the global power chessboard in the upcoming decade. However, implementing deep-rooted reforms in the well-informed, educated, and empowered communities of the USA and Europe is a challenging task, unlike in economies where the population is disciplined, still subservient to state authorities, and not very vocal or demanding. Nonetheless, both the USA and Europe have no choice but to break their economic and social inertia and undertake fundamental reforms to remain relevant in geo-economics; otherwise, they risk being relegated to a lower rung in the global community.   
— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)   
Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France   
Former MD, SRBC   
Macomb, Detroit

# Arab world should not ignore increasing Islamophobia in US

Ray Hanania

The American news media is complicit, reporting on every instance of alleged antisemitism in lengthy and detailed reports, while marginalizing stories on the increase in Islamophobia and ignoring instances of racism against Arabs. All this is a result of how "hate" has become politicized. Democrats in Congress last month reintroduced a bill known as the Combating International Islamophobia Act, which has already been ignored by Republicans and the White House. If approved, the State Department would be required to create a special...

TRENDS show a rise in terms of both Islamophobia and antisemitism, but in America more concern is expressed for the latter, often exaggerated by politically weaponized pro-Israeli agendas and growing animosity toward Arabs. Although this may seem to only be a problem for Arabs and Muslims in America, it is actually an early warning sign that could portend long-term problems for these communities worldwide. The White House and Congress have recently stepped up efforts to punish pro-Palestinian student protesters by denying them their constitutional right to free speech when they express legitimate criticism of Israeli violence against Muslims and Christians in the Gaza Strip. President Donald Trump, with the backing of the pro-Israel Congress, in January signed an executive order to "combat antisemitism," calling for tougher action on colleges. Last week, for example, the federal government cut \$400 million in grants that were due to Columbia University, one of the nation's preeminent educational institutions, because students there protested against Israel's indiscriminate killing of women and children in the Gaza Strip. Other universities are also being targeted, such as the prestigious DePaul University in Chicago, which was founded by Vincentians, a Catholic organization that helps the poor. Investigations have been launched into four other universities for allegations of tolerating antisemitism, including Northwestern University in suburban Chicago and the University of California at Berkeley, which has often been identified as a leader in free speech. Also targeted are Portland State University in Oregon and the University of Minnesota. The campaign against pro-Palestinian protests was also augmented when the Anti-Defamation League – a political organization that conflates criticism of Israel's government with hatred of Jews – last month released the results of a survey that purports to show a rise in antisemitism.

This is not a fight against antisemitism. Instead, it is the augmentation of an unconstitutional political campaign to silence supporters of Palestinian rights. Ignored in all of this is the fact that hatred targeting Arabs in America is not only at an all-time high, but it continues unabated and unaddressed by the White House or Congress. It is a new trend to criticize anything Palestinian while defending everything Israeli. It does not matter that Israel is a foreign country that shields its war crimes behind the false veil of weaponized antisemitism. The American news media is complicit, reporting on every instance of alleged antisemitism in lengthy and detailed reports, while marginalizing stories on the increase in Islamophobia and ignoring instances of racism against Arabs. All this is a result of how "hate" has become politicized. Democrats in Congress last month reintroduced a bill known as the Combating International Islamophobia Act, which has already been ignored by Republicans and the White House. If approved, the State Department would be required to create a special envoy to monitor anti-Muslim bigotry globally. One of the sponsors of the bill is a prominent Jewish member of Congress, Rep. Jan Schakowsky, who has taken a more moderate approach to the Middle East conflict than her Republican rivals. In fact, concerns about rising Islamophobia have been more prominent elsewhere in the world than in America, where so many anti-Muslim incidents have occurred. One of the leaders in warning about the "alarming rise" in Islamophobia has been the UN, attracting criticism from Israel, the White House and Congress. The ADL has consistently used accusations of antisemitism to respond to rising expressions of concern by UN officials over the increasing Israeli violence against Palestinians. In contrast to the US, the British government last month created a working group to provide it with a working definition of Islam-

phobia, while cautioning that confronting anti-Muslim hate "must be compatible with the unchanging right of British citizens to exercise freedom of speech and expression." This is the exact opposite approach being taken by Congress and the White House, which is calling for stronger measures to block protests against Israel's government policies. These changes in how the West views the hatred of individuals because of their race or religion are fueling the political activism that is undermining the international rule of law and empowering those who wish to silence those who speak out against favored political policies or favored foreign governments. It may not appear to be a problem for the Arab world today, but it is. These policies, which augment and broaden antisemitism to include political issues in defense of Israel and that are unrelated to hate, are marginalizing the growing hatred of Muslims. The political movement to weaponize anti-Muslim sentiment in America will skew the public's perception of the issue. Unable to hear both sides fairly, the public is likely to embrace the distorted view that essentially makes Islamophobia more acceptable. The Arab and Muslim worlds really need to make a greater effort to speak out on the issues of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. So far, expressions of concern have not been matched by programs or funding to educate the public and push back against the rising hatred. For the region, it may not seem important that Islamophobia is being weaponized and empowered in America in both obvious and subtle ways, but it will result in long-term consequences for the Middle Eastern countries that may be hoping for improved relations with America and the West. The Arab world should be more vocal in defending the rights of pro-Palestinian protesters at American universities and colleges or face a future of growing animosity among Americans toward the Middle East.



## Briefs

## UN migration agency in turmoil after US aid freeze

GENEVA: Hit hard by US aid funding cuts, the UN migration agency is battling claims from current and former staff of now pandering to Washington and providing cover for mass deportations. Like many humanitarian agencies, the International Organization for Migration has been reeling since President Donald Trump returned to the White House in January, pushing an anti-migrant agenda and immediately freezing most US foreign aid funding. "These funding cuts directly affect IOM's ability to support some of the world's most vulnerable people," an IOM spokesperson said, warning this would "lead to more suffering, increased migration, and greater insecurity." The United Nations agency, which at the end of last year employed around 22,000 people, has already laid off thousands. —APP

## Former Philippine president held for crimes against humanity

MANILA: Former Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte was arrested Tuesday in Manila by police acting on an International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant citing crimes against humanity tied to his deadly war on drugs. The 79-year-old faces a charge of "the crime against humanity of murder," according to the ICC, for a crackdown in which rights groups estimate tens of thousands of mostly poor men were killed by officers and vigilantes, often without proof they were linked to drugs. "Early in the morning, Interpol Manila received the official copy of the warrant of the arrest from the ICC," the presidential palace said in a statement. "As of now, he is under the custody of authorities." The statement added that "the former president and his group are in good health and are being checked by government doctors."

Duterte was arrested after landing at Manila's international airport following a brief trip to Hong Kong. Speaking to thousands of overseas Filipino workers there on Sunday, the former president decried the investigation, labelling ICC investigators "sons of whores" while saying he would "accept it" if an arrest were to be his fate. The Philippines quit the ICC in 2019 on Duterte's instructions, but the tribunal maintained it had jurisdiction over killings before the pullout, as well as killings in the southern city of Davao when Duterte was mayor there, years before he became president. It launched a formal inquiry in September 2021, only to suspend it two months later after Manila said it was re-examining several hundred cases of drug operations that led to deaths at the hands of police, hitmen and vigilantes. —APP

## Pakistan's exports to US increase 11.23%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United States (US) witnessed an increase of 11.23 percent during the first seven months of fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding months of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to the US were recorded at US \$3.565 billion during July-January (2024-25) against exports of US \$3.205 billion during July-January (2023-24), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, the exports to the US also surged to \$547.752 million in January 2025 against the export of \$456.508 million in January 2024. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to the US witnessed an increase of 8.57 percent during January 2025 as compared to the exports of \$504.481 million in December 2024, the SBP data revealed. —DNA

## Senate Chairman assures trade bodies of full support

The meeting underscored the importance of dialogue between the government and the business community to foster a conducive environment for economic growth and stability

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani met with a delegation led by Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), at the Parliament House today. The meeting was attended by FPCCI Vice President Zaki Ijaz, Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman Coordination Capital Office Sohail Hussain Malik, Momin Malik, Tariq Mahmood, and Omar Salim, executive members of the FPCCI. During the meeting, Senate Chairman Gilani assured the FPCCI delegation of the Parliament's full support in addressing the concerns of the business community. He emphasized the need to resolve ambiguities surrounding the tenure of trade bodies, stating that the Parliament would play its due role in this regard. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of FPCCI, expressed gratitude for the Senate Chairman's assurance of cooperation. He highlighted the business community's concerns over the government's proposed reduction in the tenure of trade bodies. Sheikh pointed out that trade bod-



ies were initially granted a two-year mandate following the 2024 elections, but recent amendments have created uncertainty, causing unease among business stakeholders. Sheikh underscored the importance of Parliament's role in resolving such issues, noting that the legislative forum has historically played a pivotal role in addressing the concerns of the business community. He urged the government to ensure consultation with stakeholders before making legislative changes, emphasizing that a one-year tenure is insufficient for elected representatives to fulfill their agen-

das. The FPCCI President also mentioned that trade bodies and chambers have already rejected the proposed amendments to Section 11 of the Trade Organizations Act. He called for a collaborative approach to ensure that the concerns of the business community are adequately addressed. At the

conclusion of the meeting, Atif Ikram Sheikh presented a souvenir to Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani. The meeting underscored the importance of dialogue between the government and the business community to foster a conducive environment for economic growth and stability.

## Trump says will buy Tesla to show support for Musk

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said Tuesday he will buy a "brand new Tesla" to show support for his top campaign donor and advisor, Tesla CEO Elon Musk. To Republicans, Conservatives, and all great Americans, Elon Musk is 'putting it on the line' in order to help our Nation, and he is doing a FANTASTIC JOB!," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform just after midnight on Tuesday. "But the Radical Left Lunatics, as they often do, are trying to illegally and collusively boycott Tesla, one of the World's great automakers, and Elon's 'baby,' in order to attack and do harm to Elon, and everything he stands for," Trump said. "I'm going to buy a brand new Tesla tomorrow morning as a show of confidence and support for Elon Musk, a truly great American. "Why should he be punished for putting his tremendous skills to work in order to help MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN??" Musk, the world's richest person, responded on his X platform, thanking the president. Since returning to the White House in January, Trump has empowered Musk to slash federal government spending and agencies' workforces as head of the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). But DOGE's cost-cutting campaign has faced increasing resistance, including protests, court rulings and some pressure from lawmakers. While Musk enjoys Trump's confidence, polling shows the tech billionaire is deeply unpopular among ordinary Americans, and his cuts to government budgets have sparked angry confrontations between Republicans and their constituents at town halls. And Tesla investors have feared boycotts and buyer backlash over Musk's actions and close ties to Trump. Some owners of Tesla's pioneering electric cars have voiced buyers' remorse over Musk's foray into politics, and his sharing of conspiracy theories online. Unhappy Tesla owners have even slapped bumper stickers on their vehicles claiming they had purchased them "before Elon went crazy." —DNA

## BISP to expand support to 10m beneficiaries

The meeting underscored the government's commitment to strengthening social safety nets and ensuring expanded support for those in need

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, announced that the number of BISP beneficiaries will increase from 9.3 million to 10 million, expanding financial assistance to more vulnerable families. She made this statement during a meeting with Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, where she also congratulated him on his appointment. The meeting focused on key operational improvements, including enhanced facilities at BISP offices and streamlined registration for eligible individuals. Senator Rubina Khalid reaffirmed BISP's commitment to ensuring transparent and non-discriminatory financial aid distribution. In a significant relief measure, she revealed that the quarterly cash transfer amount has been increased from Rs. 10,500 to Rs. 13,500, providing greater financial support to underprivileged communities. Additionally, she highlighted the upcoming launch of the Benazir Hunarmand Program, a skill development initiative aimed at empowering individuals through vocational training. She emphasized that BISP is dedicated to uplifting communities not only through financial aid but also by equipping beneficiaries with essential skills for a sustainable livelihood. The meeting underscored the government's commitment to strengthening social safety nets and ensuring expanded support for those in need. —DNA

## NA Speaker announces six-member panel of chairpersons

ISLAMABAD: The Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Tuesday announced a six-member panel of chairpersons for conducting the proceedings of the House in the absence of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. The Speaker, in pursuance of sub-rule one of Rule 13 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, announced that Abdul Qadir Patel, Chaudhry Muhammad Shabbaz Babar, Syeda Shehla Raza, Ali Zahid, Muhammad Jawed Hanif Khan and Sher Ali Arbab would conduct the proceedings of Lower House of the Parliament in the absence of Speaker and Deputy Speaker. —APP

## Boatless in Gaza: using old fridge doors to catch fish

GAZA CITY: Balanced calmly on top of what was once a refrigerator door, fisherman Khaled Habib uses a makeshift paddle to propel himself through the waters of Gaza City's fishing port. Israeli bombardment over more than 15 months of war has destroyed most of the boats in the harbor, wrecking the fishermen's means of making a living. "We're in a very difficult situation today, and struggling with the fishing. There are no fishing boats left. They've all been destroyed and tossed on the ground," said Habib. "I made this 'boat' from refrigerator doors and cork — and thankfully it worked." So he could continue feeding his family, Habib came up with the idea of stuffing cork into old fridge doors to make them buoyant. He covered one side with wood and the other with plastic sheeting to help make the makeshift paddleboard waterproof. Habib also crafted a fishing cage out of wire because of the lack of nets but admitted that his resulting catch was "small." The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization said in December that the conflict had taken Gaza's "once thriving fishing sector to the brink of collapse." "Gaza's average daily catch between October 2023 to April 2024 dropped to just 7.3 percent of 2022 levels, causing a \$17.5 million production loss," the FAO said. Habib now fishes mainly inside the small port area using dough as bait. Despite the fragile ceasefire that came into force on Jan. 19, which essentially halted the fighting, Habib said that fishing outside the port is prohibited. —APP

## Hundreds of thousands return home in Sudan

PORT SUDAN: Nearly 400,000 Sudanese have returned to their homes over the past two and a half months after being displaced by the ongoing conflict, the United Nations migration agency said on Monday. Between December and March, "approximately 396,738 individuals" returned to areas retaken from paramilitary forces by the army, which has advanced through central Sudan in recent months, according to the International Organization for Migration. Since April 2023, Sudan has been locked in a brutal conflict between army chief Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and his former deputy Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Daglo, who leads the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. Nearly all the returnees moved back to their homes in the central Sudanese states of Sennar, which the army largely recaptured in December, and Al-Jazira after it was retaken the following month. Thousands more have returned to the capital Khartoum, where the army regained large areas last month and appeared on the verge of expelling the RSF. Displaced families have headed back in droves, even to looted and burned homes, after more than a year of displacement. —APP

## Call for population to see beyond partisan, sectarian views

BEIRUT: Lebanese President Joseph Aoun requested the population to view Lebanon as a state for all rather than continue to view it through sectarian and partisan lenses. Aoun cautioned his visitors during a meeting that "if we remain prisoners of our narrow perspectives, we will lose many opportunities available to us." He added: "We have significant Arab and international support, and everyone claims to be with us. However, Lebanon is required to implement the necessary reforms." Aoun's statement followed controversial remarks by Hezbollah's Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem during an interview on the group's Al-Manar channel. He said: "The resistance will not cease and will not relinquish its capabilities in the face of Israeli aggression and occupation." He added: "The ceasefire agreement with Israel includes the phrase 'south of the Litani River' five times, which is the framework we must rely upon." He stressed that "the resistance views Israel as a threat to Lebanon and that there is no objection to the army and the state defending the country." He added: "The resistance has the right to continue its efforts to protect Lebanon." —APP

## Nearly 300 indians brought from Southeast Asian scam centers

NEW DELHI: India has brought home nearly 300 of its nationals who were lured to various southeast Asian countries, including Myanmar, with fake job offers and made to engage in cybercrime and other fraudulent activities in scam compounds, the government said. Thousands of people have been freed from cyber scam centers along the Thailand-Myanmar border this year as countries work together to crack down on the criminal networks. China and Indonesia repatriated some of their citizens last month. "Indian embassies in Myanmar and Thailand have coordinated with local authorities to secure the repatriation of 283 Indian nationals today by an IAF (Indian Air Force) aircraft from Mae Sot in Thailand," India's foreign ministry said late on Monday. Thailand arrested 100 people last week as a part of its crackdown on the scam centers. Criminal gangs have trafficked hundreds of thousands of people to the centers, which generate billions of dollars a year from illegal online schemes, according to the United Nations. —APP

## Greenland votes under shadow of Trump

NUUK: Greenland, the Danish self-governing territory coveted by US President Donald Trump, votes Tuesday in legislative elections that could yield a timeline for independence, which is supported by a majority of the population. Trump, determined to get his hands on the vast Arctic island "one way or the other", tried until the last minute to influence the election, sparking astonishment, rejection, and, to a small degree, enthusiasm among the 57,000 Greenlanders. "He puts the focus of Greenland back in international relations, like everyone's focusing on it. So in that way, it's good," said Hans Kaali Davidsen, a resident of Nuuk, the capital, under a glacial rainfall. But, he stressed, "Trump himself, the way he's been handling his own politics and his own country and how everything's shaping up in the US — no, we don't want him." The lead-up of the election to choose the 31-seat parliament, called the Inatsisartut, was mostly marked by a debate on issues such as healthcare, education, and future ties with Denmark, which still controls foreign, defence and monetary policy. Greenland's inhabitants — almost 90 percent of whom are Inuits — say they are tired of being treated like second-class citizens by their former colonial power. All the main political parties favour independence, but they disagree on the timeframe. The election result will define the balance of power between those who want to independence quickly — such as the nationalist Naleraq party, the main opposition faction — and those who prefer to wait until the island is financially independent, such as the two parties who make up the outgoing coalition, the left-green Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA) and social democratic Siumut. The island, covered 80 percent by ice, depends on its fisheries sector, which accounts for almost all of its exports, and annual Danish subsidies of more than \$565 million, equivalent to a fifth of its GDP. The most impatient independence backers believe Greenland will soon be able to stand on its own thanks to untapped mineral reserves, including rare earths crucial to the green transition. But the mining sector is still in its embryonic stages, hampered by high costs due to Greenland's harsh climate and lack of infrastructure. Trump floated the idea of buying Greenland during his first mandate, in a bid swiftly rejected by Danish and Greenlandic authorities. Back in the White House, he has circled back on the ambition with greater fervour, refusing to rule out the use of force and invoking US national security. Late Sunday, Trump invited Greenlanders "to be a part of the Greatest Nation anywhere in the World, the United States of America". He promised in a post on his social network Truth Social to make them "rich". The most recent polling on the issue, published in January, shows 85 percent of Greenlanders are opposed to Trump's idea. "We don't want to be American. He is so arrogant," 58-year-old Rene Olsen, a ship repairman, told AFP on Monday. Yet Trump's statements — described as "unpredictable" by outgoing Prime Minister Mute Egede — have sent a jolt through election. Trump's message is indeed a positive one, since it provides a safer and more stable ground for Greenland's move to independence," party member Juno Berthelsen told AFP. "We need the United States for national security and vice versa." —Agencies

## Dalai Lama says his successor to be born outside China

NEW DELHI: The Dalai Lama's successor will be born outside China, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism says in a new book, raising the stakes in a dispute with Beijing over control of the Himalayan region he fled more than six decades ago. Tibetans worldwide want the institution of the Dalai Lama to continue after the 89-year-old's death, he writes in "Voice for the Voiceless," which was reviewed by Reuters and is being released on Tuesday. He had previously said the line of spiritual leaders might end with him. His book marks the first time the Dalai Lama has specified that his successor would be born in the "free world," which he describes as outside China. He has previously said only that he could reincarnate outside Tibet,

possibly in India where he lives in exile. "Since the purpose of a reincarnation is to carry on the work of the predecessor, the new Dalai Lama will be born in the free world so that the traditional mission of the Dalai Lama — that is, to be the voice for universal compassion, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, and the symbol of Tibet embodying the aspirations of the Tibetan people — will continue," the Dalai Lama writes. Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, fled at the age of 23 to India with thousands of other Tibetans in 1959 after a failed uprising against the rule of Mao Zedong's Communists. Beijing insists it will choose his successor, but the Dalai Lama has said any successor named by China would not

be respected. China brands the Dalai Lama, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for keeping alive the Tibetan cause, as a "separatist." When asked about the book at a press briefing on Monday, a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry said the Dalai Lama "is a political exile who is engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion." "On the Tibet issue, China's position is consistent and clear. What the Dalai Lama says and does cannot change the objective fact of Tibet's prosperity and development." Supporters of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan cause include Richard Gere, a follower of Tibetan Buddhism, and Nancy Pelosi, the former speaker of the US House of Representatives.

His followers have been worried about his health, especially after knee surgery last year. He said in December that he might live to be 110. In his book, the Dalai Lama says he has received numerous petitions for more than a decade from a wide spectrum of Tibetan people, including senior monks and Tibetans living in Tibet and outside, "uniformly asking me to ensure that the Dalai Lama lineage be continued." Tibetan tradition holds that the soul of a senior Buddhist monk is reincarnated in the body of a child on his death. The current Dalai Lama was identified as the reincarnation of his predecessor when he was two. The book, which the Dalai Lama calls an account of his dealings with Chinese leaders over seven decades, is being published on Tuesday in

the US by William Morrow and in Britain by HarperNonFiction, with HarperCollins publications to follow in India and other countries. He expressed faith in the Tibetan government and parliament-in-exile, based with him in India's Himalayan city of Dharamshala, to carry on the political work for the Tibetan cause. "The right of the Tibetan people to be the custodians of their own homeland cannot be indefinitely denied, nor can their aspiration for freedom be crushed forever through oppression," he writes. "One clear lesson we know from history is this: if you keep people permanently unhappy, you cannot have a stable society." Given his advanced age, he writes, his hopes of going back to Tibet look "increasingly unlikely." — Agencies

**Briefs**

**Russians shaken by Ukrainian drone barrage**

MOSCOW: As a drone smashed into the side of her apartment block early on Tuesday, Russia's full-scale offensive on Ukraine literally came home to Svetlana in a suburb southeast of Moscow. Like for most Russians, Moscow's three-year military campaign had until then felt distant — mostly constrained to television screens. Despite militaristic propaganda and a mass recruitment of soldiers, authorities have tried to keep society at arm's length from the conflict's death and destruction — especially in and around the capital. "You understand that it is war, but you don't realize it properly," Svetlana, wearing a winter coat with a fur collar, said. "But now, yes, it has come." In her town of Ramenskoye, around 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of central Moscow, police had cordoned off an area where a drone hit. The attack shattered the sense of comfort that Svetlana — a supporter of the Kremlin's offensive — had. "Yes, we were weaving camouflage nets, collecting humanitarian aid, accompanying fighters there, but we still didn't realize it. Now it has come," Svetlana said. "I'm scared for the children," said Andrei, an electrician who lives on the 12th floor of a building that was hit. He was sweeping up broken glass from his car, which was hit by falling shrapnel after the drone crashed into the 18th-22nd floors. "My six-year-old daughter was sleeping with me, she woke up crying from the noise," he told AFP. Kyiv said it wants the attack — which involved more than 300 drones — to convince Russian President Vladimir Putin to agree to an aerial ceasefire. The Kremlin has previously ruled that out. — Agencies

**Court issues arrest warrants for PTI leaders**

DNA  
ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court on Tuesday issued arrest warrants for PTI leaders in the Azadi March cases. Senior Civil Judge Muhammad Abbas Shah heard two cases related to the march, where PTI founder Imran Khan and others are nominated. None of the accused appeared before the court. Due to their absence, the court issued arrest warrants for Ali Nawaz Awan, Raja Khurram Nawaz, and others. The court could not hear arguments on the acquittal pleas, with Judge Abbas Shah stating that he would only consider the requests in the presence of the accused. The petitioners' lawyer argued that in previous cases, Imran Khan was acquitted despite his absence. The hearing was adjourned until April 23. Two cases against Imran Khan and others are registered at Kohsar Police Station.

## Pakistan sugar exports to Afghanistan fully regulated

This season, country to have 5.7m tonnes of sugar in addition to stock available from previous harvest, says Fin Min

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that, for the first time, sugar bound for Afghanistan was exported through official channels rather than smuggled, with the support of law enforcement agencies at the border. "... we need every single dollar coming in to balance our current account," the finance minister said speaking at a press conference along with Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar. Elaborating on the implementation and effectiveness of the strict production monitoring system, the country's top economic manager termed the development as positive. "During this sugar season, the country would have 5.7 million tonnes of sugar in addition to the stock available from the previous season," Aurangzeb said. He expressed confidence that this would be sufficient to meet the country's needs through better management. "On top of these technological measures, FBR (Federal Board of Revenue) personnel have been deployed at sugar mills across the country to ensure accountability and reduce malpractices," the finance minister said. He said the presence of the Federal In-

vestigation Agency (FIA) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) officers, along with other law enforcement agencies, further strengthened the system's enforcement. "The result is that sugar is now being sold to genuine distributors, and profiteering and corruption within the supply chain are being significantly minimised," Aurangzeb said. Meanwhile, in its bid to stabilise and bring down soaring sugar prices, the federal government has decided to import raw sugar (shakkar). The News reported on Tuesday. The import of raw sugar, as per a press release issued by the government, would help bring down sugar prices and would also increase future sugar production, as it could be refined and converted into sugar locally. The development comes as sugar prices in the country have witnessed a significant increase in recent months with the price reaching the nationwide average to Rs150.43 per kilogram last month. Commenting on the ongoing reforms in the sugar industry, he noted that as the 2024-2025 sugarcane crushing season began, the FBR had implemented a new, enhanced production monitoring system for sugar mills. "This system includes five oversight mechanisms, such as track-and-trace stamps, automated counters, and video recording to increase transparency," he said.

Since the week ending November 28, 2024, sugar prices have increased by Rs18.58 per kg, reflecting a 14.3% surge. A year ago, in February 2024, the average price had stood at Rs144.47 per kg, marking an annual rise of approximately Rs6 per kg. The continuous price hike coincides with the government's decision to approve large-scale sugar exports. Between June and October 2024, authorities had permitted the export of 750,000 metric tonnes, including a final approval of 500,000 metric tonnes in October. The finance minister also highlighted the positive impact of these reforms on government revenue, noting that the sales tax on sugar in the first two months of 2025 had risen sharply compared to the same period in the previous year, reaching Rs24 billion, up from Rs15 billion in the previous year. "This 54% increase is a clear indication of the success of the government's enhanced monitoring systems," he added. Thanking the Pakistani diaspora for their contribution to the nation's economy, the minister said the remittance inflow for February 2025 had reached an impressive \$3.1 billion. "We estimate an all-time high remittance inflow of \$36 billion by the end of the fiscal year," he said. The finance minister also shared the re-

sults of several independent surveys conducted in the past quarter, including those by Gallup, ICC, Overseas Shapers, Ipsos, PricewaterhouseCoopers and a recent one by the State Bank of Pakistan, all of which showed a noticeable uptick in business and consumer confidence. "This confidence is reflected in increased business activity, and it is promising to see these positive trends taking root across various sectors," he noted. Despite daily fluctuations in the stock market index, Aurangzeb expressed optimism about the market's overall direction. Notably, he pointed out that 52,000 new investors had entered the market in recent months, signalling a growing interest in Pakistan's financial sector. Furthermore, the finance minister highlighted a major milestone in the capital markets, with seven initial public offerings (IPOs) taking place on the stock exchange in the past year. "This is the highest number of IPOs in recent years, significantly surpassing the average of four IPOs annually over the past decade," the finance minister said. "These are very encouraging signs of progress, both in terms of economic recovery and in fostering a more vibrant, investor-friendly market environment," he said, adding that such developments suggested long-term improvements to come.

**ATC extends Armaghan's physical remand**

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday extended the physical remand of Armaghan Qureshi, the prime suspect in the Mustafa Amir kidnapping and murder case, by seven more days. During the hearing at the special ATC set up in Central Jail Karachi, the investigating officer presented the accused before the court after the completion of his previous remand. The court inquired about the investigation report, to which the officer requested an extension, stating that a DVR, a weapon, and an iPhone had been recovered from the accused. He urged the court to extend the remand until March 17 for further investigation. However, the defense lawyer, Abid Zaman, opposed the request, arguing that no further investigation was needed and the accused should be sent to jail on judicial remand. The lawyer claimed that the prosecution had lied about the recovery of the stick, as it was retrieved the next day. The court asked how long a physical remand could be granted in ATC cases.



ISLAMABAD: US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie A. Baker calls on Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar. — DNA

## US, Ukraine hold talks after major attack on Russia

US has stopped military assistance and paused intelligence sharing with Kyiv, and British PM Keir Starmer told Trump on Monday that he hoped those moves could be reversed as a result of the talks

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Ukrainian and US officials held crunch talks in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday to find a path towards ending the war with Russia, hours after Kyiv's forces launched their largest drone attack on Moscow to date. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hopes the meeting in Jeddah will revive "pragmatic" US ties after his disastrous talks with US President Donald Trump last month and he has suggested an initial truce with Russia in the air and at sea. The proposal is aimed at demonstrating he is working towards Trump's objective to end the war at lightning speed, after the US president accused the Ukrainian leader of not being ready for peace and pressed ahead with direct talks with Russia. "The meeting has begun very constructively," Andriy Yermak, Zelenskyy's chief of staff who is leading the Ukrainian delegation, wrote on Telegram. Ukraine's anxious European allies are watching for any sign of an improvement, or further deterioration, in Kyiv's relations with

Trump's Washington, which has upended US policy on the war and piled pressure on Ukraine. In particular, the US has stopped military assistance and paused intelligence sharing with Kyiv, and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told Trump on Monday that he hoped those moves could be reversed as a result of the talks. "Dear Americans, dear Ukrainians, don't waste this chance. The whole world is watching you in Jeddah today. Good luck!" Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk wrote on X. Ukraine overnight launched its biggest drone attack on Moscow yet, deploying at least 91 drones, killing at least three people, sparking fires, closing airports and forcing dozens of flights to be diverted, Russian officials said. The strike — in which 337 drones were downed over Russia, according to Moscow — appeared aimed at showing Kyiv can also land major blows after a steady stream of Russian missile and drone attacks, one of which killed 14 people on Saturday. It comes as Zelenskyy has been calling on his European allies to support the air and sea truce idea that he says would be a chance to test Moscow's willingness to end the war.

## PIA sell-off set for July, IMF told

ZTBL, three DISCOs among entities on privatisation list

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The government has assured the International Monetary Fund of selling the Pakistan International Airlines by July, but the future of Roosevelt Hotel in New York has yet to be decided amidst the US decision to terminate the \$228 million worth lease deal prematurely. In a briefing to the IMF over Pakistan's virtually stalled privatisation programme, the federal authorities said that they will try to privatise five to seven enterprises, including PIA, three financial institutions and three power distribution companies, according to the government sources. Among the financial institutions that will be privatised is the ZTBL and the government is hopeful to sell it off by November this year. The global lender has been told that the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation would make a decision whether to sell the priciest Roosevelt Hotel or give it under a joint lease agreement. The hotel, owned by PIA, is located in an area considered among the top 1% of the most expensive properties in the world. The hotel has 1,025 rooms and Pakistan had given it on three years' lease to the Immigrant Housing Business by the New York City Government in July 2023.

## Karakoram Highway blocked due to landslide

GILGIT: The Karakoram highway (KKH) has been blocked in the limits of the Lotar police station in Upper Kohistan due to a heavy landslide since Monday night, police officials said today. This disconnects Gilgit Baltistan and parts of Kohistan from the rest of the country, leaving hundreds of travelers and families stranded on both sides of the international route. Last week, the KKH was reopened to traffic after the company executing the Dasu hydropower project in Upper Kohistan district removed a massive landslide that had blocked the road earlier in the week. Upper Kohistan control room police official Minhajuddin confirmed the road blockade via phone to media, while Gilgit Baltistan's Diamer district police officer's assistant Abdul Khaliq also confirmed the blockage. "The Karakoram Highway has been blocked since last night at Lotar area, which is the limits of Upper Kohistan. I just recently contacted an official in Kohistan police who said the landslide is massive, and its opening till late night is not possible with a single cleaning machine," Khaliq said. He added that passengers were stranded on both sides of the block. However, Diamer police were on the roads to inform the travelers heading down towards Islamabad and other cities that they would wait in Chilas city till the road opens. Minhajuddin at the Upper Kohistan control room told media that work on the road opening was underway, but the boulders were big and blocked over a 100-meter portion of the road in the Lotar area. He said the stranded passengers were being served with Iftari in Kohistan by the local people and administration as the KKH was blocked for the fifth time over the last 10 days. Ali Shah Sharliat, a passenger, told media that he was traveling towards Gilgit and got stuck on the way along with his family and was waiting for the road closure, but the pace of road clearance was not only slow but comprised single-machine work at the point. He said the weather was cold and that he was experiencing hardships while fasting with family. He urged the government to fix this issue permanently because the KKH gets blocked often, mostly in the Kohistan and Diamer areas, and even people lose their precious lives due to landslides. — DNA

## UN resident coordinator calls on finance minister Aurangzeb

During the meeting, the Minister emphasized that Pakistan faces two major existential challenges: climate change and population growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: DFederal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held today an important meeting at the Finance Division with Mr. Mohammed Yahya, the United Nations Resident Coordinator, who was accompanied by Mr. Abdul-Fadil, UNICEF Representative. The meeting provided a platform for discussions on key issues including

debt management, debt restructuring, climate financing, sustainable development goals (SDGs), and Pakistan's transition to green energy. Ms. Afke Bootsman, Head of UN Resident Coordinator Office and Dr. Luay Shabaneh, UNFPA Representative were also present along with senior officers from the Finance Division. During the meeting, the Minister emphasized that Pakistan faces two major existential challenges: climate change and population growth. He stated that no

amount of economic stability and growth could be sustained without addressing these two critical issues. The Minister highlighted the importance of the technical support from development partners in designing and implementing bankable and investable projects that would be properly monitored and reported according to international standards.

The Minister also outlined Pakistan's ongoing commitment to its partnership with the World Bank, particularly focusing on the two key areas of population management and learning poverty, which are part of the 10-year Country Partnership Framework signed between Pakistan and the World Bank. He reiterated Pakistan's determination to address these issues effectively with the necessary technical and financial support. Furthermore, Senator Aurangzeb provided an update on the country's economic outlook, pointing to stability and improvements in several key economic indicators. He reaffirmed the government's focus on an export- and productivity-led growth model, carefully managed to avoid the boom-and-bust cycles of the past.



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