



Islamabad POST

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Hania Aamir honoured at UK Parliament with 'Star of Pakistan' award

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Dar vows to strengthen Pak-Azerbaijan ties

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Judicial reforms must ensure timely justice

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Eyeing UK operations

UK transport deprettains PIA on air safety list

Airlines must go through rigorous procedure to have restrictions lifted, says spokesperson

FOREIGN DESK / DNA

LONDON: The UK Department for Transport confirmed on Tuesday that Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) would remain on the air safety list. In a statement, a spokesperson for the department said that the UK Civil Aviation Authority was in contact with Pakistani authorities regarding the issue. "Airlines must go through a rigorous procedure to have restrictions lifted," the spokesperson added. The UK Air Safety List is the published list of countries and airlines that are subject to an operating ban on safety grounds and so cannot fly planes to, from or within the UK. All air carriers certified by the authorities with responsibility for regulatory oversight of Pakistan are banned from operating commercial air services to, from, and within the United Kingdom, stated an official UK government website. Last week, it was reported that the ban on the national carrier on flying to Britain is likely to be lifted soon as the British Air Safety Committee concluded an important meeting on the matter. The ban was enforced in July 2020 by the UK and European aviation authorities following the fake pilot licence scandal. However, Pakistani authorities remained hopeful that the restrictions would be lifted following tomorrow's review. In 2020, during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) government, then-aviation minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan claimed that pilots were operating planes with fake licences. This was his response after PIA's Airbus A-320s plunged into a Karachi street, killing nearly 100 people. Following this, the debt-ridden PIA was banned from flying to the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The ban cost the loss-making airline Rs40 billion (\$144 million) annually in revenue. In January 2025, after a years-long hiatus, the PIA operated its first direct flight from

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Russian envoy clarifies Pakistan not supplying arms to Ukraine

Russia's ambassador rejects reports of Pakistani arms supply to Ukraine, calling them baseless in an interview

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Russia's Ambassador to Pakistan, Albert P. Khorev, has dismissed media reports alleging that Russia has found evidence of Pakistan supplying arms to Ukraine. Speaking to a Pakistani news channel Khorev stated, "We have not found any proof of Pakistani arms supplies in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. All such claims are baseless." On regional security, Khorev acknowledged that Afghanistan's efforts to combat militancy were inadequate but attributed this to economic challenges and prevailing security conditions in the country. He identified ISIS as the greatest threat to Russia's national and regional security, stating that Moscow is closely monitoring the situation and working with regional partners under the "Quartet" format to counter terrorism. Khorev also highlighted Russia's collaboration with regional countries under the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to eliminate militancy.

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ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari distributing computer tablets among orphaned children during an Iftar Dinner hosted by him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

President hosts Iftar dinner for orphaned children

During the ceremony, the President also distributed computer tablets to the children

MEHTAB PIZRADA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Zardari has urged children to prioritize education, calling it the key to success. He said that children were their future and they must focus on their education and work hard to become successful individuals. The President expressed these views during an Iftar Dinner hosted by him for the orphaned children being cared for by the Pakistan Orphan Care Forum, at Aiwan-e-Sadr today. During the ceremony, the President also distributed computer tablets to the children,

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Demands plebiscite at UN 'Kashmir dispute awaits just, final settlement: Pak'

"Jammu and Kashmir is not, and has never been, a so-called 'integral' part of India," Pakistan at UNSC debate

DNA

NEW YORK: Pakistan has once again dismissed India's claim that Jammu and Kashmir is an "integral part" of the country, reiterating that the region remains disputed and its status is recognised as such by the United Nations and the international community. "Every official UN map depicts Jammu and Kashmir as disputed territory," said Gul Qaiser Sarwani, Counselor at Pakistan's Mission to the UN, while exercising his right of reply at the conclusion of a high-level UN Security Council debate on peacekeeping operations. Sarwani's response came after Indian Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish repeated New Delhi's assertion that "Kashmir has been, is, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India." The Indian envoy made the statement in reaction to a speech by Syed Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to

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EU-Pak business forum set to take place in May

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen its cooperative partnership with the EU

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The inaugural EU-Pakistan Business Forum is set to take place in Islamabad from May 14-15 to enhance economic cooperation, according to a joint announcement by the government and European Union delegation on Tuesday. The EU is the largest single market in the world and the largest destination for Pakistani exports.

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Briefs

Army Chief's mother passes away

President Asif Ali Zardari condoled the death of the mother of Chief of Army Staff

DNA

LAHORE: The mother of Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir has passed away. With the news circulating on media, condolences started pouring in on the sad demise of the mother of Gen Asim Munir. People shared condolence messages and commented that Ramazan is a month of blessing and may Allah Almighty shower limitless blessing on the departed soul. President Asif Ali Zardari condoled the death of the mother of Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Asim Munir. In his condolence message, the president said it was sad to hear about the news of the death of army chief's mother.

Jl announces million march

Karachi emir says rulers fail to give people relief

DNA

KARACHI: Jamaate-Islami (JI) has announced holding a million march on April 27 in Karachi. In a statement issued here, Karachi JI emir Munam Zafar said the aim to hold million march was to highlight the pressing issues of people of Karachi, adding MQM-P, PPP and PML-N were not serious in resolving people's issues. Munam Zafar said 'Haq Doo Tehreek' will get momentum after Ramazan, vowing his party will continue its efforts for the well-being of the masses. He said price hike, worsening law and order situation and terrorism incidents were worrisome problems and all political parties and the rulers should unite to overcome these challenges.

Residing in KP

Centre seeks record of Afghan students

Interior Ministry requires details by March 27 as its updating its dashboard related to foreign nationals

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: In the wake of the looming deadline for illegal Afghan nationals to leave Pakistan, the Ministry of Interior's Foreign National Security Cell has sought the record of Afghan students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from the provincial government. In its letter addressed to KP's interior secretary, the federal ministry said that the Foreign National Security Cell was updating its dashboard related to foreign nationals and needed the data of Afghan students by March 27. The federal government's move comes against the backdrop of its directives ordering all illegal aliens, including Afghan citizens, to leave the country by March 31. The interim Afghan Taliban-led administration in Kabul had earlier requested Islamabad to extend the stay of Afghans residing illegally in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. However, Pakistan had turned down the neighbouring country's request. The Afghan nationals, who have

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PTI leaders exchange barbs

PTI leaders exchange barbs as Babar Awan allowed to meet with founder

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: A new controversy came to light on Tuesday after Babar Awan was allowed to meet with the PTI founder Imran Khan. The meeting between Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi was due today. Tensions arose between the legal team and the jail administration when Babar Awan was allowed to meet. Salman Akram Raja, while talking to the jail staff, said, "You should establish discipline." Babar Awan's name is not included in our list. Why did you call him inside? PTI secretary general was of the opinion that only

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Jaffar Express attack 'facilitators' arrested by CTD

Weapons, communication devices recovered from slain terrorists sent for forensic analysis

STAFF REPORT

QUETTA: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) arrested four suspected facilitators of the March 11 terrorist attack on the Jaffar Express near Balochistan's Bolan district, sources privy to

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Tariff cut, Rs 11 billion waiver offered by seven IPPs

IPPs call on regulator to discontinue its suo motu actions and related inquiries

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Seven independent power producers (IPPs) have offered to cut electricity tariffs by up to Re0.50 per unit and waive over Rs11 billion in late payment surcharges - on the condition that the government withdraw all ongoing legal proceedings and investigations into alleged excessive profits. In a joint tariff revision request submitted to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), the IPPs contended that fuel and operation and maintenance (O&M) cost recoveries had already been settled. They called on the regulator to discontinue its suo motu actions and related inquiries. An IPP's representative stated that their petition for tariff revision was conditional upon the withdrawal of all legal cases against them. "Our request is tied to the closure of all cases filed against us," the representative said, adding that they had challenged all Nepra notices in the Islamabad High Court. Similarly, another IPP's representative demanded the withdrawal of suo motu proceedings against their company. The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA), backing

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ECC approves key economic projects

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet met today with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing it virtually from China where he is attending the Boao Forum for Asia 2025. The meeting was attended by Minister for Petroleum Mr. Ali Parvez Malik, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, along with the Chairman of SECP, federal secretaries, and senior officials from relevant ministries and divisions. The ECC took up a summary by the Petroleum Division regarding the Reko-Diq Project and changes in its overall development plan and related financial commitments and project

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Sanaulah calls for enhanced collaboration with Australia

During the meeting, Neil Hawkins praised Pakistan for its efforts in combating terrorism and praised the country's role in maintaining peace and stability in the region



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaulah meeting with Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins.

kistan and Australia, on Tuesday. During the meeting, Neil Hawkins praised Pakistan for its efforts in combating terrorism and praised the country's role in maintaining peace and stability in the region. He expressed Australia's commitment to enhancing cooperation in various areas. Minister Sanaulah stressed the importance of strong ties between the two countries for mutual development. He pointed out the need for increased collaboration in education, trade, and investment. He also highlighted Pakistan's significant contributions to regional security and urged the international community to recognize its experience in this area. Sanaulah emphasized that political stability and economic growth are interconnected, arguing that strengthening democratic practices is vital for national stability. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to economic stability and sustainable development. The meeting ended with both leaders agreeing to deepen their bilateral relations and expand cooperation in multiple sectors.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaulah met with Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins to discuss ways to improve relations between Pa-

PU hosts manuscripts' artistic book-binding exhibition

LAHORE :Punjab University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Ali on Tuesday inaugurated Pakistan's first-ever exhibition on artistic book-binding of rare manuscripts. The exhibition titled 'Tajdeed-e-Naqoosh' is a revival of artistic book-binding and illumination. In a pioneering effort, PU has hosted Pakistan's first exhibition of its kind, where an academic institution and its institutional library have showcased artistic book-binding from its extensive manuscript collection. The event was jointly organized by Punjab University Department of Fine Arts and Main Library here on Tuesday. On this occasion, Department of Fine Arts Chairperson and curator Prof Dr Sumera Jawad, Chief Librarian Dr Muhammad Haroon Usmani, curator Amina Cheema, faculty members, artists and students were present. In his address, PU VC Dr Muhammad Ali commended the efforts of curators Amina Cheema, Dr Sumera and Dr Haroon for their dedication to this significant endeavor. He said that our students should know how books were preserved in the past. Amina Cheema said that this exhibition not only addresses the historical invisibility of artistic bookbinding and illumination but also raises critical questions regarding typology, contextualization, display methodologies, and the complexities of metadata associated with each artifact. She said that it marks a crucial step in advancing scholarly engagement with these overlooked domains, fostering further research and appreciation of Islamic and regional book arts. Book-binding and illumination, integral to the Islamic arts of the book, have historically remained underrepresented in local scholarship and the broader art scene. Tajdeed-e-Naqoosh is a collaborative initiative dedicated to the revival of these traditional and regional art forms, seeking to bring them into academic and artistic discourse. —APP

Pak, EU to strengthen economic ties through high level business forum

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the European Union are set to strengthen their economic ties through the first-ever High-Level EU-Pakistan Business Forum, scheduled to take place on May 14,15 in Islamabad. This landmark event aims to facilitate high-level dialogue, empower partnerships, and unlock opportunities for businesses in both regions, said a EU press release. The EU is Pakistan's largest trading partner, accounting for 15.3% of Pakistan's total trade in 2023, with bilateral trade reaching 11.87 billion. Pakistan offers immense business opportunities, with a rapidly growing market of over 240 million people, competitive labor costs, and strategic geo-

graphical access to Central and South Asia. The forum will bring together high-level policymakers, business leaders, and CEOs from Pakistan and Europe, as well as financial institutions and investors. It will showcase Pakistan's potential, innovation, and best practices in key sectors, including agribusiness, energy, and renewables, green logistics, pharmaceuticals, IT, and textiles. The key highlights of the forum include launch of the EU-Pakistan Business Network, A network of 300+ European companies active in Pakistan, aiming to strengthen EU-Pakistan business cooperation and promote enhanced trade and investment. EU's Global Gateway Strategy, a largest investment pro-

gramme outside of the EU, aiming to leverage EUR 300 billion of investments worldwide until 2027. Business-to-Business and Business-to-Government Meetings, dedicated meetings, engaging discussions, and exhibitions to foster dialogue and collaboration between European and Pakistani businesses. Sector-Specific Breakout Sessions which focused discussions on key sectors, including agribusiness, IT, and textiles, to explore opportunities for growth and collaboration. The forum marks a crucial step in reinforcing economic ties between Pakistan and the European Union, paving the way for enhanced collaboration and mutual prosperity.—APP

Motorway Police recover gutka worth millions

ISLAMABAD:The Motorway Police South Zone, in a successful operation on Tuesday recovered contraband gutka worth Rs 10 lakh and arrested a drug-peddler, while the other escaped. According to the NH&MP spokesperson, a rickshaw driver near Matiani informed the motorway police that a white Honda City (number BX462) had hit his rickshaw and fled. As soon as the information was received, the officers of the Motorway Police immediately started a chase. The accused tried to flee by leaving the vehicle at the location of 197-NB. Timely action by the Motorway Police resulted in the arrest of one of the accused, while the second suspect managed to flee. Upon searching the vehicle, police found 10 sacks filled with banned gutka and two fake number plates. The seized items and the arrested individual were handed over to the Khabrani police station for further investigation.—DNA

SECP launches same-day account opening

ISLAMABAD:The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has developed a concept paper in consultation with the Central Depository Company (CDC) to enhance the eZfile portal for same-day corporate bank account opening. The key features of the concept paper include integrating regulatory, technological, and digital procedures with banking systems to streamline the process, eliminate redundancies, and improve efficiency, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. This integration aims to enhance the ease of doing business, promote financial inclusion, and support economic growth by providing newly established companies with immediate access to banking services. The eZfile portal will introduce a "Corporate Account Opening" section, enabling companies to set up bank accounts during registration by submitting additional documents. Verified data will be shared with selected banks for a seamless, standardized, same-day account opening process. A push-based mechanism will ensure real-time data exchange, while API integration with banks, centralized KYC, e-alerts for activation, and provisions for provisional accounts will enhance efficiency and compliance. The RAAST platform may also be leveraged to streamline transaction processing. According to the concept paper, this feature aims to create a more efficient, one-stop solution for company incorporation and corporate banking. The new feature will ensure that businesses can complete the necessary steps for account opening without unnecessary delays or confusion. The concept paper on enhancing the eZfile portal for same-day corporate bank account opening has been placed on SECP's website to seek public comments.—DNA

Peshawari Chappal draw people ahead of Eid celebrations

DNA

PESHAWAR: Peshawari Chappal, a famous traditional footwear with eye-catching designs started attracting customers ahead of Eidul Fitr celebrations. With less than five days left in Eidul Fitr, people thronged to Peshawari chappal outlets to select appropriate shoes for themselves and family members. Known as the city of artisans, Peshawar's Jahangirpura Bazaar near the historic Qissakhani Bazaar has been the hub of skilled cobblers where shoemakers are burning the midnight oil to meet the growing de-

mands of people. Many consumers, belonging to other districts, have trekked long distances to buy decent, shiny and unique designs for themselves and their family members. Besides its cultural relevance, one contributing factor to the increased preference for durable readymade chappals is the skyrocketing costs of foreign footwear, which the salaried, middle class and low-income groups can barely afford. Fayaz Khan, a local shoemaker who remained associated with this hard business for the past 25 years in Jhangirpura, said that peoples' demand for this traditional chappal has increased manifold due

to its durability and shininess. "Currently, we cannot accept more orders due to shortage of time, power load-shedding and fasting," he said. Fayaz felt proud of adhering to these skills from his forefathers, who were associated with this profession for decades with expertise, skill and craftsmanship. "Peshawari chappal is my favorite and my Eid seems incomplete without it," Faraz, Khan, a resident of Wapda Town Nowshera, said while selecting footwear for himself and family members at Jhangirpura. "I purchased six sets of handmade designs of Peshawari chappal for Rs5000 each this year as against

Rs4,500 last year for myself, brother, and orphans," he said adding that purchasing shoes and clothes for poor people would double our joy on Eid. He urged the government to regulate this business and fix rates for Peshawari chappal to facilitate the customers. "Peshawar chappal is my first choice for Eid as it gives a traditional touch with shalwar qameez and can also be worn with pants and jeans, as is the trend now," Professor Ehtisham Khan, a resident of Nowshera, said. "I purchased plain black and green designs of this famous chappal as demanded by my brothers," he said, adding that its other



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Musadik Masood Malik cutting ribbon to inaugurate the "Rescue and Rehabilitation Center for Asian Black Bear, at Old Margzar Zoo" in Federal Capital.

Plant for Pakistan campaign continues

LAHORE:Vice Chairman of Lahore Development Authority (LDA), Mian Marghoob Ahmed, and Director General LDA Tahir Farooq visited the LDA Township office Tuesday as part of the ongoing "Plant for Pakistan" campaign and planted a tree to promote environmental sustainability. Under the "Plant for Pakistan" initiative, LDA is planting over 215,000 trees across various locations. DG LDA Tahir Farooq shared that in the past few days alone, LDA has planted more than 40,000 trees, with 25,000 of them being geo-tagged for tracking and monitoring. Additionally, LDA has distributed over 15,000 plants among citizens in recent days, in line with the campaign's goals to engage the community in environmental conservation. DG LDA emphasized that the tree plantation campaign would continue under the guidance of the Punjab Chief Minister. In collaboration with private housing schemes, LDA plans to plant over 150,000 more trees. The Vice Chairman of LDA noted that these efforts are part of the broader vision to promote eco-friendly initiatives in the provincial capital. Following the plantation activity, Vice Chairman Mian Marghoob Ahmed and DG LDA Tahir Farooq personally distributed plants to citizens present at the event. The special tree plantation event was organized by the LDA Enforcement Squad. In attendance were additional DG Headquarters, additional DG UP, Chief Engineer LDA, and Chief Metropolitan Planning, along with directors of various departments including Enforcement, Environment, Education, Kachi Abadies, and Housing, as well as the LDA Workers Union officials.—APP

IT varsity to be setup in Hyderabad within 2 months: Tessori

DNA

HYDERABAD: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has announced that IT courses will soon be launched for the youth of Hyderabad, along with arrangements for free scholarships for students. He said the warm welcome he received from the people of Hyderabad was unforgettable. He expressed this while addressing a Sehri gathering in Lati-fabad. The event was attended by the prominent figures including MQM leader Dr. Farooq Sattar, MNA Abdul Aleem Khanzada, MNA Waseem Khan, MPA Sabir Qaimkhani, MPA Nasir Qureshi, MPA Rashid Khan and a large

number of distinguished guests and citizens. Governor Tessori stated that he had visited all the towns in Karachi, where the public expressed their love and affection. However, he added, the reception in Hyderabad was historic. He added that if the governor house was in Hyderabad, its doors would remain open to the public 24/7. Tessori mentioned that, after Karachi, IT courses for young people would be started in Hyderabad very soon to help the local youth benefit from modern technology. He further shared that without any government funding, a total of 1 million ration bags had been distributed among deserving people, victims

of stolen motorcycles had been provided new bikes and 12,000 laptops had been distributed among young people. Governor declared that the establishment of an IT university in Hyderabad would be ensured within two months. Additionally, he announced free scholarships for students wishing to study abroad. Expressing concern over dumper accidents, he said that the death of a couple in the recent accident was extremely tragic and immediate steps would be taken to prevent such incidents in future. Tessori emphasized that practical steps were needed to improve the traffic system in Karachi to ensure the safety and security of citizens.

WWF, GSK to protect freshwater resources in Pak,India

ISLAMABAD:World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and global biopharma giant GSK have launched a five-year initiative to conserve and restore freshwater resources in water-stressed regions of Pakistan and India. The collaboration, running until 2030, will focus on the Indus River Basin in Pakistan and the Sutlej River Basin in India, key areas for medicine production. The initiative aims to replenish over 300,000 cubic meters of water and benefit more than 100,000 people by implementing nature-based solutions. Key efforts include restoring freshwater habitats,

protecting endangered species like river dolphins and otters, and promoting sustainable water management in local communities and farms. GSK, which operates three manufacturing sites in these regions, emphasized the importance of securing water resources for medicine production. Regis Simard, GSK's President of Global Supply Chain, stated, Ensuring sustainable water supply is critical to delivering life-saving medicines. Partnering with WWF allows us to drive meaningful change in these vulnerable ecosystems. Hammad Naqi Khan, Director General of WWF-Pakistan, highlighted the ur-

gency of water conservation, noting that Pakistan faces severe water scarcity and pollution. "Companies like GSK are leading by example not just reducing water use but actively replenishing resources," he said. Freshwater ecosystems have seen an alarming 85% decline in wildlife populations since 1970, according to WWF's Living Planet Report. The Indus Basin, in particular, faces threats from pollution, dams, and climate change. The partnership aligns with global biodiversity goals, including the Freshwater Challenge, which seeks to restore 300,000 km of rivers and 350 million.—APP

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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. Patrick's 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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Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

A Tribute to employees' services and commitment to further growth

A grand Iftar dinner was organized by one of the country's leading Pharmacy and Superstore groups in honor of its staff, with special participation from the Group Chairman Zafar Bakhtawari, CEO Ahsan Bakhtawari, and MD Waqar Bakhtawari

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A grand Iftar dinner was organized by one of the country's leading Pharmacy and Superstore groups in honor of its staff, with special participation from the Group Chairman Zafar Bakhtawari, CEO Ahsan Bakhtawari, and MD Waqar Bakhtawari. During this event, detailed discussions were held on the group's successes, challenges, and future strategies, while long-serving employees were praised for their dedication, and new staff members were welcomed. In his speech, Zafar Bakhtawari emphasized that the secret to the group's success lies in its honest and hardworking employees. "We started with a small pharmacy, and today our group is a respected name in Pakistan's health and wellness sector. This success is the result of our employees' tireless work, integrity, and the trust our customers have in us," he stated. He further remarked

that competition is crucial for the growth of any business, as without it, we would become complacent and fall behind. "I want to tell my team that the competition in business is now extremely tough. You must stand with us like an iron wall. Today, I ask you to pledge that you will continue this journey with us, and together, we will build a New Pakistan. Our role will be significant in Pakistan's development and every other matter," he added. Zafar Bakhtawari shared a personal experience, recalling how, when ambassadors from various countries visited the first pharmacy, he would not just deal with them as a shopkeeper but as a Pakistani, ensuring his conduct reflected the love, respect, and dignity of Pakistan. "You should also treat customers in the same way, ensuring they leave with the respect and esteem of our group," he said. "If you make sure of this, our collective success will be guaranteed." He encouraged his employees to prepare for the next phase of the journey, saying,

"Your performance won't just be measured by your own work but by how well you develop your team and how many leaders you create within your team." He emphasized the importance of a culture of truthfulness and the rejection of dishonesty, stating that if this is adopted, Pakistan's development will accelerate. Zafar Bakhtawari also praised Ahsan Bakhtawari for his pivotal role in the group's progress, stating, "Ahsan has built the team that has helped take us forward, and you, too, are all part of my family. I want your children to become doctors, engineers, CSP officers, and military officers. To achieve this dream, we must work unitedly." Ahsan Bakhtawari, in his speech, shared that the group is not just a business organization but a family where everyone works together. "Thanks to the senior staff, my job has become easier. When they joined, they helped me immensely, and now, with God's grace, we have 34 branches," he said. He emphasized that all sen-

ior staff should create leaders within their teams and train their juniors. "Every staff member is an asset to us. I've told HR that while people can be hired, no one will be fired without my consent," he continued. He also advised the staff to deal with customers with patience and tolerance, stating, "If you want to become good managers and salespeople, you must be able to tolerate criticism. If you can't tolerate, you won't grow. Focus on the positive and understand that each part of our team is like a part of a vehicle, playing a unique role in the business." Ahsan Bakhtawari concluded by stating, "The progress we have made in the last 50 years is something we aim to repeat in the next 10 years. With hard work, honesty, and dedication, God will reward us, and, God willing, we will open branches in every city and take the business beyond Pakistan." Waqar Bakhtawari, in his address, stressed that the success of any institution depends on its employees.

"We have always regarded our employees as our greatest asset, and even during tough times, we stood by them. The results are evident today," he said. He encouraged junior staff to seek guidance from senior staff and continue their hard work, emphasizing the importance of employee benefits like EOBI, social security, and health insurance, and that the company takes care of educational expenses for employees' children. General Manager Operations Kashif Mehmood shared his personal journey, stating that he had risen from a salesman to the position of GM through hard work, dedication, and integrity. "The Bakhtawari family has always supported me, and I am grateful for that," he said. Another senior team leader, Muhammad Ahmed, shared his experience of being supported by the organization despite his illness, saying, "This organization has never let me or my family down, and for that, I am forever thankful."

Peace walk held to condemn Jaffar Express incident

ISLAMABAD: A peace walk was organized at Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad on Tuesday to express solidarity with the victims of the Jaffar Express tragedy. The event was arranged by the National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-e-Azam University. A large number of students from various departments participated in the Peace Walk. The students expressed their solidarity with the families of the victims of terrorism. The students carried banners and placards with slogans such as "March 11, a Black Day" and "We stand united." On this occasion, the students emphasized the importance of national unity and harmony. During the Peace Walk, the students expressed their strong condemnation and anger against the perpetrators of terrorist acts in Balochistan and those who facilitate them. The participants of the Peace Walk demanded strict action against terrorists and their facilitators.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chief Editor of Daily Islamabad POST and Centreline magazine presented a special edition of Centreline magazine dedicated to Uzbekistan to Ambassador of Uzbekistan, Alisher Tukhtaev. The special edition highlights the strong diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, showcasing key developments, collaborations, and opportunities for enhanced bilateral cooperation. Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev appreciated the initiative, acknowledging the role of media in strengthening international relations and promoting deeper understanding between the two nations. The exchange marked yet another step toward fostering closer ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

PMYP to launch digital youth hub

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Youth Program is all set to launch a revolutionary Digital Youth Hub on Wednesday, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at empowering Pakistan's youth. This pioneering initiative sets its sight to link young Pakistanis with a wide range of career opportunities, scholarships, internships, and employment prospects both nationwide and globally. According to an official, Youth Hub Portal was poised to make a massive impact, empowering a staggering 10 to 15 million young people in its very first year. This portal will help connect young people with employers, including both the public and private sectors, as well as international opportunities in countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Japan, South Korea, Canada and the United States. He said Digital Youth Hub would revolutionize the country's job market by providing young Pakistanis with seamless access to job openings that match their skills, spanning the entire spectrum of blue-collar, white-collar, and grey-collar professions. He said the initiative will offer a comprehensive suite of services, including, Expert Career Counseling, comprehensive employment listings and specialized training programme. By bridging the gap between job seekers and employers, this digital hub would empower the nation's youth, foster economic growth, and drive Pakistan's future prosperity. He said Digital Youth Hub designed to connect young Pakistanis with job opportunities tailored to their skills. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, the Digital Youth Hub represents a pivotal component of the government's comprehensive strategy to amplify youth engagement, he stated. This initiative is intricately linked with the Prime Minister's Youth Program, which focuses on enriching education, employment, and skill development opportunities for young Pakistanis. He said it was designed to connect talented individuals with a wide range of employment opportunities, game-changing online portal would empower young Pakistanis to take control of their career trajectories. He said, it would enable users to create personalized profiles, unlocking a world of tailored employment and educational opportunities that perfectly match their skills and qualifications. He said, this ambitious initiative promises to be a game-changer, offering a beacon of hope for millions of aspiring professionals eager to make their mark. As the country strives to build a robust and modern economy, this innovative tool is expected to bridge the gap between talent and opportunity.—DNA

Pakistan's iPhone trade-in program launched

ISLAMABAD: Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital conglomerate, in partnership with Mercantile, Apple's authorized distributor in Pakistan, has introduced the country's first-ever iPhone Trade-In Program, making the iPhone 16 series more accessible and affordable. Under this initiative, customers can trade in their old PTA-approved iPhone 11 or newer models to receive a discount on the latest iPhone 16 series. To further ease affordability, Jazz and Mercantile are offering an additional subsidy bonus on top of the trade-in value, said a news release. "As a digital leader, Jazz is committed to bridging the digital divide in Pakistan. Our partnership with Mercantile to launch the first iPhone Trade-In Program reflects our focus on innovation and customer convenience," said Ali Fahd, Head of Marketing at Jazz. "By making premium devices more accessible, we are empowering customers to enhance their digital lifestyle with seamless connectivity and value-added services." Nauman Durrani, CEO of Mercantile Pakistan, commented: "This launch simplifies how people in Pakistan can access the latest iPhone models.—APP

Tarar condoles demise of COAS's mother

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of the mother of Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir. In his condolence message, the minister said that the entire nation was with General Asim Munir and his family in this hour of grief. The minister prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.—APP

PBM distributes Iftar boxes to 1.7m:MD

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) has provided iftar boxes to 1.772 million people nationwide as part of its "Mizban-e-Ramadan" program, Managing Director Senator Captain Shaheen Khalid Butt said Monday. Addressing a press conference at PBM headquarters, Managing Director Senator Captain Shaheen Khalid Butt announced the organization's groundbreaking "Mizban-e-Ramadan" initiative has received overwhelming Mizban-e-Ramadan public response. "We're providing nutritious iftar boxes to deserving families across Pakistan, including remote and underserved regions," he stated, adding that he is personally overseeing distribution operations. The Senator emphasized PBM's dual commitment to quality and dignity, "Our teams have strict instructions to maintain the highest food standards while ensuring

all beneficiaries are treated with utmost respect." This initiative reflects PBM's broader mission to uplift vulnerable communities during the holy month. He emphasized that, beyond offering financial aid to alleviate suffering, their efforts are also focused on empowering individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, enabling them to support themselves and their families. He urged media representatives to help raise awareness about the organization's initiatives supporting underprivileged and deserving families, and to collaborate with philanthropists and welfare organizations to further the institution's mission. Butt emphasized that the media plays a vital role in addressing national issues, raising awareness, and driving social change. He acknowledged Pakistani journalists for their dedication and patriotism, calling journalism a sacred and responsible profession.

Highlighting Pakistan's complex poverty challenges, he stressed that no single entity can overcome them alone instead, collective efforts from welfare organizations, politicians, philanthropists, journalists, and citizens are essential. Butt noted the media's critical role in exposing injustices, advocating for policy reforms, and amplifying marginalized voices. He praised its influence in shaping public opinion, combating corruption, and promoting accountability. Ultimately, he affirmed that the media is indispensable in fostering a just society and called for stronger collaboration among all stakeholders to achieve meaningful progress. Senator Capt. Shaheen Khalid Butt, Managing Director of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), stated that PBM is committed to enhancing its existing welfare programs and launching new initiatives to combat poverty.—DNA

WASA recovers Rs 116m more than target in 8 months

RAWALPINDI: The Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi has recovered Rs 116 million more than its target during the first eight months of the current financial year. The target for the period was Rs 1581 million while Rs 1,697 million was recovered till 28.02.2025, said a report presented by the Director of Revenue in a special meeting chaired by WASA Rawalpindi Rawalpindi Muhammad Saleem Ashraf here on Tuesday. The report further said a record recovery of more than Rs 250 million was made last month and over Rs 210 million so far in the current month, despite the holy month of Ramazan. Hopefully the recovery target for the current month would be met in the coming days. The meeting was attended by the Director Revenue, Deputy Director Revenue and all the relevant staff, a WASA news release said. The WASA MD praised the staff and officers who performed well in the revenue recovery, while warning the other who failed to meet the target and directed them to improve their performance. He said WASA met all its expenses and run affairs from its own resources, therefore, no negligence would be tolerated in revenue recovery. He directed to the officers to recover full outstanding dues from all defaulters, or otherwise, disconnect their connections. Giving the defaulters a last chance to clear their outstanding dues, he said there would be a ban on late fees and installments. He further warned of attachment of property, alongside arrest, and closure of water and sewerage connections if the outstanding dues persisted. He urged the WASA customers to prove that they were responsible citizens by paying their dues on time.—APP

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Briefs

Exhibition celebrates China-Pakistan cultural bond

ISLAMABAD: Marking a significant occasion of cultural exchange, the 'Esthetic Bridges' exhibition was inaugurated here on the occasion of Pakistan Day, celebrating the lively spirit of spring in the country. The event brought together Chinese and Pakistani artists, fostering a platform for in-depth dialogue and showcasing the rich artistic traditions of both nations. By the Silkroad Culture Center and Hunerkada, "Esthetic Bridges" featured an extraordinary collection of traditional, contemporary, and miniature paintings by acclaimed artists from Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts, China. This exclusive event highlighted the rich artistic heritage of China, bringing together masterful works that reflect centuries-old techniques and modern interpretations. Speaking at the event, Jiang Zaidong the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan highlighted the importance of mutual learning and appreciation between civilizations, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday.—APP

Govt intensifies efforts to eradicate polio

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health, Mustafa Kamal, on Tuesday highlighted the government's renewed commitment to eradicating polio in Pakistan by 2025. Talking to a private news channel, he announced a series of proactive measures to tackle the virus, focusing on increasing vaccination coverage and addressing community concerns. He shared that the government is launching an extensive polio vaccination campaign in April, aiming to surpass 90% coverage meeting the World Health Organization's (WHO) target for polio elimination. He emphasized that advanced data systems now allow health authorities to identify and address vaccine refusals at the local level, improving the efficiency of vaccination drives. To tackle vaccine hesitancy, the government is working with local influencers and community leaders to build public trust and promote immunization, he added.—APP

Rupee sheds 06 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 06 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.42 against the previous day's closing of Rs 280.36. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs280.60 and Rs282.1, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.54 to close at Rs 302.56 against the last day's closing of Rs 304.01, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went down by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.86, whereas a decline of Rs 1.12 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 362.05 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 363.17. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 01 paise each to close at Rs 76.34 and Rs 74.75, respectively.—APP

Pakistani researcher's journey in new energy industry in China

I hope to make significant progress in my research and contribute meaningful and practical advancements to this field," he said, looking forward to the future

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani researcher is actively engaged with a leading battery manufacturer, seeking advance skill in new energy industry in China. "Good!" That was the first word that came to his mind when reflecting on his experience working with battery manufacturing industry in China. Hafiz Muhammad Umair Arshad, a Pakistani PhD student from Nankai University, currently employed by Chilwee Group, a battery manufacturer located in Huzhou, Zhejiang Province. Hafiz

is part of the Advanced Technology Research Division at Chilwee's Central Research Institute, which is a crucial initiative for the company's future industrial development. The research institute is primarily comprised of highly skilled professionals. Currently, Hafiz is engaged in two projects. One project focuses on anode and cathode prelithiation technology, in which he has optimized the prelithiation process to enhance battery capacity and cycling stability. "These improvements increase energy density and lifespan

batteries, making them more reliable," he explained according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. The second project focuses on anode-free solid-state batteries, a challenge that Hafiz takes great pride in. "This project is particularly difficult because achieving commercial viability for anode-free solid-state batteries remains a significant global challenge for researchers," he noted. To create a comfortable and convenient living environment for talents, Zhejiang government offers rental apartments to eligible professionals. "I was able

to secure a unit at the Changxing Talent Apartment. It's only five kilometers from my home to the company, so I often commute by electric bicycle, which takes just over ten minutes. It's very convenient for me," he shared. Recently, Hafiz brought his wife from Pakistan to Huzhou to live with him. "Chilwee has state-of-the-art equipment, and my colleagues are very friendly. I hope to make significant progress in my research and contribute meaningful and practical advancements to this field," he said, looking forward to the future.

Stable economic indicators, key areas show gradual growth in March

During Jul-Feb FY2025, goods exports increased by 7.2 percent to \$21.8 billion compared to \$20.4 billion last year, while imports recorded an increase of 11.4 percent to reach \$38.3 billion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The country's external and internal economic sectors, including fiscal policy, remained stable in March with exports, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and remittances showing consistent growth. According to monthly economic updates and outlook for the current Month of March 2025, issued by the Federal Ministry of Finance here on Tuesday, as the ongoing fiscal year progresses towards the last quarter, Pakistan's economy demonstrates resilience and stability on fiscal and external fronts. The external sector remains robust, with a current account surplus, export growth, strong remittance inflows, and rising foreign investment. According to the report, the investors' confidence continues to strengthen, as reflected in the bullish performance of the Pakistan Stock Exchange. These positive developments lay the foundation for sustained growth and moderate inflation in the

coming months of the fiscal year and inflationary pressures have eased, supported by declining food and energy prices, fostering overall price stability. Fiscal consolidation measures are yielding tangible results, leading to a primary surplus and a narrowed fiscal deficit. According to the report external sector's stability remained intact and the external account position has strengthened, driven by continued increase in exports and a noteworthy rise in remittances. Despite an upward trend in imports, during July-February FY2025, the current account posted a surplus of \$691 million compared to deficit of \$1,730 million last year. However, in February 2025, the current account recorded a deficit of \$12 million, compared to a surplus of \$71 million in February 2024. During Jul-Feb FY2025, goods exports increased by 7.2 percent to \$21.8 billion compared to \$20.4 billion last year, while imports recorded an increase of 11.4 percent to reach \$38.3 billion. The service exports grew to \$5.5

billion (up by 6.0%) and imports to \$7.7 billion (up by 12.0%), resulting in a service trade deficit of \$2.3 billion higher than \$1.7 billion last year. IT exports grew by 25.5 percent to \$2.5 billion against \$2.0 billion last year. Workers' remittances recorded an impressive growth of 32.5%, with a robust inflow of \$24.0 billion during Jul-Feb FY2025 compared to \$18.1 billion last year—with the largest share from Saudi Arabia (24.6%) followed by UAE (20.3%). Net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was recorded at \$1,618.4 million, 41.0 percent higher than the previous year. According to the report, agriculture Sector improves on the back of government initiatives. For the Rabi season 2024-25, wheat production is targeted to reach 27.9 million tonnes, supported by government initiatives such as input subsidies, the distribution of high-yielding seeds, and interest-free loans under the Kissan Card initiative. During Jul-Jan FY2025, agricultural credit disbursement grew by 16.0 percent, to reach Rs.

1,483.6 billion from Rs. 1,279.4 billion in the same period last year. The Large-Scale Manufacturing (LSM) shows mixed trend amid ongoing challenges and LSM remains on a bumpy recovery path in January 2025, report said. MoM growth edged up by 2.1 percent, signaling a mild improvement from December 2024. However, on a year-on-year (YoY) basis, LSM contracted by 1.2 percent, compared to 1.1 percent growth last year. During Jul-Jan FY2025, LSM posted a decline of 1.8 percent, compared to a contraction of 0.6 percent last year. According to the report, The Inflation decelerates as food and energy prices decline and CPI inflation recorded at 1.5 percent on YoY basis in February 2025 as compared to 2.4 percent in the previous month and 23.1 percent in February 2024. On a MoM basis, it decreased by 0.8 percent as compared to an increase of 0.2 percent in the previous month. The fiscal consolidation efforts are strengthening the fiscal accounts and the fiscal consolidation measures have

yielded positive results, showing improvements in fiscal accounts during the first seven months of FY2025, report said. The fiscal deficit reduced to 1.7 percent of GDP in July-Jan FY2025 from 2.6 percent last year. Similarly, the primary surplus increased to Rs.3,518.7 billion (2.8% of GDP), against a surplus of Rs.1,938.8 billion (1.8% of GDP) last year. According to the report, The net federal revenues grew significantly by 45.3 percent to Rs.6,362.5 billion during Jul-Jan FY2025 from Rs.4,379.5 billion last year. This substantial growth is attributed to both tax and non-tax collection. Particularly, the receipts from non-tax collection grew sharply by 75.8 percent. During Jul-Feb FY2025, FBR tax collection increased by 25.9 percent to Rs.7,343.9 billion from Rs.5,831.3 billion last year. Within total collection, revenues from domestic taxes grew by 27.4 percent, while customs duty increased by 15.4 percent. The report said that the government's support for

social protection and uplifting communities. In February 2025, Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment registered 50,030 workers for employment, compared to 53,642 in February 2024. The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, in collaboration with its 24 partner organizations, distributed 21,396 interest-free loans amounting to Rs. 1.0 billion. Since the inception of the program in 2019, a total of 2.95 million interest-free loans amounting to Rs. 114.85 billion have been disbursed. The government has also allocated Rs. 20 billion for the Ramadan Package to benefit 4 million households. According to the report under this package, Rs. 5,000 is being provided per household through a digital wallet. During Jul-Jan FY2025, Rs. 241.0 billion has been spent under the Benazir Income Support Programme, against the budgetary allocation of Rs 592.5 billion for FY2025, showing an increase of 30.6 percent against last year.

Pakistan values it ties with Ethiopia: Gilani

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that Pakistan highly values its relations with Ethiopia and desires to further expand bilateral ties in diverse sectors. The Chairman Senate expressed these views in a meeting with Jemal Bekir Abdula Ambassador of Ethiopia in Islamabad. Mr. Gilani appreciated that Pakistan and Ethiopia have a long history of working together on multilateral forums in support of international peace and stability. He termed trade and economic relations crucial for bringing people of the two sides closer. He said that trade and business cooperation in diverse sectors can help in building lasting relations between Islamabad and Addis Ababa. He said that a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to bring all stakeholders on a single platform. SIFC promises a win-win paradigm for our brotherly and friendly countries through symbiotic projects. He welcomed the direct flights between Karachi and

Addis Ababa. He informed that NADRA has successfully launched projects in Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya and Somalia

promote people to people exchanges. The volume of bilateral trade, however he said, does

fields especially in trade, investment, and economic spheres, he observed. Mr. Gilani remarked that Pa-

requently used in global soccer tournaments. Pakistan offers scholarships to Ethiopian students in various dis-

operation important as both countries are faced with identical challenges of terrorism and extremism. He said that such a cooperation would further boost our defense ties. He said that terrorism is a great threat. Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism, saying that, we lost Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was also victim of terrorism. The Chairman Senate also extended invitation to his counterpart in the Ethiopian parliament to visit Pakistan as both the countries have a history of high level exchanges. Mr. Gilani said that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed was the architect of Pakistan-Ethiopian bilateral relations as he first visited Ethiopia in 1972. He said that parliamentary exchanges play a pivotal role in promoting people to people contacts. He emphasized that parliamentary friendship groups in the respective parliaments can be highly beneficial in this regard. The Ambassador of Ethiopia thanked the chairman Senate for his remarks. He said that Pakistan is an important country and we also desire to further deepen diversify ties.



relating to digitalization of Passports and National Identity documents and Ethiopia can also avail the services. He further thanked the Ethiopian Government for extending online visa facility to Pakistani nationals to

not reflect the true potential of our two economies and both sides need to work together to make progress in economic and trade links. Pakistan is firmly committed to broaden cooperation with African countries in diverse

kistan has been exporting medical and surgical equipment, pharmaceutical products, and medicines to Ethiopia which can be further enhanced. He said that Pakistan is known for producing high-quality footballs that are

disciplines. He further informed that Ethiopian diplomats have been receiving training at Foreign Service Academy and we are ready to offer training courses to more Ethiopian diplomats. He also considered the Defense Co-

AIU students included in PM's laptop scheme

ISLAMABAD: Great news for the students of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) as the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has included the students of the university in the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme, under which deserving and merit-based students would be provided with laptops, the official sources said. Disclosing this, Regional Director Allama Iqbal Open University Mirpur AJK region, Faisal Shehzad, quoting the Varsity management, told APP here that the initiative would prove to be a significant milestone for students associated with the distance education system. "It will further enhance online learning opportunities, enabling students to continue their academic activities more effectively with the help of modern technology. The provision of laptops will also facilitate e-learning, research, and practical assignments, positively impacting students' academic performance," he added. Faisal Shehzad while lauding the decision, continued that the university had always strived for the welfare of its students, and the inclusion in this scheme would benefit thousands of the university's students.—APP

Pakistani PhD's explores AI frontier tech in China

"I believe that technological innovation serves as a catalyst for unlocking human potential and addressing significant challenges

ISLAMABAD: At the Yangtze Delta Region Institute (Huzhou) of the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China (UESTC), Associate Researcher Kumar Raja is engaged in the Artificial Intelligence and Public Safety Research Center. China is not unfamiliar to Kumar. He hails from Karachi, Pakistan, a city that has experienced significant infrastructure improvements due to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "From road expansions to energy projects and port enhancements, Chinese companies have played a major role in transforming my hometown. The changes are evident in every corner of the city," he stated. In 2016, Kumar enrolled at UESTC to pursue a Ph.D. with a focus on machine learning and information security. During his studies, he contributed to several research projects funded by China's National Natural Science Foundation. After earning his doctorate, he remained at UESTC as a postdoctoral researcher, publishing more than 70 academic papers. In 2021, he joined the Yangtze Delta Research Institute as an associate researcher. "The institute's research focus closely aligns with my academic interests. It also offers extensive research resources and collaboration opportunities, enabling me to apply my findings to real-world challenges," Kumar explained. Since joining, he has led several projects, filed multiple invention patents, and collaborated with institutions such as Huzhou Central Hospital to facilitate technology transfer. Currently, he is developing an AI-powered illustration generation system based on a proprietary large language model. "In simple terms, we are creating an 'AI drawing assistant' to help businesses and individuals generate illustrations from text descriptions," he stated. "I believe that technological innovation serves as a catalyst for unlocking human potential and addressing significant challenges. Creativity and adaptability are essential," he noted, expressing his enthusiasm for exploring more AI projects with enterprises, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday.—DNA



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Transatlantic relations

HERE is nothing like a good crisis to focus the mind. And the question of how Western countries intend to proceed in relation to the war in Ukraine is providing such an existential crisis – one that has forced everyone to define their values and principles as well as to consider the specific task of dealing with the war itself. From the start of the Russian invasion of February 2022 until very recently, the US and Europe had shown a united front regarding Moscow's unprovoked aggression against its Ukrainian neighbor. Accordingly, a strict regime of sanctions was imposed on Vladimir Putin's Russia in order to hurt its war machine, while Ukraine, led by its unlikely hero Volodymyr Zelensky, received huge amounts of military and financial support from the West in a move to ward off the naked violation of its sovereignty. But this transatlantic unity came to an abrupt halt upon Donald Trump's return to the White House. Nevertheless, the rift over Ukraine – just like those over the future of Gaza and free trade – is also a blessing in disguise. For too long, Europe has lived in the shadows of the military and economic prowess of the US. But it now has an opportunity to step out of the shadow of its American ally and enhance its own brand of liberal-democratic foreign policy that is distinct to that of the US, but without distancing itself completely from its long-time partner. The profound disagreement that has surfaced over Ukraine is forcing Europe to assert itself and allocate the necessary resources to rebuilding its hard power in order to enhance its already considerable reserves of soft power. And this could eventually mean a strengthening of transatlantic relations. There is a comforting illusion shared by the world's liberal democracies: that, with minor differences, they are very much the same in terms of their outlook regarding both how countries should be run domestically and how they conduct their foreign policy. It is, to my mind, a mistaken view – and no more so than when we compare US-European relations, largely derived from their different histories, systems of governance, geographies and even their contrasting attitudes to the relationship between religion and politics. On some fundamental issues that define a society, such as freedom of speech, the right to life and the welfare state, Europe and the US hold very different views. And why shouldn't they? On the other hand, there is enough commonality of values and principles that deserve and require a close alliance. Nevertheless, the experience of the last few weeks has emphasized the need for Europe to reduce its military and political reliance on Washington and develop its own particular foreign policy that will serve its own interests and system of beliefs. The examples of Ukraine and Palestine could incentivize Europe to rally round and develop its own brand of foreign policy and peacemaking. For now, however, it has been a case of Europe's voice being heard more clearly on Ukraine than on Gaza. The disastrous meeting between Trump and Zelensky in the White House was a catalyst for Europe to take a leading role and, in the process, also accept that the security challenges it is facing require continental cooperation and increased military expenditure. Europe has, for too many years, been too slow to react to impending threats and has let reductions in military expenditure reach levels that mean it can no longer fulfill its political objectives because of popular calls to cut taxes or improve public services.



China's AI advancement

FROM the stock market to government applications, DeepSeek has made an impact in China. With China's economy beset by external challenges and domestic woes, DeepSeek offers hope of a turning point. But long before its emergence, artificial intelligence (AI) had been staring at us in the face. How have TikTok and its domestic sibling Douyin risen to global prominence without their recommendation algorithm? Just as with Amazon, the success of Shein and Temu, Taobao and JD.com, is not built on sourcing and logistics alone. From books to fashion, we are "guided" towards what to consume next based on our purchasing patterns and browsing behaviour. Long before we could direct DeepSeek to compose impressive poems, AI has been shaping our consumption of merchandise and media – in ways that are more insidious. For decades, Amazon and Google have been pioneers in adopting AI. DeepSeek can compose soaring poetic lines but cannot give watertight legal advice guaranteed to be accurate. Such limitations are inherent in the statistical methods of the neural architecture of large language models (LLMs). LLMs will make things up for matters they do not fully know, generating misleading results – known as hallucinations. This phenomenon is partly overcome by reasoning models like DeepSeek's R1 and Open AI's o1 and o3, but not to an extent which is foolproof. LLMs such as DeepSeek can be a powerful personal tool as long as they are not relied upon for critical decisions. For enterprises and government, LLMs excel in process automation, workflow optimisation and data analytics. As the open-source DeepSeek may be hosted in dedicated government digital infrastructure, confidential information can be processed in a secure environment. For public-facing government applications, when the inquiry results should be authoritative, automated responses from LLMs can be problematic. Even if they generate perfectly good answers 99 per cent of the time, misleading answers in the other 1 per cent may lead to dire consequences. How Alibaba.com is betting on AI to transform e-commerce. There are of course safeguards that can be put in place to prevent such occurrences. Inquiries and answers may be filtered – requiring human intervention for interactions outside a defined range. Such tension between power and accuracy is inherent in LLMs' statistical foundation. For instance, the Zhuhai municipal government, which is pioneering a smart city initiative, recently injected 500 million yuan (US\$69 million) of strategic investment into Zhipu AI. From optimising traffic flow to integrating data across government departments, Zhipu AI aims to deliver better public services. Zhipu's smart city initiative is a comprehensive and layered implementation of embedding advanced AI in urban life. And Zhipu AI's GLM-4 general language model – an LLM adept at handling both Chinese and English tasks – claims, in addition to its multi-modal (beyond text) capabilities, the lowest hallucination rate in a recent global ranking. A spin-off from Tsinghua University's Knowledge Engineering Group, Zhipu AI incorporates structured data sets in its learning.

Do not raise your head

Qamar Bashir



Pakistan's political history reinforces this power structure. The military has ruled directly for nearly half of the country's existence—Ayub Khan (1958–69), Yahya Khan (1969–71), Zia-ul-Haq (1977–88), and Pervez Musharraf (1999–2008)—and indirectly during most of the remaining years through engineered coalitions and installed puppets. Civilian leaders such as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, and Imran Khan were removed, not for incompetence or corruption, but for crossing the invisible red lines laid down by the establishment

THIS perhaps is the unwritten rule of the Deep State that has held Pakistan in a tight grip since its very inception. This command does not apply only to the political elite but extends to every institution and stakeholder of the state—civilian or military, public or private, individual or collective. It ensures that all organs of the state—judiciary, bureaucracy, legislature, media, and the business community—remain subservient to its control. Dignity and independence are liabilities; unquestioning obedience is the only accepted virtue. Having served closely in both media and civil service, and having traveled and worked with Presidents, Prime Ministers, Governors, and Chief Ministers—especially in Balochistan—I have witnessed firsthand that no government, no leader, and no public figure survives politically unless they surrender completely to the dictates of the Deep State. Those who dare to raise their heads or express a vision independent of establishment control are swiftly removed, disgraced, or eliminated. Political transitions, cabinet reshuffles, judicial rulings, and even corporate growth trajectories are carefully managed by forces outside the constitutional framework. In Balochistan, this power dynamic is especially severe. Leaders such as Sardar Akhtar Mengal and Nawab Akbar Bugti, who tried to govern their province on their own terms, were either ousted, assassinated, or politically isolated. Successive provincial governments have rarely completed their terms. They were either pressured to resign or removed by engineering political turmoil under establishment oversight. This trend clearly reflects that governance in Balochistan has less to do with performance and more to do with submission to invisible commands. The Deep State's reach extends well beyond politics and into the heart of Pakistan's economy. No industrialist, real estate developer, banker, manufacturer, or transporter can operate independently if their business model threatens or competes with the economic interests of the establishment. The military's corporate empire—estimated to be worth over \$40 billion—controls banks, insurance firms, cement and cereal plants, schools, agricultural estates, and retail chains. Businesses that pose a threat or refuse to align with these interests are often brought to heel through financial strangulation, legal troubles, or forced compliance. This coercion stifles competition, innovation, and

fair enterprise. Economic policy is crafted not with national development in mind but to favor the monopolistic hold of military-run conglomerates. Pakistan's political history reinforces this power structure. The military has ruled directly for nearly half of the country's existence—Ayub Khan (1958–69), Yahya Khan (1969–71), Zia-ul-Haq (1977–88), and Pervez Musharraf (1999–2008)—and indirectly during most of the remaining years through engineered coalitions and installed puppets. Civilian leaders such as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, and Imran Khan were removed, not for incompetence or corruption, but for crossing the invisible red lines laid down by the establishment. Bhutto was hanged after a farcical trial. Benazir was dismissed twice and later assassinated under mysterious circumstances. Nawaz Sharif was disqualified thrice; despite popular support, he never completed a term. And Imran Khan, brought into power in 2018 by the military itself, was discarded when he sought to assert independence in foreign and domestic policy. In the 2024 general elections, despite being widely believed to hold majority public support, his mandate was brazenly stolen using a combination of judicial verdicts, election commission maneuvering, and administrative suppression. He remains incarcerated, while political stooges have been conveniently installed to rubber-stamp decisions made elsewhere. The consequences of this unchecked power are now evident across every sector of national life. Pakistan has alienated all of its neighbors—India, Afghanistan, and Iran—due to erratic policies and border management failures. The major global powers are wary of investing or engaging with Pakistan, citing political instability and military overreach. Foreign direct investment has dried up. The entire country is in the grip of resurgent terrorism. Extremist violence, once restricted to tribal areas, has now spread to major cities, disrupting daily life and national morale. Unlike the past, when certain provinces viewed the military favorably, today the people across Pakistan—Punjab, Sindh, KP, and Balochistan—are increasingly opposed to military dominance and are openly challenging the high-handedness of the establishment. This nationwide disenchantment is unprecedented. Meanwhile, Pakistan's borders are insecure and porous. There is rampant cross-border

infiltration of terrorists, and smuggling of arms, drugs, money, and fuel has become routine. Billions of dollars spent on building barbed-wire fencing have failed to prevent these illegal flows. The state has lost control over many stretches of the frontier. Law enforcement is either compromised or powerless in the face of this organized criminal enterprise, which often flourishes under patronage. The country's prisons are filled with political opponents and dissenters. Those who align themselves with the Deep State are released, rewarded, or protected, while others are brutally persecuted. Due process has collapsed. Journalists, students, politicians, and activists languish in jails without trial. The judiciary, historically a collaborator in legitimizing military coups under the so-called doctrine of necessity, has now become another instrument of suppression, rubber-stamping decisions of convenience. Pakistan's economy is in crisis. Inflation is crushing the middle and lower classes. The currency has lost value. The youth are disillusioned, with record levels of emigration by those who see no future in their homeland. The GDP per capita continues to decline. Public services are broken. Institutions are hollowed out. This is the price of prolonged subjugation to an unelected force. The military, which is supposed to be a branch of the state, has acted as if it is the tree itself. But a branch cannot remain standing if the trunk falls. Unfortunately, this truth has remained unacknowledged since 1947. The Deep State has become an entity that thrives on control and intimidation. Its political engineering, economic monopolies, and suppression of dissent have ensured that Pakistan remains isolated, unstable, and impoverished. Unless this cycle is broken—either by a people's revolution or reform from within the ranks of the military itself—the nation will continue to drift toward deeper chaos. There seems little hope from within the existing structure. The choice now lies with those who wield power in the shadows. If they continue to act as the masters of this nation rather than its servants, Pakistan will continue to lose its standing in the community of nations, and its people will remain trapped in despair. The time for introspection is now. Let wisdom prevail before it is too late. Peace be upon you all.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister at Embassy
of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC

The battle for unity: Resisting internal and external threats to Pakistan

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



In addition to economic measures, political inclusion is vital. The voices of Balochistan must be heard and given due representation in national policymaking. The appointment of capable Baloch individuals in key administrative, military, and diplomatic positions would reinforce the message that they are not just a part of Pakistan but an essential...

FOR decades, Pakistan has been the target of internal and external forces that seek to weaken its unity. The bitter lesson of 1971 serves as a stark reminder of how exploitation of internal divisions, fueled by foreign interests, led to the tragic separation of East Pakistan. It is no secret that political mishandling, economic disparities, and a systematic campaign of misinformation were used to drive a wedge between the eastern and western wings of the country. Years later, those who played a role in this conspiracy have themselves admitted to their actions, but such confessions offer little solace. The damage had already been done. As the proverb goes, "There is no use crying over spilt milk". Instead of lamenting over the past, we must take heed and ensure that history does not repeat itself. Today, the same malicious agenda is at play once more, this time targeting Balochistan. The largest yet least populated province of Pakistan, Balochistan holds immense strategic and economic importance. Its vast natural resources, deep-sea port at Gwadar, and proximity to key regional players make it a focal point for both development and disruption. Unfortunately, certain forces—both internal and external—have sought to exploit the grievances of the local population, fanning the flames of provincial and ethnic discord to serve their own geopolitical objectives. One of the most alarming manifestations of this campaign is the growing wave of terrorism, where innocent travelers are brutally targeted after their identity cards reveal their provincial backgrounds. This pattern of violence is not incidental; it is a calculated effort to instill fear, deepen mistrust, and create rifts between different ethnic communities in Pakistan. Such acts mirror the tactics used in the past, where propaganda and selective violence were employed to create a sense of alienation among certain segments of the population.

The architects of this hostility operate on multiple fronts. They manipulate historical grievances, distort facts, and use digital platforms to spread disinformation. The internet has become a battleground where anti-state narratives are carefully crafted and disseminated to radicalize youth and sow doubts about the legitimacy of the Pakistani state. In this information age, where social media holds significant influence, a single fabricated story can ignite unrest. This is precisely why the enemy invests so heavily in propaganda—to weaken Pakistan from within. Given these challenges, the responsibility falls upon both the state and its people to counter these nefarious designs and strengthen interprovincial harmony. The first step is addressing the root causes of dissatisfaction. While Balochistan has witnessed development in recent years—especially under projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)—there remains much to be done. Investment in infrastructure, education, and healthcare must be intensified to uplift the standard of living. Economic opportunities must be expanded so that the people of Balochistan feel an active part of Pakistan's progress rather than mere spectators. In addition to economic measures, political inclusion is vital. The voices of Balochistan must be heard and given due representation in national policymaking. The appointment of capable Baloch individuals in key administrative, military, and diplomatic positions would reinforce the message that they are not just a part of Pakistan but an essential pillar of its stability. Moreover, interprovincial exchange programs for students, professionals, and cultural groups could help bridge the gaps of misunderstanding and foster a spirit of national cohesion. Equally important is the role of the media. At present, the country's adversaries are using disinformation as their most potent weapon. The media must counter this by highlighting the shared struggles and achievements of Pakistanis across all provinces.

Stories of unity, resilience, and brotherhood should be brought to the forefront to overshadow divisive narratives. Instead of focusing solely on problems, national media outlets must actively promote a sense of collective identity that transcends regional boundaries. Security measures also require urgent reinforcement. The targeting of individuals based on their provincial identities is a grave threat to the nation's unity, and law enforcement agencies must act with full force to dismantle the networks orchestrating these attacks. This, however, must be done with a balanced approach—one that combines firmness against hostile elements with efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate those who have been misled by extremist ideologies. History has shown that Pakistan's greatest strength lies in its unity. From the battlefields of 1965 to the fight against terrorism in recent decades, it has been the collective resolve of Pakistanis that has thwarted every challenge. The enemy is well aware that a divided Pakistan is a weakened Pakistan. This is why such relentless efforts are being made to pit provinces and ethnic groups against one another. However, these conspiracies will only succeed if we allow ourselves to be blinded by artificial divisions. The path forward is clear; we must refuse to fall prey to provincial biases and instead reaffirm our commitment to a united, strong Pakistan. The sacrifices of our people—from the mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan to the shores of Gwadar—must serve as a reminder that our destinies are intertwined. There is no Sindh Pakistan, Baloch Pakistan, Punjabi Pakistan, or Pashtun Pakistan—there is only one Pakistan, and its survival depends on our ability to stand together. At this critical juncture, complacency is not an option. We must act decisively to neutralize the enemy's agenda, heal divisions, and forge an unbreakable bond among our people. The time to protect Pakistan's unity is now, for we cannot afford to learn this lesson at the cost of another irreparable loss.

Briefs

UK transport
deprettains
PIA on air...

FROM PAGE 01
Islamabad to Paris, resuming its long-awaited flights to Europe. Eyeing UK operations, PIA spokesperson Abdullah Hafeez Khan said that once cleared by the DfT, London, Manchester, and Birmingham would be the most sought-after destinations. PIA has 23% of Pakistan's domestic aviation market, but its 34-plane fleet cannot compete with Middle Eastern carriers, which have 60%, due to a lack of direct flights, despite having agreements with 87 countries and key landing slots.

Centre seeks
record of
Afghan...

FROM PAGE 01
documents to go to another country, can stay here till March 31 this year. After this date, they will also have to leave Pakistan. The Afghans, who have a valid Pakistani visa for the period for which it has been issued, can continue to stay till that time. Government sources have said that the decision to expel Afghan nationals has become inevitable because of the security situation and sensitivity of the twin cities. As per the statistics revealed by the Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) in February, Pakistan hosts around 2.9 million Afghan refugees of which 0.7 million were unregistered individuals whereas 1.4 million were registered.

PTI leaders
exchange
barbs

FROM PAGE 01
the names given by the party should be sent for the meeting. Bushra Bibi also instructed to include the names of Salman Safdar and Usman Gul. He further explained that this entire matter had been settled in the High Court yesterday, so only those six people whose names were already provided should be allowed to meet. However, the jail administration finally allowed Babar Awan, Niazullah Niazi, and Salman Akram Raja to meet, in addition to this, Zaeer Abbas Chaudhry, Naem Haider Panjutra, and Salman Safdar were also allowed to meet.

Tariff cut,
Rs 11 billion
waiver...

FROM PAGE 01
the petitions, informed Nepra that future savings under fuel and O&M heads would be shared with the government to pass on relief to consumers. While briefing the authority, the CPPA's Managing Director said, as part of the ongoing negotiations, the seven IPPs had agreed to waive over Rs11 billion in late payment surcharges. The CPPA further stated that both parties - CPPA and the IPPs - would withdraw their pending cases from courts following Nepra's approval. Nepra's hearing also touched on exchange rate adjustments, the 'take-and-pay' mechanism, and insurance caps—areas where CPPA said understandings had been reached. According to CPPA officials, negotiations with these seven IPPs are expected to result in a reduction of up to Re0.50 per unit in electricity tariffs.

ECC
approves...

FROM PAGE 01
finance considerations due to inflation and enhanced scope of the project concerning capacity, energy mix, alternative water supply options and updated processing plants and machinery. The ECC noted the factors leading to the project escalations, and approved the proposals contained in the summary with the directions to the Ministries of Petroleum & Finance to continue close coordination with a view to ensuring timely implementation of all agreed actions. The ECC assured full support for the Reko-Diq Project, calling it a project of immense national importance.

Raducanu finds 'competitive spirit' to reach Miami last 8

Elsewhere, world number one Aryna Sabalenka is also through to the quarter-finals after a 6-4 6-4 win over defending champion Danielle Collins of the USA

SPORTS DESK

MIAMI: Emma Raducanu says she has found her "competitive spirit" after defeating 17th seed Amanda Anisimova in Miami to reach her first WTA 1,000 quarter-final. The Briton was in brilliant form from the off against her American opponent and needed just 24 minutes to secure the first set on her way to a blistering 6-1 6-3 win. It is the first time since her US Open triumph in 2021 that Raducanu has won four WTA main-draw matches in a row, and she was dominant in sweeping Anisimova aside. "The biggest thing I'm proud of is just finding the competitive spirit and being there for every ball and drawing that out of myself," Raducanu said. "I think that's kind of been missing in the last few months and even a few years at times."

Prior to this tournament, Raducanu had lost five of six matches since the Australian Open - and last week ended her partnership with coach Vladimir Platenik after just two weeks. "I've come a long way in the last week since Indian Wells, I wasn't necessarily feeling great about my tennis, about everything," the 22-year-old told Sky Sports. "This week I have some really good people around me who I trust and who I have fun with off the court as well. That's extremely important. "When I play my best I am definitely authentic, true to myself and creative. I feel when I am boxed into a regimented way then I am not able to express myself in the same way. So I'm happy with how I realised that this week." Raducanu broke in the opening game of the match and raced through the opening set without losing a point on her own serve. It was her returning that most impressed, though, as she continually put pressure on the Anisimova serve. The American grew increasingly angry as the first set went on and appeared to be struggling with



a right wrist issue. Following a medical timeout between sets, she was much improved but could still not prevent Raducanu breaking to go 3-1 up in the second. Anisimova broke straight back but Raducanu once again demonstrated the resilience she has shown in Miami, breaking again before confidently serving out for the match. "I'm walking on to the court knowing that I'm going to be there for every point, every ball," the British number two said. "So far that's really worked. Also, I think on the match

court now I'm just thinking less, which is probably a good thing, and trying to just let my creativity come out because I think that's when I'm playing my best tennis." Raducanu will play world number four Jessica Pegula in the last eight after the American beat Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk 6-2 6-3. Elsewhere, world number one Aryna Sabalenka is also through to the quarter-finals after a 6-4 6-4 win over defending champion Danielle Collins of the USA. The Belarusian secured the only break of the first set at 3-3 and, after breaking in the opening game of the second, went on to complete the victory in an hour and 19 minutes. Italy's Jasmine Paolini came from a set down to overcome four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka 3-6 6-4 6-4. World number two Iga Swiatek pressed on with her quest for a first title of 2025, beating Ukraine's Elina Svitolina 7-6 (7-5) 6-3 to set up a meeting with 19-year-old wildcard Alexandra Eala, from the Philippines, who will be playing in her first WTA quarter-final. Eala's eye-catching run in Miami continued after her fourth-round opponent, 10th seed Paula Badosa, withdrew before the match because of a lower back injury. There was disappointment for world number three Coco Gauff who was beaten 6-4 6-4 by Poland's Magda Linette. In the men's singles, Alexander Zverev overcame a slow start to beat Australia's Jordan Thompson 7-5 6-4. The German was 4-1 down in the first set before fighting back to win eight of the next nine games and set up a fourth-round tie against France's Arthur Fils, who beat Frances Tiafoe 7-6 (13-11) 5-7 6-2. Taylor Fritz also advanced with a 7-5 6-3 win against Canada's Denis Shapovalov, but his American compatriot Tommy Paul suffered a 6-2 7-6 (7-4) defeat by Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo. Australian 10th seed Alex de Minaur fought back to beat Brazilian 18-year-old Joao Fonseca 5-7 7-5 6-3 and set up a last-16 meeting with Italy's Matteo Berrettini.

Azhar Mehmood backs Afridi despite unlucky bowling spells

Mahmood highlighted Pakistan's bowling inconsistency, noting individual performances but a lack of unity

DNA

WELLINGTON: As Pakistan gears up for the fifth and final T20I against New Zealand on Wednesday, assistant coach Azhar Mahmood admitted that the team's bowling unit has not been functioning cohesively, despite individual brilliance from certain fast bowlers. Pakistan ended up losing the T20I series 3-1, winning only the third clash courtesy of a fiery ton by Hasan Nawaz. Speaking at a pre-match press conference, Mahmood highlighted Pakistan's inconsistency in the bowling department, stressing that while some bowlers have performed well, the team has failed to deliver as a unit. "Our fast bowlers are performing individually, but as a unit, we are not delivering. One bowler excels while the others struggle. It's true that our bowling unit is not functioning properly,



and we need to learn from this," Mahmood stated. He emphasized that bowling requires teamwork, much like batting partnerships, and consistency from the entire attack is crucial to securing victories. "Bowling works like a batting partnership—if all three bowlers perform together, we will have a chance. In one match, Haris [Rauf] bowled exceptionally well, but the others couldn't contribute in the same way.

Shaheen Afridi was unfortunate—his deliveries got top edges, but he couldn't take wickets," he explained. Despite already losing the series to New Zealand, Mahmood remains optimistic about finishing on a strong note, targeting a 3-2 result in the final match. "We have lost the series, but we are not out of any tournament. Our goal is to finish the series with a 3-2 result. The team consists of young players, and every-

one has seen their injuries and fighting spirit. Our job is to boost the players' morale," he added. The assistant coach acknowledged the difficulties faced by Pakistani players upon their arrival in New Zealand, particularly in adapting to the bounce and pace of the pitches. "When we arrived in New Zealand, we faced many challenges. Batters had to deal with bounce and pace. Compared to the past, there is now more bounce. We told the batters not to fight against pace but to use it wisely. Bowlers were also guided on the right lengths to bowl here. The players are learning," he said. Mahmood also pointed out the evolving nature of T20 cricket, stating that traditional par scores have changed and teams must aim higher to remain competitive. "In modern-day cricket, 160 is no longer a competitive score; teams now score 180 or even 200+.

Paleker and Wharf
replace Gough, Wilson

Paleker officiated in the 2024 T20 World Cup and U-19 Men's World Cup

DNA

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced two new additions to its prestigious Elite Panel of Umpires, with South Africa's Allahudien Paleker and England's Alex Wharf joining the ranks. The duo replaces Michael Gough and Joel Wilson in the latest reshuffle. Paleker, a former first-class cricketer, has steadily risen in the umpiring ranks, having officiated in four Test matches, 23 One-Day Internationals (ODIs), and 67 Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is) in men's cricket, along with 17 women's internationals. He has played key roles in major ICC tournaments, including the Men's T20 World Cup 2024 and the Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2024. Wharf, a former England international with 13 ODI appearances as a player, successfully transitioned into umpiring after a 16-year first-class career. As an on-field official, he has officiated in seven Test matches, 33 ODIs, and 45 T20Is. His experience includes officiating in high-profile events such as the ICC Men's and Women's Cricket World Cups, the T20 World Cups in 2024, and the upcoming Men's Champions Trophy 2025. Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Jay Shah extended his best wishes to the new appointees while acknowledging the contributions of Gough and Wilson.

Pakistani actress Hania Aamir
honoured in UK Parliament

Hania Aamir thanks peers, vows to support next generation of talent

WEB DESK

LONDON: Pakistan's leading actress Hania Aamir has been honoured with a Recognition Award at the UK Parliament, in celebration of her contributions to the entertainment industry and her growing influence on global audiences. The award ceremony was hosted by British Member of Parliament Afzal Khan in the Jubilee Room of the House of Commons on Monday. Hania Aamir addressed the gathering with heartfelt thanks. "It is an absolute honour to be here and it means a lot to me," she said. "I hope we continue to entertain people through our work and make Pakistan proud." Hania Aamir also expressed solidarity with her peers, noting the strength of the Pakistani community and her hope that they "continue to stand by and support each other, in whichever way we can." She went on to thank women in the entertainment industry who paved the way for the next generation. "I will do everything in my capacity to make it easier for others to come," she added. Hania Aamir has become one of Pakistan's most prominent female stars in recent years, gaining significant popularity at home and



abroad. Reports also suggest Hania is set to make her Indian film debut in Sardar Ji 3, a Punjabi-language film starring Diljit Dosanjh and Neeru Bajwa. Earlier, Senior Pakistani actress Bushra Ansari was honoured with the prestigious Award of Recognition at a ceremony in the UK Parliament for her contributions to the entertainment industry and her social advocacy. Mahira Khan and Fahad Mustafa were also honoured by the UK Parliament for their contributions to Pakistan's entertainment industry.

Lahore Blues storm into National T20 Cup semi-final

Lahore joins the likes of Peshawar, Abbottabad and Multan in the semi-final round

DNA

FAISALABAD: Lahore Region Blues secured a commanding 33-run victory over Sialkot Region in the fourth quarter-final of the ongoing National T20 Cup at Iqbal Stadium on Monday night, earning a spot in the semi-finals. After being put in to bat first, Lahore Region Blues posted a competitive total of 184 runs in their allotted 20 overs. The innings was anchored by a stellar knock from Umar Siddiq, who smashed 65 runs off 44 balls, including six fours and three sixes, at a strike rate of 147.73. Hammad Butt provided valuable support with a quickfire 19 off 13 balls, while Nisar Ahmad added late fireworks with an explosive cameo of 21 off just seven deliveries, boasting a staggering strike rate of 300.00. Lower down the order, Farhan Yousaf contributed crucial runs, scoring 12 off just five balls in the death overs.



Despite Lahore's aggressive approach, their innings witnessed regular wicket losses, with Usama Mir and Hasan Ali leading the bowling attack. Hasan Ali starred with

four wickets, while Usama Mir picked up two crucial scalps to restrict Lahore's momentum. Ahsan Hafeez Bhatti, Shoaib Malik and Mirza Tahir Baig also chipped

in with key dismissals. In response, Sialkot Region faltered under pressure and were bundled out for 151 in 18.5 overs.

Despite a valiant effort from opener Mirza Tahir Baig, who top-scored with a blistering 77 off 47 balls, the rest of the batting lineup failed to offer substantial support. Sialkot suffered an early setback when Mohammad Hurrara was dismissed for a duck. Mohsin Riaz (1) and Ayaz Tasawar (7) also failed to make an impact, while Afzal Manzoor (10) and Shoaib Malik (20) provided brief resistance before falling at crucial moments. Hasan Ali's late cameo of 25 off just 10 balls, featuring three towering sixes, briefly reignited Sialkot's hopes, but the lower order collapsed, losing the last four wickets for just seven runs. Lahore Region Blues delivered an exceptional bowling performance, with Hussain Talat, Mohammad Rizwan, Nisar Ahmad and Mohammad Ifran taking two wickets each, while Mohammad Salman Mirza chipped in with one.

Russian
envoy
clarifies
Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01
He reaffirmed Moscow's support for Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other regional states in tackling militant threats.

President
hosts Iftar...

FROM PAGE 01
emphasizing their use for educational purposes. "I urge all children to use these tablets, being gifted on First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari's suggestion, for learning and personal growth," he added. The President said the children were as dear to him as his own and encouraged them to pursue education with dedication. The President also met with the children individually, expressing affection and reinforcing his commitment to their well-being. Air Marshal (Retd.) Farooq Habib, Chairman of the Pakistan Orphan Care Forum (POCF), highlighted the pressing issue of orphaned children in the country. "There are an estimated 4.6 million orphaned children in Pakistan," he said. He said that POCF and its affiliated organizations were currently supporting nearly 120,000 children nationwide.

Jaffar
Express...

FROM PAGE 01
the matter claimed on Tuesday. Investigations into the terrorist attack on the passenger train were underway, CTD sources said, adding that they, along with other agencies, were working to trace and identify those involved in the attack. Weapons and other communication devices recovered from the slain terrorists were sent for forensic analysis, the sources added. The outlawed Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), during the attack on the Jaffar Express, blew up train tracks and held over 440 passengers hostage in a day-long standoff with security forces near a remote mountain pass in the Bolan district. The military, after clearing the train and rescuing hostages, said it killed 33 attackers. Before the operation began, terrorists had martyred 26 passengers, while four security personnel were martyred during the operation.

EU-Pak
business...

FROM PAGE 01
The EU is also the world's largest foreign investor representing 42 per cent of outward foreign direct investment globally. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen its cooperative partnership with the EU and welcomed the convening of the business forum. "With a rapidly growing market of over 240 million people, competitive labour costs, strategic geographical access to Central and South Asia and a preferential trade access to the EU, Pakistan offers immense business opportunities," the joint statement read. The forum will bring together high-level policy makers - including the prime minister, ministers for finance and commerce - business leaders and CEOs from Pakistan and Europe, financial institutions such as the European Investment Bank, investors and other key stakeholders.

'Kashmir
dispute...

FROM PAGE 01
the Prime Minister of Pakistan, who had urged the 15-member Council to implement its own resolutions that call for a UN-supervised plebiscite to determine the future of Jammu and Kashmir. "No amount of obfuscation can change the legal, political and historical reality - Jammu and Kashmir is not, and has never been, a so-called 'integral' part of India," Sarwani said. He described the region as a "disputed territory," whose "final disposition" must be decided by its people through a plebiscite, as mandated by multiple UN Security Council resolutions. Sarwanicriticised India's heavy military presence in the region, stating that more than 900,000 troops and paramilitary forces are deployed in what he called "the densest occupation in history."

Briefs

PSX turns
bullish,
gains 193
points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 193.55 points, a positive change of 0.17 percent, closing at 116,633.17 points as compared to 116,439.62 points on the last trading day. A total of 268,098,907 shares were traded during the day as compared to 311,970,520 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs19.455 billion against Rs20.953 billion on the last trading day. As many as 436 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 155 of them recorded gains and 214 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 67 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Pak El-ektron with 23,534,658 shares at Rs45.90 per share, TRG Pak Limited with 22,825,615 shares at Rs66.14 per share and Nergycio PK with 14,454,846 shares at Rs7.94 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs23.50 per share closing at Rs23,549.00 whereas runner-up was Indus Motors Company Limited with Rs18.77 rise in its share price to close at Rs2,060.00. Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs91.06 per share price, closing at Rs9,066.01, whereas the runner-up was Services Industries Limited Limited with Rs25.45 decline in its per share price to Rs1,292.98.—APP

Gold price
dips by
Rs.800 per
tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.800 and was traded at Rs.317,800 on Tuesday as compared to its sale at Rs318,600 on previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs.686 to Rs 272,462 from Rs. 273,148 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold also went down by Rs. 629 to Rs.249,765 from Rs 250,394 respectively. The prices of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3,475 and Rs.2,979 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$6 to \$3,021 from \$3,027 whereas that of silver remained unchanged at \$33.10, the Association reported.—APP

India ends
import duty
on several
items

NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday said there would be no import duties on several goods used to manufacture electric vehicle batteries and mobile phones amid broader tariff cuts to help local producers withstand the potential impact of reciprocal U.S. tariffs. "We aim to boost domestic production and enhance export competitiveness by reducing duties on raw materials," finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said ahead of a vote to pass Finance Bill 2025 in parliament. India will exempt from import duty 35 items used to make EV batteries and 28 items used in mobile phone manufacturing, she said. India has been preparing to mitigate the impact of U.S. President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs set to take effect from April 2. The two countries are engaged in talks to resolve tariff issues and come up with a bilateral trade pact. Reuters reported earlier on Tuesday that New Delhi was open to cutting tariffs on more than half of U.S. imports worth \$23 billion in the first phase of a trade deal that the two nations are negotiating, citing two government sources.—APP

Kashmir disputed territory not
India's 'integral part', Pak tells UN

Sarwani, who is a counselor at the Pakistan Mission to the UN, was reacting to Indian Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish's claim that "Kashmir has been, is, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India"

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan brushed aside India's claim of Jammu and Kashmir being its 'integral part', saying the disputed status of the Himalayan state is acknowledged by the UN and the international community. "Every official UN map depicts Jammu and Kashmir as disputed territory," Pakistani delegate Gul Qaiser Sarwani told the UN Security Council as its high-level discussion on UN peacekeeping operations came to an end. Sarwani, who is a coun-

selor at the Pakistan Mission to the UN, was reacting to Indian Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish's claim that "Kashmir has been, is, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India." The Indian ambassador made that claim in response to the Special Assistant to Pakistan's Prime Minister/Minister of State, Syed Tariq Fatemi, who made an earnest call on the 15-member Council to implement its own resolutions promising the Kashmiri people the right to self-determination through a UN-supervised plebiscite. Exercising his

right of reply, the Pakistani delegate said, "No amount of obfuscation can change the legal, political and historical reality - Jammu and Kashmir is not, and has never been a so-called 'integral' part of India. "It is a disputed territory, whose 'final disposition' is to be decided by the people of Jammu and Kashmir through a UN supervised plebiscite, as demanded by numerous resolutions of the Security Council," Sarwani added. Pointing out that India holds Kashmir by brute force with over 900,000 troops and paramilitary forces,

he said that India has killed over 100,000 innocent Kashmiris since 1989. "It (India) has imposed the densest occupation in history, with one Indian soldier for every eight Kashmiri men, women and children," the Pakistani delegate said, adding that the UN has duly recorded India's gross violations of human rights in occupied territory. As regard the Indian envoy's allegation of cross-border terrorism, Sarwani said, "It is most ironic that India, which is committing the worst form of state terrorism in Occupied Jammu and

Kashmir, is portraying itself as the victim," adding, that this was a familiar ploy of all occupiers and colonizers to paint legitimate struggles for freedom and liberation as terrorism. Instead of maligning others for terrorism, he added, India should sincerely reflect on its own campaign of orchestrating targeted assassinations, subversion and terrorism in foreign countries. "It is India which supports and finances terrorism against Pakistan through Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Majeed Brigade.

Israeli
military
intercepts
missile
launched
from Yemen

SANAA: The Israeli military said it had intercepted a missile over Israel on Monday that had been launched from Yemen, according to a statement. The Houthi, undeterred by waves of US strikes since March 15, fired two ballistic missiles toward Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv, the group's military spokesman said in a televised statement early on Tuesday. US President Donald Trump also threatened to punish Iran over its perceived support for Yemeni Houthi militants. Earlier, warning sirens sounded in several areas of Israel, including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The Houthis have vowed to escalate attacks, including those targeting Israel, in response to the US campaign. Houthi spokesman Yahya Saree said the group also targeted "the US aircraft carrier Truman, using ballistic and cruise missiles and drones." The Houthis have carried out over 100 attacks on shipping since Israel's war with Hamas began in late 2023, saying they were acting in solidarity with Gaza's Palestinians. The attacks have disrupted global commerce and prompted the US military to launch a costly campaign to intercept missiles. The Houthis are part of what has been dubbed the "Axis of Resistance" - an anti-Israel and anti-Western alliance of regional militias including Hamas, Lebanon's Hezbollah and armed groups in Iraq, all backed by Iran.—APP

Jam reviews NCC progress

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan chaired a briefing session at the National Compliance Centre (NCC) to review the Centre's progress and discuss recent developments with Dr. Nabeel Amin, Head of NCC and the NCC team. The Minister appreciated NCC's efforts to improve Pakistan's compliance and quality systems and reviewed key achievements, including the recent visit by a World Bank mission focusing on the National Quality Infrastructure (NQi), said a press release issued here on Tuesday. Dr. Nabeel Amin briefed the Minister on NCC's initiatives and highlighted the importance of strengthening Pakistan's compliance framework to enhance



trade standards and global competitiveness. The Minister directed NCC to prepare a strategic roadmap with defined timelines,

to be presented at the next National Compliance Advisory Council (NCAC) meeting in end of April. The discussion focused on

enhancing Pakistan's export potential, aligning with international standards, and fostering collaboration with global partners.

Israeli strikes
on Gaza killed
23 people
overnight

Palestinian medics said Israeli strikes killed at least 23 people in the Gaza Strip overnight into Tuesday. The dead include three children and their parents, who were killed in a strike on their tent near the southern city of Khan Younis, according to Nasser Hospital, which has received a flood of dead and wounded since Israel resumed heavy bombardment of Gaza last week, shattering the ceasefire that had halted the 17-month war. Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians and wounded more than 113,000, according to the Health Ministry.—APP

US airstrikes
targeting Houthis
kill at least 2

DUBAI: US airstrikes targeting Yemen's Houthi militia pounded sites across the country into early Tuesday, with the group saying one attack in the capital killed at least two people and wounded more than a dozen others. The American strikes on the militia, who threaten maritime trade and Israel, entered their 10th day without any sign of stopping. They are part of a campaign by US President Donald Trump targeting the rebel group while also trying to pressure Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor. So far, the US has not offered any specifics on the sites it is striking, though Trump's national security adviser Mike Waltz claimed the attacks have "taken out key Houthi leadership, including their head missileer." That's something so far that's not been acknowledged by the Houthis, though the militia have downplayed their losses in the past and exaggerated their attacks attempting to target American warships. "We've hit their headquarters," Waltz told CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday. "We've hit communications nodes, weapons factories and even some of their over-the-water drone production facilities." An apparent US strike Sunday hit a building in a western neighborhood of Yemen's capital, Sanaa, killing at least two people and wounding 13 others, the rebel-controlled SABA news agency said, citing health officials. Footage released by the militia showed the rubble of a collapsed building and pools of blood staining the gray dust covering the ground. A building next to the collapsed structure still stood, suggesting American forces likely used a lower-yield warhead in the strike. The Houthis also described American airstrikes targeting sites around the city of Saada, a Houthi stronghold, the Red Sea port city of Hodeida and Marib province, home to oil and gas fields still under the control of allies to Yemen's exiled central government. Those strikes continued into early Tuesday as the Houthis separately launched a missile attack on Israel. The campaign of airstrikes targeting the militia, which killed at least 53 people immediately after they began March 15, started after the Houthis threatened to begin targeting "Israeli" ships again over Israel blocking aid entering the Gaza Strip. The militia in the past have had a loose definition of what constitutes an Israeli ship, meaning other vessels could be targeted as well. The Houthis had targeted over 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two vessels and killing four sailors during their campaign targeting ships from November 2023 until January of this year. They also launched attacks targeting American warships, though none have been hit so far.—DNA

Humanitarian aid cuts could
cause more kids to die: UN

UNITED NATIONS, United States: Cuts in international aid could bring an end to decades of progress in fighting child mortality, and even reverse the trend, the United Nations warned Monday. Although the annual report from UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the World Bank does not single out the United States, it comes as President Donald Trump's administration has axed the vast majority of the programs carried out by USAID, America's main overseas aid agency with a former annual budget of \$42.8 billion. "The global health community cannot be worried enough at the situation that we are seeing," Fozia Shafiq, UNICEF's Associate Director of Health, told AFP. The report warns the consequences of aid money cuts will be the worst in countries where infant mortality rates are already the highest, such as in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia. "Simply put, if support for life-saving services is not sustained, many countries can expect a resurgence of newborn and child deaths," the report said. In 2023, mortality of children under age five continued to drop, with 4.8 million deaths recorded, including 2.3 million newborn babies under a month old, according to the report. The number of such deaths fell below five million for the first time in 2022, and the new record low marks a 52 percent decline since 2000. But Shafiq insisted that "4.8 million is 4.8 million too many." Since 2015, progress in fighting child mortality has slowed as aid money was redirected toward fighting Covid - and this could be just the start of a dangerous pattern. "Bringing preventable child deaths to a record low is a remarkable achievement. But without the right policy choices and adequate investment, we risk reversing these hard-earned gains," UNICEF executive director Catherine Russell said in a statement. "We cannot allow that to happen," she added. Some negative impacts of the funding cuts are being felt already, such as health care worker shortages, clinic closures, vaccination program disruptions, and a lack of essential supplies, such as malaria treatments. Ethiopia, for instance, is enduring a big increase in malaria cases, said Shafiq. But the country is facing an acute shortage of diagnostic tests, insecticide-treated nets for beds and funding for spraying campaigns against disease-carrying mosquitos. A separate report by the same organizations found a stubbornly high number of stillbirths - babies who die after 28 weeks of pregnancy, before or during childbirth - with a total of around 1.9 million such deaths in 2023.—DNA



DUBAI: Pakistan's envoy to the UAE ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi inaugurates an art exhibition celebrating Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and artistic diversity.

Ethiopian,
Eritrean
officials
accused of
war crimes

ADDIS ABABA: Eight survivors of the devastating conflict in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region have accused 12 high-ranking Ethiopian and Eritrean civilian and military officials of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the legal rights group representing them said on Monday. The Tigray region, bordering Eritrea, endured a war between 2020 and 2022 that claimed up to 600,000 lives, according to some estimates. The conflict pitted Tigray People's Liberation Front rebels against federal Ethiopian forces, supported by local militias and the Eritrean army. Both sides were accused of committing atrocities, with the government sealing off Tigray for most of the war and restricting humanitarian aid to the region. Eight survivors "have filed a groundbreaking criminal complaint with the German Federal Public Prosecutor, alleging that 12 senior Ethiopian and Eritrean government officials and military officers committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the conflict," nonprofit Legal Action Worldwide said in a statement. The Swiss-based organization did not disclose the identities of those accused in the filing, submitted in 2024 but announced last week.—APP

Breaking Barriers: challenging
gender stereotypes in the workplace

BISMA RAFIQUE

IN recent years, Pakistan has made strides toward gender inclusivity, with women breaking barriers in fields once considered the exclusive domain of men. From female astronauts like Dr. Sarah Al Amiri of the UAE to Pakistani women driving taxis and running delivery services, the narrative is changing. Yet, despite these advancements, a troubling trend persists in our society: the association of certain jobs with specific genders. Professions like teaching, nursing, and caregiving are often labeled as "feminine," while roles in engineering, technology, and driving are seen as "masculine." These stereotypes limit opportunities for individuals based on their gender rather than their skills or talents. This mindset is not only regressive

but also counterproductive in a world that increasingly values diversity and meritocracy.

The idea that certain jobs are better suited to a specific gender is rooted in archaic societal norms. Historically, men were seen as breadwinners, while women were confined to domestic roles. However, the 21st century has shattered these notions. Women are now astronauts, engineers, pilots, and CEOs, proving that no profession is beyond their capabilities. Similarly, men are excelling in fields like nursing, teaching, and fashion design; areas traditionally dominated by women. These examples underscore a simple truth 'talent and skill know no gender.' Namira Salim, Pakistan's first woman in space, exemplifies how women can excel in unconventional fields. Her achievement is a testament to the fact that women can excel in

even the most challenging and unconventional fields. Closer to home, we have women like Zar Aslam, who founded Pakistan's first all-female ride-hailing service, "Pink Rickshaw," empowering women to take on roles as drivers in a male-dominated industry. These women are not exceptions; they are proof that given the opportunity, women can thrive in any profession. Similarly, men are increasingly breaking free from traditional gender roles. In Pakistan, we see men working as makeup artists, flight attendants, and care givers roles that were once stigmatized as "feminine." This shift is a positive sign that society is beginning to recognize the value of individual choice and capability over rigid gender norms. Despite these advancements, the association of certain jobs with specific genders remains a stark reminder of the biases that still

plague our society. For example, teaching is often seen as a "soft" profession suited for women, while technical roles like engineering are labeled as "tough" and masculine. Such stereotypes not only discourage individuals from pursuing their passions but also perpetuate harmful norms. When we label teaching as a "woman's job," we undermine the contributions of male educators who bring unique perspectives to the field. Similarly, when we assume that only men can excel in technical roles, we overlook the countless women who are driving innovation in these areas. The consequences of these gendered associations are far-reaching. They reinforce the idea that certain professions are off-limits to one gender, discouraging individuals from pursuing their interests. They also create a hostile environment where people are judged

not by their performance but by their ability to conform to gender expectations. This not only stifles innovation but also limits the potential of organizations and societies to benefit from diverse perspectives. It is time for us to recognize that talent is gender-neutral. Professions should be defined by the skills and expertise they require, not by outdated stereotypes. A teacher's ability to inspire students, a nurse's capacity for empathy, or an engineer's problem-solving skills have nothing to do with gender. By breaking free from these stereotypes, we can create a society where individuals are free to pursue their passions and contribute to their fullest potential. As a society, we must also challenge the stereotypes that underpin these practices. Parents, educators, and policymakers have a role to play in encouraging young people to

pursue their interests, regardless of gender. Schools and universities should promote STEM education for girls and humanities for boys, breaking down the artificial barriers that limit their choices. Media and advertising should also reflect a more inclusive vision of gender roles, showcasing men and women in diverse professions. The examples of female astronauts and Pakistani women taxi drivers remind us that the only limits we face are the ones we impose on ourselves. It is time to move beyond gender distinctions and create a world where everyone has the opportunity to succeed based on their abilities, not their gender. After all, the sky is not the limit—it is just the beginning.

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Briefs

'Issues are not solved by Iftar, but by working'

Wahab emphasises importance of taking concrete steps rather than engaging in propaganda

DNA

KARACHI: The war of words between Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori and Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab continues as the latter made a statement that issues facing the city cannot be solved simply through gestures like 'Iftar and Sehri', but only through consistent and practical work. Speaking to the media, Wahab, belonging to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), emphasised the importance of taking concrete steps rather than engaging in propaganda.

Wahab said that the PPP is committed to addressing the problems of the public regardless of political affiliation. He also took a moment to offer prayers for protection from those he referred to as "adversaries" and expressed hopes that the holy month of Ramadan would bring blessings to the city and its people. Further defending the PPP's approach, Wahab praised the Governor of Sindh, describing him as both a close friend and a benefactor of the city. He revealed that, on the Governor's suggestion, he had recently written a letter to the federal government requesting funds to support development efforts in Karachi.

US-Russia talks on Ukraine 'useful'

MOSCOW: A Russian negotiator said on Tuesday that Moscow would continue "useful" talks with the United States over the Ukraine conflict and would aim to involve the UN and other countries. "We talked about everything, it was an intense dialogue, not easy, but very useful for us and the Americans," Grigory Karasin, told the state TASS news agency, adding that "lots of problems were discussed." "Of course we are far from solving everything, from being in agreement on all points, but it seems that this type of discussion is very timely," he said. "We will continue doing it, adding in the international community, above all the United Nations and certain countries," Karasin said. He spoke a day after the US and Russian teams held 12 hours of talks in a luxury hotel in Saudi Arabia. President Donald Trump is pushing for a rapid end to the three-year war and hopes the latest round of talks in the Saudi capital will pave the way for a breakthrough. - Agencies

Israel strikes Syria despite EU warning

BEIRUT: Israeli shelling killed at least four people in southern Syria on Tuesday, Syria's state news agency reported, after the Israeli military said its troops had clashed with militants there who had opened fire on them. The violence along the border area marks increased friction between Israel and Syria, where a new Islamist-led leadership has been installed after rebels ousted former leader Bashar Assad from power in December. Israel has since said it will not tolerate an Islamist militant presence in southern Syria and sent its own troops into Syria's border zone. Syria's leadership has said it does not intend to open a front against Israel. On Tuesday, the Israeli military said militants in southern Syria opened fire toward Israeli troops, without specifying whether the Israeli troops were within Syrian territory when they were targeted. The Israeli military said its troops returned fire and that an Israeli warplane struck the militants. It gave no details on casualties but said "hits were identified." - Agencies

Pak reviews proposals for projects with Azerbaijan

CCoP approves fast-tracked plan for PIA privatization



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Cabinet Committee on Privatization (CCoP) on Tuesday approved a fast-tracked plan for the privatisation of

Pakistan International Airlines Corporation (PIACL), including the divestment of 51-100% share capital together with management control. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the Com-

mittee, a press statement issued by the foreign office spokesperson said. The deputy PM emphasized the government's commitment to PIACL's privatisation to unlock its full potential and reduce financial burden on the national exchequer.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday reaffirmed that strengthening Pakistan-Azerbaijan ties remained a priority as both countries collaborate across various sectors. He was chairing an inter-ministerial meeting on investment project proposals with Azerbaijan. During the meeting, the deputy PM directed to accelerate the implementation of decisions to boost economic growth and development through viable investment projects. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting on Pakistan's Exploration and Production sector. Ministers and senior officials from various Ministries and industry stakeholders participated in the discussions, a press release issued by the foreign office spokesperson. The committee discussed long-term energy planning, focusing on optimizing domestic oil & gas exploration, offshore & onshore drilling, and ensuring uninterrupted gas availability for industries & consumers. The deputy PM welcomed the upcoming offshore bidding round as a major step to unlock Pakistan's hydrocarbon potential and attract investment. He reaffirmed the Government's commitment to a secure, investment-friendly environment for the E&P sector to further strengthen Pakistan's energy security and economic growth.

OGDCL approves \$ 627 mln funding for Reko Diq project

The decision follows an updated feasibility study, which outlines a 37-year mine life split into two phases

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), one of Pakistan's largest exploration and production (E&P) firms, has approved a significant increase in its funding commitment for the Reko Diq project, raising it to \$627 million. The announcement was made in a notice to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Tuesday. "The Board of Directors of the company has approved an increase in the company's funding commitment with respect to the project, reflecting its pro rata share of total capital investment, inclusive of project financing costs, to \$627 million (to be adjusted for actual project financing costs and inflation)," the notice read. The decision follows an updated feasibility study, which outlines a 37-year mine life split into two phases. Phase 1 is estimated to require a total capital investment of

\$5.6 billion, excluding financing costs and inflation. The capital for this phase is planned to be secured through a limited-recourse project financing facility of up to \$3 billion, with the remaining amount covered by shareholder contributions. "Phase 1 is planned to be funded through a limited-recourse project financing facility of up to \$3 billion with the remaining funded through shareholder contributions," the notice added. OGDCL also highlighted that the project would leverage five of the 15 identified porphyry surface expressions within the current mining lease, indicating substantial future growth potential. Negotiations for the proposed project financing are still ongoing, the company stated. Phase 2 of the project will be funded through a mix of revenue generation, additional project financing, and, if necessary, further shareholder contributions. The updated feasibility study indicates that Phase 1 will process 45 million tonnes of mill feed annually (Mtpa) starting from 2028. By 2034, Phase 2 is expected to double the processing capacity to 90 Mtpa. "Based on existing reserves, the Reko Diq project is expected to yield production of 13.1 million tonnes of copper and 17.9 million ounces of gold over the life of the mine (100% basis)," the company stated.

Judicial reforms must ensure timely justice: CJ

CJP made the remarks during a consultative meeting with senior judicial officials on improving access to justice



COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi has emphasised that litigants are key stakeholders in the justice system and must be treated with dignity and respect. He made the remarks during a consultative meeting with senior judicial officials on improving access

to justice. The chief justice underscored that reforms should not only ease case backlogs but also ensure timely and effective justice. The meeting, attended by top officials including Supreme Court Registrar Muhammad Saleem Khan and Federal Judicial Academy Director General, reviewed ongoing judicial reforms and digitalisation efforts. Discussions highlighted progress in digital case filing, transparency, and accountability. The IT Directorate briefed participants on integrating new technologies to make judicial processes more efficient. A statement from the meeting noted that enhancing accessibility and efficiency remains a top priority. Currently, around 57,000 cases are pending before the Supreme Court of Pakistan, with an additional 2.4 million awaiting resolution in other courts across the country. According to the office of the registrar, 27,312 cases were fixed and 12,109 disposed of between 28 Oct 2024 and 7 March 2025 while 7,370 new cases were instituted in the same period. Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi's push for judicial reforms aims to address the ongoing backlog and modernise the justice system. Key reforms include the introduction of advanced information technology, such as the e-Affidavit system to streamline filing processes and reduce delays, and a Case Management System that allows litigants and lawyers to access certified copies instantly. Additionally, feedback mechanisms involving legal professionals and the public have been implemented to strengthen trust in the system.

Five takeaways from leaked US top mily chat group

Goldberg said he had seen classified military plans for the strikes, including weapons packages, targets and timing, two hours before the bombs struck

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Trump and his top aides have consistently raised concerns about footing the bill for European defence Washington DC is still digesting a serious security breach at the heart of the Trump administration. It's the story of how a journalist - the Atlantic magazine's Jeffrey Goldberg - was added to a Signal platform messaging group which apparently included Vice-President JD Vance and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, in addition to National Security Adviser Mike Waltz. The topic being discussed was attacking the Iran-backed Houthi group in Yemen. Goldberg said he had seen classified military plans for the strikes, including weapons packages, targets and timing, two hours before the bombs struck. What are the main revelations in a nutshell? On the military action, Goldberg reported that the account named JD Vance wrote: "I think we are making a mistake." The vice-president said targeting Houthi forces that are attacking vessels in the Suez Canal serves European interests more than the US, because Europe has more trade running through the canal. Vance added that his boss was perhaps unaware of how US action could help Europe. "I am not sure the president is aware how inconsistent this is with his message on Europe right now," Vance said. "There's a further risk that we see moderate to severe spike in oil prices." The vice-president went on to say, according to Goldberg, he would support the consensus but would prefer to delay it by a month. Goldberg reported in his article that spokesman for JD Vance had later sent him a statement underlining that Trump and Vance had had "subsequent conversations

about this matter and are in complete agreement". Since coming to power, Trump has castigated his European Nato allies, urged them to increase defence spending and generally insisted that Europe needs to take responsibility for protecting its own interests. Arguments over why the US could - and should - carry out the military strike against the Houthis did not sway Vance. He said to the defence secretary, "If you think we should do it let's go. I just hate bailing Europe out again." Hegseth reciprocated: "I fully share your loathing of European free-loading. It's PATHETIC." A group member, only identified as "SM" suggested that after the strike, the US should "make clear to Egypt and Europe what we expect in return." "If Europe doesn't remunerate, then what?" he asked. "If the US successfully restores freedom of navigation at great cost there needs to be some further economic gain extracted in return," the user continues. According to Goldberg, the US national security chief posted three emojis after the strike: "a fist, an American flag, and fire". The Middle East special envoy, Steve Witkoff, responded with five emojis, Goldberg said: "two hands-praying, a flexed bicep, and two American flags". Secretary of State Marco Rubio and White House chief of staff Susie Wiles voiced messages of support, he said. "I will say a prayer for victory," Vance said as updates on the strikes were given. Two others members added prayer emojis, Goldberg reported. To Vance's concerns that the action may be seen as going against Trump's message on Europe, the US defence secretary wrote: "VP: I understand your concerns - and fully support you raising w/ POTUS [Trump]. Important considerations, most of which are tough to know how they play out (economy, Ukraine peace, Gaza, etc).

Israel escalates its genocidal war on Gaza

FOREIGN DESK

GAZA: The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) continued their renewed assault on the Gaza Strip for the eighth consecutive day, launching intense air raids and barrages of artillery across the territory, targeting civilian homes and shelters. The attacks mark another escalation in what has been widely described as a systematic campaign of collective punishment and mass killing against Gaza's civilian population. According to PIC reporters, residents across Gaza endured yet another harrowing night of relentless bombardment. Reports from medical sources confirmed that at least 20 Palestinians were killed since dawn on Tuesday in fresh Israeli attacks. In the early hours of the morning, four people were killed and others wounded in an airstrike on the Al-Khour family home in the Sabra neighborhood of southern Gaza City. Civil defense teams reported further casualties after an Israeli strike targeted a residential building near Al-Farouq Mosque in the Al-Zeitoun neighborhood.

Journalist Farhan Mallick sent to jail

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A local court on Tuesday sent journalist Farhan Mallick to jail on judicial remand, who was arrested for allegedly spreading anti-state content. After the expiry of his four-day physical remand, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) presented the senior journalist before the Judicial Magistrate (East), seeking an extension to the remand. However, the court rejected the FIA's request for his physical remand and instead sent Mallick - who worked for a private news channel as its director news and now owns a YouTube channel - to jail on judicial remand. The court also issued notices on Mallick's bail application, setting March 27 as the date for the next hearing. A large number of anchors and senior journalists were present in court during the proceedings. During the hearing, the investigating officer informed the court that anti-state videos had been posted.

Court releases BYC's Sammi Deen Baloch

Karachi police on Monday detained Sammi, others for violating Section 144 and used force to break up their protest

DNA

KARACHI: Police rearrested Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) leader Sammi Deen Baloch from the court premises on Tuesday, shortly after a judicial magistrate ordered her release along with the other accused. Karachi police, a day earlier, detained Sammi and several others for violating Section 144, using force to disperse their demonstration as the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) pressed on with its protest against the arrest of its leadership in Balochistan. However, as soon as she was freed, police attempted to re-arrest her, leading to resistance from lawyers present at the court. Shortly after, authorities took Sammi into custody from the court premises and shifted her to jail for 30 days under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO). According to the Sindh Home Department, the decision was made on the recommendation of Inspector General (IG) Sindh, citing security concerns. Officials alleged that Sammi, along with Abdul Wahab Baloch, Raza Ali, and others, was inciting road blockades and sit-ins, which could disrupt law and order in the city. The department further stated that the presence of the detained individuals in public places posed a potential threat to peace and stability. According to Baloch's lawyer, Jibran Nasir, police attempted to detain her under the MPO ordinance. "The learned judicial magistrate discharged all five accused in the FIR registered yesterday," Jibran wrote in a post on X. "As soon as the accused were discharged and ordered to be released, the police started waving the MPO order.

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