



Islamabad POST

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Malaysian HC hosts sumptuous Eid Milan Open House

Detailed News On Page-08

China to empower development thru green energy

Detailed News On Page-08

Pakistan gets Presidency of Asian Council

Detailed News On Page-06



PM shares good news

Massive cut in electricity rates unfurled

The prime minister unveiled the package, saying that the average per unit price for the domestic consumers had been brought down by Rs 7.41 and Rs 7.69 industrial sector; says government was taking structural reforms especially in power sector

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday announced a significant reduction in the electricity prices of up to Rs 7.69 per unit for the consumers, pledging to provide further relief in near future through structural reforms in the power sector. The prime minister, addressing a ceremony to unveil the package, said that the average per unit price for the domestic consumers had been brought down by Rs 7.41 and Rs 7.69 industrial sector. "In June 2024, the per unit price for industrial sector was Rs 58.5 which was first reduced by Rs 10.3 and further by Rs 7.69," he added. The prime minister pointed out that the government was taking structural reforms especially in power sector to ensure further relief for the consumers and overall development of the country. "This reduction will help industrialists to produce cheaper and more competitive products," he added. He noted that the common people had to suffer a lot in the past due to high inflation rate and electricity bills.

Continued on Page 06

PSX hits all-time high as PM slashes tariffs

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The capital market continued its bullish momentum on Thursday, surging to an all-time high amid strong investor sentiment driven by a major government relief package for electricity consumers and improving economic indicators. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index rose by 1,131.37 points, or 0.96%, to finish at 118,938.11. The market touched an intraday high of 119,179.45, climbing 1,372.71 points, or 1.17%, from the previous close of 117,806.74. The day's low was recorded at 117,508.07. The rally was sparked by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement of a significant reduction in electricity tariffs for

both domestic and industrial users. Addressing a special event in Islamabad attended by cabinet members, industrialists, and business leaders, the premier said domestic electricity rates had been slashed by Rs7.41 per unit, bringing the cost down to Rs34 per unit. Industrial users also saw a reduction of Rs7.59 per unit. The move comes as part of the government's broader strategy to boost economic productivity and ease inflationary pressures on households and businesses. The reduction in electricity prices follows a prior request submitted to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), which was approved after consultation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presents appreciation shields to the members of task force of power sector reforms on 3 April 2025. — DNA

India approves bill to target Muslim bodies

Rahul Gandhi says Waqf (Amendment) Bill aimed at marginalising Muslims, usurping their property rights

DNA

NEW DELHI: India's parliament passed a bill on Thursday to reform hugely wealthy Muslim land-owning organisations, with the Hindu nationalist government saying it will boost accountability while the opposition called it an "attack" on a minority. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government argues the bill will boost transparency to more than a dozen powerful Waqf boards, which control properties gifted by Muslim charitable endowments. There are around two dozen

Continued on Page 06

Dar for bolstering trade with friendly states

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM) Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday directed that selected proposals should be finalized, reaffirming Pakistan's priority to bolster economic, trade, and investment ties with friendly countries. The DPM chaired the 4th inter-ministerial meeting, on investment project proposals with friendly countries. During the meeting, the committee reviewed briefs on potential investments in key sectors, including infrastructure, petroleum, trade, and information technology (IT).

Continued on Page 06

Amidst Gaza bombardment

Pakistan slams Israel's latest military offensive

These actions, coupled with Israel's clear intent to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from their homeland, constitute war crimes under international law," Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday denounced Israel's latest military offensive aimed at establishing new security corridors, including the illegal seizure of the Morag Corridor and further annexation of Palestinian land. "The deliberate targeting of a UN-run clinic in Jabalia, which sheltered over 700 displaced civilians, demonstrates Israel's blatant disregard for international law and humanitarian principles. These actions, coupled with Israel's clear intent to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from their homeland, constitute war crimes under international law," Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said in a statement.

Continued on Page 06

21 killed in Israeli strike on school

RAMALLAH: Gaza's civil defence agency said at least 21 people were killed Thursday in an Israeli air strike on a school serving as a shelter for people displaced by the war. "So far, 21 people have been killed as a result of an Israeli air strike on Dar al-Arqam School in the Al-Tuffah neighbourhood, northeast of Gaza City," Mahmud Bassal, the agency's spokesman, told news agency. — Agencies

Briefs

More floods in US feared

DNA

NEW YORK: The National Weather Service warned on Thursday of "generational" floods in the US South and Midwest as storms ripped across a swath of the country from Texas to Michigan, whipping up tornadoes and killing two people. At least 19 tornadoes struck on Wednesday, destroying homes and businesses, injuring at least eight people and knocking out power to hundreds of thousands. That was just "the beginning of a multi-day catastrophic and potentially historic heavy rainfall event", the NWS said. Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee and Mississippi faced the threat of a "generational flood event" with some locations forecast to see as much as 15 inches (38 cm) of rain by the weekend, which could cause rivers to burst their banks.

Bride shot dead in Lahore

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: A bride was shot dead hours before her wedding procession in Lahore on Thursday, according to a statement from the Edhi Foundation, while the victim's family alleged that her brother-in-law was the culprit. According to today's statement, the 23-year-old woman was shot in the head on Thursday morning, noting that it was the day of her wedding procession. "The police and forensic team collected evidence and launched an investigation," the statement read. "After the police and investigative agencies completed their work, the body was shifted to the morgue by an Edhi ambulance. However, the victim's mother, Jameela Bibi, alleged that her son-in-law had "murdered the girl" and that action should be taken against him.

Armenian claims rejected Baku welcomes UN rights council opinion

In its Opinion, the Working Group explicitly rejected Armenian side's claims that Ruben Vardanyan was arrested for his freedom of expression and political activities

DNA

BAKU: The Republic of Azerbaijan welcomes the Opinion of the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which was published on 13 March 2025, rejecting Armenian side's claims regarding the case of Ruben Vardanyan. In its Opinion, the Working Group explicitly rejected Armenian side's claims that Ruben Vardanyan was arrested for his freedom of expression and political activities. The aforementioned Opinion especially emphasizes that Ruben Vardanyan is accused by the Republic of Azerbaijan of committing crimes such as the death of numerous individuals, large-scale property destruction, financing of terrorism, establishment of illegal armed groups, and other crimes, and was detained on the basis of these charges. Furthermore, Armenian side's claims that Ruben Vardanyan was arrested for defending his rights and making statements in this context have been deemed baseless. The Opinion

of the Working Group states that freedoms of expression and association are not absolute rights and can be subject to restrictions, for reasons relating, in particular, to national security and public order. According to the Opinion the charges against R.Vardanyan allows to conclude that indeed his actions posed a threat to national security. At the same time, in response to Armenian side's claims that actions allegedly invalidating R. Vardanyan's presumption of innocence were committed during the indictment and trial process, the Opinion states that his arrest is based on reasonable suspicions. Thus, despite Armenian side's claims that Ruben Vardanyan has been allegedly deprived of his right to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defense and other fair trial rights, the Working Group concluded that these claims were unfounded and confirmed that Azerbaijan ensured legal procedures in accordance with international standards.

Continued on Page 06

Donald Trump sparks trade war with sweeping global tariffs

Pakistan also hit hard by Trump decision

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump ignited a potentially ruinous global trade war Wednesday as he slapped 10 percent tariffs on imports from around the world and harsh extra levies on key trading partners. Holding up a chart of the sweeping measures in the White House Rose Garden, Trump unveiled particularly stinging tariffs on major trade partners China and the European Union on what he called "Liberation Day." "This is one of the most important days, in my opinion, in American history," said Trump. "It's our declaration of economic independence." The announcement triggered immediate anger, with China warning the tariffs could "endanger" global economic development, US ally Australia blasting them as "not the act of a friend," and threats of retaliation from around the world. Stock markets looked set for major volatility Thursday, with Tokyo's Nikkei leading an Asian selloff, collapsing more than four percent. US futures plummeted and safe haven gold hit a new record as investors took fright. Trump reserved some of the heaviest blows for what he called "nations that treat us badly." That included an additional 34 percent on goods from superpower rival China — bringing the newly added tariff rate there to 54 percent.

Continued on Page 06

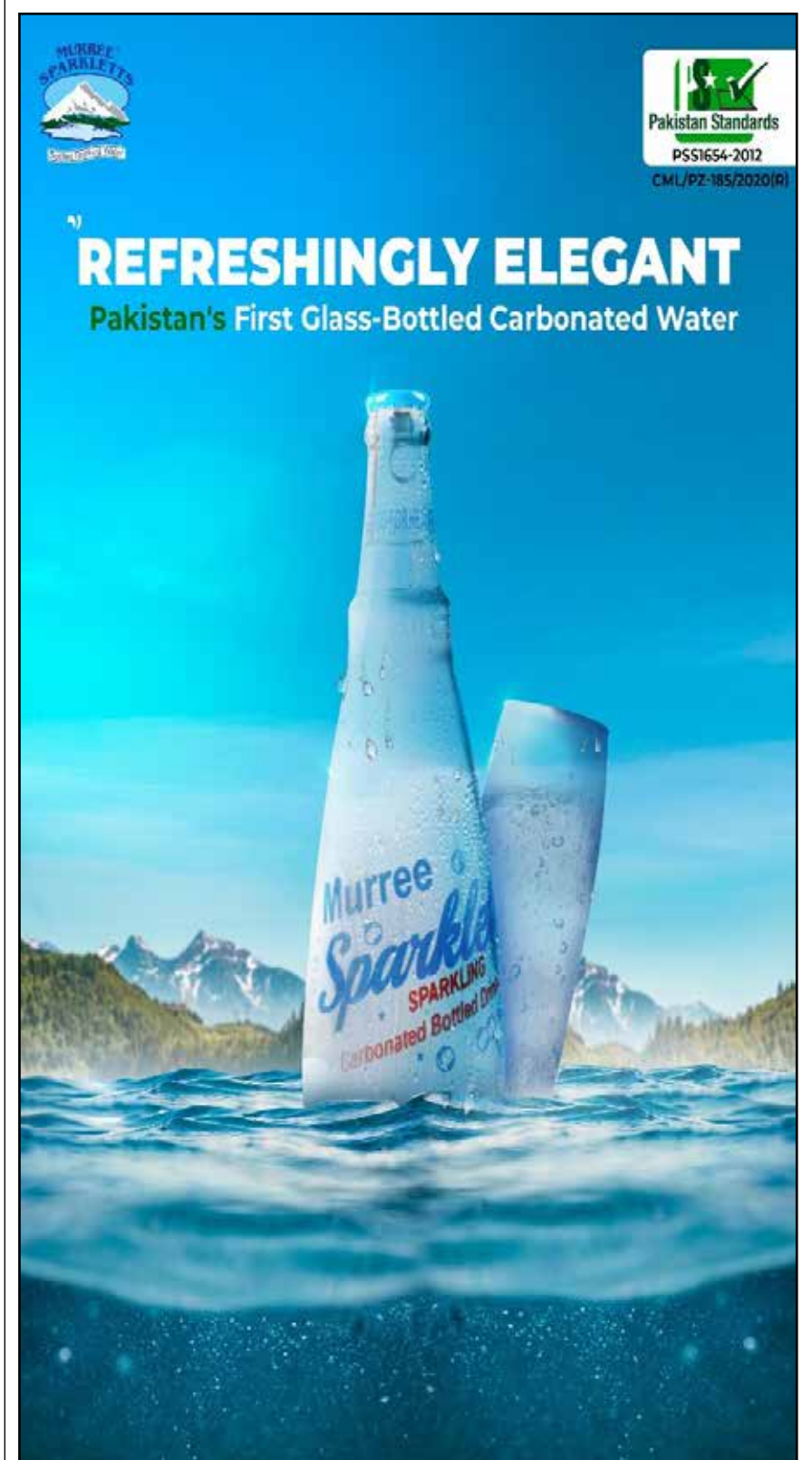
China urges US to correct its wrongdoing

DNA

BEIJING: China has urged the United States to correct its wrongful imposition of "reciprocal tariffs," and address economic and trade differences with China and other countries through equal, respectful, and mutually-beneficial negotiations, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Thursday.

Another news on Back Page

Guo made the remarks at a regular press briefing in response to a query about Washington's announcement of "reciprocal tariffs" on major trading partners. Under the pretext of "reciprocity," the US has imposed additional tariffs on exports from China and other countries, which seriously violates World Trade Organization regulations.



CM for immediate implementation of anti-harassment laws

The provincial government follows a zero-tolerance policy on harassment, particularly in educational institutions, recognizing that protecting female students and staff is not only a legal obligation but also essential for ensuring women's access to education

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister (CM) Ali Amin Gandapur has directed the immediate enforcement of anti-harassment laws in public universities across the province. The Chief Minister's Secretariat has issued an official letter to the Higher Education Department, emphasizing the need for strict compliance. According to the letter, while there are existing laws, guidelines and policies aimed at preventing sexual harassment in educational institutions and workplaces, gaps in their effective implementation remain in some universities. Due to these shortcomings, recent incidents of alleged har-

assment in certain universities have been reported in the media, prompting the CM to take strict notice. The letter highlights that such incidents violate both existing laws and societal ethical values. The provincial government follows a zero-tolerance policy on harassment, particularly in educational institutions, recognizing that protecting female students and staff is not only a legal obligation but also essential for ensuring women's access to education. To address this, the Higher Education Department has been instructed to take necessary steps to ensure implementation in all universities under its jurisdiction. Students must be made aware of existing anti-harassment laws, and all institutions must establish inquiry com-

mittees as mandated by law. At least one female focal person should be appointed in each university, and their contact details must be published on university websites. Furthermore, universities must establish an effective mechanism for reporting and addressing harassment complaints while strictly adhering to the department's protocols and guidelines. All universities have been given a deadline of ten days to implement these directives and submit a compliance report. Failure to meet this deadline will result in legal action against the responsible officials. The provincial government aims to create a safe educational environment for women, reinforcing its commitment to eradicating harassment in all forms, it added.



ISLAMABAD: Vendor is busy in his work, to sell fruits as resuming the daily routine after Eid

Ahsan terms electricity tariff reduction major economic step

DNA

Islamabad :Chairman of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Member of the Central Core Committee of UBG, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, has stated that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement of a significant reduction in electricity prices for domestic and industrial consumers is a major economic step that will provide direct relief to both the business community and the general public. He highlighted the relentless efforts and continuous endeavors of the UBG Group, Group Leader Gohar Ejaz, and Patron-in-Chief S.M. Tanveer behind this achievement. They have consistently raised the issues faced by traders and industrialists and played a crucial role in finding practical solutions in collaboration with the government.

Speaking to a high-level delegation of traders, he stated that, following this decision, the electricity price for domestic consumers has been reduced by 7.41 rupees per unit, bringing the new rate to 34 rupees per unit. Similarly, for industrial consumers, the price has been reduced by 7.59 rupees per unit, lowering it to 39.60 rupees per unit. This step is a significant advancement toward economic recovery, industrial growth, and public welfare. Not only will it accelerate industrial and commercial activities, but it will also provide relief to the public, marking another positive step toward economic stability in the country. Ahsan Bakhtawari further emphasized that the leadership of the UBG Group has always represented the business community's concerns to the government and played a key role in securing this crucial decision.

Cotton to be sown on over 3.5m acres in Punjab: Secretary

DNA

MULTAN: Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftekhar Ali Sahoo announced on Thursday successful completion of the first phase of cotton cultivation in the province, with over 3.5 million acres set to be cultivated this season. While presiding over a meeting at Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture, Multan, he highlighted that this year marked the launch of Pakistan's first-ever uniform cotton sowing campaign, which has already yielded positive results. Sa-

hoo reported that over 80pc of the cotton sowing target had been achieved in the first phase. If the current pace is maintained, the target will likely be met within the next two to three days. He further noted that the cotton revival campaign is being widely appreciated, and the Punjab chief minister has introduced a special incentive package to support the sowing and production targets. The second phase of sowing will continue until April 30, with both the Agriculture Department and farmers dedicated to meeting the cultivation goals.

Efforts are being made to ensure the availability of quality agricultural inputs and sufficient canal water for cotton-growing regions. Sahoo emphasised that boosting per-acre yields is key to making cotton cultivation more profitable. In his address, Sahoo directed relevant officers to accelerate field activities to achieve the provincial cotton cultivation targets. He also visited the under-construction Model Agriculture Mall in Multan and expressed satisfaction with the progress of its construction.

RCCI welcomes reduction in electricity prices

RCCI President Usman Shaukat commended the initiative, highlighting that the reduction of Rs. 7.41 per unit for domestic consumers and Rs. 7.59 per unit for industries will lower operational costs, promote industrial growth, and boost exports

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has welcomed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's decision to reduce electricity tariffs for domestic and industrial consumers, calling it a much-needed relief for businesses and households. The RCCI and the business community had long demanded a reduction in power tariffs to lower the cost of doing business, and this decision marks a significant step in addressing their concerns. RCCI President Usman Shaukat

commended the initiative, highlighting that the reduction of Rs. 7.41 per unit for domestic consumers and Rs. 7.59 per unit for industries will lower operational costs, promote industrial growth, and boost exports. He emphasized that this measure will restore investor confidence, improve market competitiveness, and help Pakistani exporters meet global challenges. The announcement was made at a ceremony held at the Prime Minister's Secretariat, attended by

prominent stakeholders from the business and industrial sectors. RCCI President Usman Shaukat, along with Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Fahad Barlas, and Immediate Past President Saqib Rafiq, represented the Chamber at the event. The gathering also included industrialists, business leaders, federal ministers, Power Ministry officials, and representatives from various chambers of commerce.

OGDCL announces revival of Oil & Gas production

KARACHI: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Thursday announced the successful revival of oil and gas production from Chak # 2-2 Well, a joint venture in the Sinjhora Block, located in the Sanghar district of Sindh. This achievement underscores OGDCL's commitment to enhancing the country's hydrocarbon resources and ensuring energy security. The Sinjhora Block comprises OGDCL as the Operator with a 62.5% working interest, alongside Government Holdings (Private) Limited (GHPL) with 22.5%, and Orient Petroleum Inc. (OPI) holding a 15% share. Following a side-track and recompletion in the Basal Sand formation, post-completion testing has yielded promising results. The well is currently producing 115 barrels of oil per day (BPD) and 7.0 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of gas, along with 21 metric tons per day (MTon/D) of LPG. —APP

Husband held for strangling wife, hiding body in trunk

ISLAMABAD: In a swift operation, the Islamabad Capital Police and Homicide Investigation Unit (HIU) arrested a man (Husband) accused of strangling his wife with a dupatta and hiding her body inside a trunk at their residence in the Bhara Kahu area on Thursday. An official told media that the incident occurred on March 28, 2025, within the jurisdiction of Bhara Kahu Police Station. The suspect, identified as Ikhtlaq, allegedly killed his wife and concealed her body inside the house. He said that upon receiving directives from DIG Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq, police teams, including the Homicide Investigation Unit, utilized modern forensic and technical investigation methods to trace and apprehend the accused in a short span of time.—APP

CDA chief reviews progress on uplift projects

Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa further urged collective civic participation, inviting schools, universities, families, and residents to actively contribute to the plantation campaign

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, presided over a meeting at the CDA Headquarters on Thursday to review the authority's overall performance, progress on ongoing development projects, as well as new initiatives taken by CDA such as the citywide beautification plan and the Spring Plantation Drive 2025, inauguration of Sector E-12 and third party audit of all the projects in order to ensure transparency, merit and internal accountability. The meeting, attended by CDA board members and the relevant senior officers. The meeting underscored the authority's commitment to elevating Islamabad's status as a global model of urban excellence. During the meeting, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa received detailed briefings on the status of ongoing infrastructure and civic related projects, including updates on the beautification plan designed to enhance

the capital's visual appeal. Emphasizing the need for sustained efforts, he issued directives to align long-term beautification plans for a greener, cleaner and more aesthetically vibrant capital. During the meeting, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa stressed the importance of maintaining high quality standards and adhering to timelines for all projects. Every project we undertake must reflect the highest standards of craftsmanship, quality and efficiency. He stated that his goal is to ease out the difficulties of the citizens of Islamabad. He said that CDA has established Islamabad Water Agency in order to provide safe, and clean drinking water to the citizens but to have sufficient future arrangements of supply of drinking water. Highlighting the significance of collaborative efforts, Chairman CDA called for proactive engagement with all stakeholders including corporate sector and leading brands to support the city's beautification drive through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). By mobilizing resources and expertise

under CSR initiatives, we can accelerate the greening of Islamabad, particularly through the Plantation Drive 2025. Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa further urged collective civic participation, inviting schools, universities, families, and residents to actively contribute to the plantation campaign. He reaffirmed that a beautiful Islamabad is a shared responsibility. He called on every citizen, especially our youth, to join hands in planting trees and nurturing green spaces. Together, he emphasized that we can transform Islamabad into one of the world's most beautiful capitals. The meeting also outlined beautification plans including horticulture designs, landscaping, and tree plantation drive across the city. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa reiterated his unwavering resolve to position Islamabad as a benchmark for urban planning and environmental stewardship. He concluded that his vision is to create a city that harmonizes modernity with nature, setting a high standard for sustainable development in Islamabad and beyond.

Hundreds of subpar items destroyed during Ramadan in KP

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority has released a report of its actions during Ramadan, revealing that hundreds of substandard and harmful food items were confiscated and destroyed across the province. According to the Food Authority report on Thursday, food authority teams conducted 10,112 inspections of food-related businesses throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During these inspections, a total of 112,595 kilograms of substandard and harmful food products were seized and disposed of. The highest number of inspections took place in Peshawar, where 1,682 checks were carried out, leading to the seizure and discarding of 31,242 kilograms of unsafe food items. In Mardan, 49,485 kilograms of substandard food were discarded following 883 inspections. Other districts with significant inspections included Bannu (593), Abbottabad (559), Swat (596), Mansehra (563), and Haripur (512). Additionally, 2,201 food samples, including milk, beverages, cooking oil, ghee, and spices, were tested in mobile food testing labs. Among these, 1,904 samples met safety standards, while 297 were declared substandard. As part of enforcement measures, 25 businesses were sealed, and fines totaling 15.75 million rupees were imposed for violations of hygiene and food safety regulations. The authority also renewed and issued 2,477 business licenses, generating 9.64 million rupees in revenue. Furthermore, 1,147 businesses received improvement notices and eight training sessions along with 155 awareness sessions were conducted during Ramadan. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru, emphasized that the government is committed to eliminating substandard and hazardous food products from the province. He assured that strict action would be taken against those involved in selling unhealthy food, stating that public health will not be compromised under any circumstances.—DNA

Navy fully committed to protect maritime borders: Naval Chief

Visits forward posts in Coastal and Creeks areas, lauds Navy's dedication

DNA

KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf has reaffirmed Pakistan Navy's steadfast commitment to protect country's maritime borders. He was talking to the officers and men of Pakistan Navy during his visit to forward posts in Coastal and Creeks Areas, as well as several Pakistan Navy ships. Admiral Ashraf extended Eid greetings to deployed personnel and lauded their unwavering commitment to duty, emphasizing that safeguarding national interests remains paramount even during festive occasions. Ac-

cording to a statement issued by the Directorate General Public Relations (Pakistan Navy), he commended the

sacrifices of naval personnel in maintaining vigilance and operational readiness. The Naval Chief reaffirmed the

Pakistan Navy's unwavering commitment to defending the country's maritime borders while also underscoring

its crucial role in ensuring regional stability. He encouraged officers and sailors to continue their mission with professionalism and resolve, acknowledging their vital contributions to national security. While interacting with personnel stationed at forward posts, Admiral Ashraf praised their dedication and high morale in defending this vital frontier, which comprises challenging marshlands, swamps, and unpredictable waterways. The CNS expressed complete satisfaction with the operational preparedness of Pak Marines in the Creeks Area, highlighting their role in safeguarding the country's coastal frontiers.



JUDO KARATE KUNG-FU JU-JITSU TAEKWONDO

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WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

APRIL

April 04/Senegal National Day

April 07/W. H. O. World Health Day

April 12/Somalia Armed Forces Day

April 15/DPR Korea The Day of the Sun

April 16/Denmark National Day

April 17/Iran Army Day

April 17/Syria Independence Day

April 18/Zimbabwe Independence Day

April 24/Holy See Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate

April 25/DPR Korea Armed Forces Day

April 26/Tanzania National Day

April 27/Sierra Leone Independence Day

April 27/South Africa Freedom Day

April 30/Sweden Birthday of His Majesty

April 30/Netherlands Birthday of Queen



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency	
Rescue (Police).....	15
Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....	1122
& Rescue Services.....	4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....	9222596
Rawalpindi.....	9270601-20



Enquiry	
Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Inquiry.....	117
Railway Exchange.....	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....	5555489
CAA.....	9281092



Hospitals	
CMH.....	5611111
MH.....	5611116
Cantt Hospital.....	9270907-11
DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
Holy Family.....	9290322-7
PIMS.....	9261170-79
Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International.....	4603666



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

Water Tank	
Islamabad.....	0321-5744480

Ministry for enhancing country’s global eco position

Efforts like lifting the rice export ban to Mexico and the MERCOSUR Framework Agreement opened new markets, boosting export diversification. New trade missions and improved trade facilitation, including the near-completion of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), enhanced Pakistan’s global footprint and efficiency in customs processes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ministry of Commerce has achieved key milestones aimed at enhancing the country’s global economic position in Fiscal Year, 2024. Notable successes include the signing of the Pakistan-Azerbaijan Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and the Transit Trade Agreement (TTA), both aimed at reducing tariffs and enhancing trade with Azerbaijan and Central Asia, said official documents issued here by the federal government. The Ministry also strengthened e-commerce through MoUs with Uzbekistan and Belarus, promoting digital trade and supporting SMEs. The “Made in Pakistan” exhibition in Tashkent resulted in significant business deals, while the lifting of the rice export ban to Mexico and the MERCOSUR Framework Agreement opened new markets. The Ministry expanded Pakistan’s commercial presence through new trade missions, fostering global trade relations. These efforts, alongside strategic initiatives and trade facilitation measures, are laying the groundwork for sustainable economic growth and enhanced export competitiveness, official data said. The outcome Evaluation in 2024, the Ministry of Commerce’s efforts significantly advanced Pakistan’s economy through trade growth, expanded market access, and strengthened international partnerships. Key achievements include the Pakistan-Azerbaijan PTA and TTA, enhancing regional trade and improving access to Central Asia. The E-commerce MoUs with Uzbekistan and Belarus fostered digital trade, while the “Made in Pakistan” exhibition in Tashkent generated over \$10 million in business deals and strengthened ties with Central Asia. Efforts like lifting the rice export ban to Mexico and the MERCOSUR Framework Agreement opened new markets, boosting export diversification. New trade missions and improved trade facilitation, including the near-completion of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), enhanced Pakistan’s global footprint and efficiency in customs processes. These initiatives foster long-term sustainable growth, positioning Pakistan’s economy as more competitive, resilient, and globally integrated. The report highlighted the Policy and legislative developments, signing of the Pakistan-Azerbaijan Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and Pakistan-Azerbaijan Transit Trade Agreement (TTA) – July 2024. Pakistan-Turkiye Trade and Investment Roundtable (Aug 2024) and “Made in Pakistan” Exhibition in Tashkent (June 2024) as well Memorandum of Understanding on E-commerce Cooperation also finalized. According to the documents issued, the Ministry of Commerce of Pakistan aims to drive economic growth by fostering a dynamic and competitive trade ecosystem. Aligned with national objectives of economic resilience and sustainable development, the Ministry focuses on promoting exports, enhancing market access, and integrating Pakistan’s economy into global supply chains. The Strategic priorities include developing key sectors such as textiles, agriculture, and manufacturing, while also supporting emerging industries like technology and services. The Ministry strives to create an environment conducive to foreign investment and reduce trade imbalances through policies that encourage export-oriented growth. By modernizing trade infrastructure and building capacity, the Ministry aims to position Pakistan as a competitive player in the global market, contributing to the nation’s economic stability and prosperity, the data said. The data also highlighted the initial status of country’s trade, in the previous year, the Ministry of Commerce operated within a challenging yet dynamic landscape shaped by both domestic and international factors.

Pakistan’s economy was facing various challenges, including trade imbalances, inflationary pressures and structural inefficiencies, while the global trade environment remains volatile due to geopolitical factors and market fluctuations. The Ministry’s starting point in addressing these challenges involved recalibrating its policies to align with the government’s economic priorities and ensure the sustainability of trade growth. In 2024, Pakistan’s Ministry of Commerce focused on enhancing exports, improving market access, negotiating trade agreements, and boosting the competitiveness of Pakistani industries. The Ministry modernized trade infrastructure, improved the ease of doing business, and supported export-oriented sectors like textiles, agriculture, e-commerce, and information technology. Key performance indicators included monitoring export growth, improving the trade balance, and successfully implementing trade agreements. The Ministry also prioritized strengthening institutional capacity and aligning trade policies with national economic objectives. Notably, Pakistan achieved record-breaking exports, surpassing expectations at the end of the second quarter of the fiscal year 2024.

IRSA releases 57,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 57,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 68,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1411.03 feet which was 9.03 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 19,300 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1085.00 feet, which was 35.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 22,300 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 32,100, 30,300, 16,600 and 6,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 17,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 6,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

PM’s decision to decrease electricity tariff hailed

ISLAMABAD: PML-N Minister & Coordinator Thursday have jointly welcomed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s landmark decision to decrease the electricity tariff by Rs 7.41 per unit, terming it a ‘historic mega power sector relief package’ which will greatly benefit both industrial and domestic consumers, bringing much-needed respite to the people. Coordinator to the Prime Minister Rana Ihsan Afzal recently shared his thoughts in an exclusive interview with a private news channel and highlighted that one of the government’s significant achievements is providing relief to the public and business community while still working within the IMF program. Rana Ihsan Afzal emphasized that the relief provided is “revenue-based neutral relief”, implying that it does not compromise the country’s revenue generation while offering much-needed respite to the public and business. Afzal expressed optimism that with the provided relief, businesses will now flourish and domestic consumers will also greatly benefit. Railway Minister Bilal Azhar Kiyani also welcomed the decision, calling it a huge relief and a testament to the government’s sustainable and long-term policies.—APP

Best medical facilities to be ensured: Kamal

The minister said that the ministry will work on the health card in the coming days

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal on Thursday said that quality medicines and treatment facilities will be delivered to the doorsteps of the people with modern technology. Talking to media during visit to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), the minister said that negligence will not be tolerated in the health sector as it is not possible to rectify mistakes in this area. He said that work is being done on the ongoing projects at PIMS at a fast pace. “We have always fulfilled our responsibilities like a challenge and medicines and treatment facilities will be provided to the people at their doorsteps.” He said that there is a need to pay full attention to the health sector and assured that positive changes will be seen in this sector in the coming days. He said that innovation and positive reforms will be introduced and basic health centers will be activated in a modern and complete manner. He said that we have to move towards tele-medicine and the government is working to introduce one patient one ID system. He said that keeping the modern world in mind, people go to big hospitals due to the lack of a primary health centers. “We will improve facilities at public hospitals and primary health system will be upgraded.” He said that our aim is to provide quality medicines and best doctors to citizens at all public hospitals. He said that seven operation theaters have been built at a cost of Rs 2.1 billion. He added state-of-the-art facilities will be provided in such modern operation theaters. He said that the plan to give the health sector on public-private partnership is not under consideration. He added the ministry will work on the health card in the coming days.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: A worker is painting the over head pedestrian bridge of Metro Bus at Srinagar Highway in Federal Capital. – Online

Food allergy awareness crucial for public health

ISLAMABAD: A health expert Thursday stressed that food allergies necessitate an immediate attention, emphasizing the critical need for public awareness for timely, cost-effective treatment which are entirely curable if proper precautions are taken. “Neglecting it can have severe and potentially life-threatening consequences”. Food Allergy Expert Dr Anwar ul Haq Roomi talking to a private news channel, explained food allergies can manifest at any stage of life, from early childhood to adulthood and occur when the immune system mistakenly identifies certain foods as harmful, triggering a defensive response. He further noted that food allergies can be inherited and alarmingly, adding, approximately 80% of food allergies manifest in children, making them significantly more prone to developing these allergies compared to adults and the elderly. He emphasized that in South Asian countries, including Pakistan, there is a growing need for holistic treatment approaches that not only address the physical aspects of food allergies but also provide rehabilitation and support for affected individuals. Dr Roomi highlighted that common food allergens in Pakistan include gluten, wheat, chicken and nuts which can trigger severe allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. He assured that the treatment for food allergies is not only effective but also cost-effective, making it accessible to a wider population in Pakistan. He emphasized the need for nationwide awareness programs to educate citizens about food allergies and their implications. Additionally, he stressed the importance of conducting more extensive research on food allergies specific to Pakistan, highlighting the need for a better understanding of the prevalence, causes and consequences of these allergies in the local population.—APP

Pak’s regional export increases 6.64%

Among other countries, imports from India increased to \$157.523 million from \$138.616 million whereas imports from Afghanistan also increased by 232.46 per cent from \$5.477 million to \$ 18.209 million

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s exports to the seven regional countries increased by 6.64 per cent in the first eight months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) compared to the corresponding months of last year. The country’s exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$3.101 billion, which is 14.21 per cent of Pakistan’s overall exports of \$21.820 billion during July-February (2024-25), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan’s exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan carried out its border trade with farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives. Pakistan’s exports to China witnessed a decrease of 10.54 per cent from \$1895.959 million last year to \$1695.941 million this year whereas exports to Afghanistan surged to \$592.840 million from \$321.754 million. The country’s exports to Bangladesh also increased by 26.48 per cent to \$525.133 million this year from \$415.167 million whereas exports to Sri Lanka rose by 4.63 per cent to \$279.295 million from \$266.930. The exports to Nepal decreased to \$1.693 million from \$2.160 million in the previous year. Pakistan exports to Maldives increased by 2.15 per cent to \$6.127 million from \$5.998 million while exports to India increased to \$0.404 million from \$0.230 million, it added. On the other hand, the imports from seven regional countries were recorded at \$10.462 billion during the period under review as compared to \$8.316 billion during last year, showing an increase of 25.79 per cent. The imports from China during July-February 2024-25 were recorded at \$10.188 billion against the \$8.094 billion during July-February 2023-24, showing an increase of 25.86 per cent. Among other countries, imports from India increased to \$157.523 million from \$138.616 million whereas imports from Afghanistan also increased by 232.46 per cent from \$5.477 million to \$ 18.209 million.

ANF recovers 209 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting seven operations across the country, recovered as many as 209 kg drugs worth more than Rs 87.2 million and arrested three suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Thursday. He informed that around 167 kilograms of Ice was recovered from spice packets in a shipment being sent to Dubai from the Karachi port. In another action, 4.6 kg of Ice captured in five parcels was recovered from a parcel being sent to Australia from a courier service office in Quetta. One kg of heroin was recovered from a parcel being sent to the UK at a courier service in Rawalpindi. As many as 1,887 kg of Ice was recovered from hidden parts in the sewing machine of a passenger’s luggage going to Jeddah at Peshawar Airport. In another operation at a courier office in Rawalpindi 996 grams of Ice were recovered hidden in two computers being sent to Doha. 30 kilograms of hashish were recovered from a passenger’s trolley bag near the bus terminal on Multan Road. The ANF recovered 5 kg of Hashish and 1 kg of Ice from a suspect riding a bus near Jamshoro in Hyderabad.—APP

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Briefs

Gwadar Pak-China Friendship Hospital debuts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-aided Gwadar Pak-China Friendship Hospital has debuted in conducting an operation to remove bladder stones through modern laser surgery in the history of Gwadar, charting out new blueprints of health cooperation under CEPC. In surgery of "cystolitholapaxy", a procedure to remove bladder stones, surgeons used an instrument called a cystoscope to locate the stone or stones, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. According to details, laser crushes the stones into smaller pieces, then a team of surgeons removed them. All such medical procedures and the rest of facilities are free of cost for the underserved people of Gwadar. This February, Pak-China Friendship Hospital scored a landmark achievement by introducing Endourology for the first time in its Urology department. This advanced procedure, often referred to as minimally invasive surgery using a camera, marks a breakthrough in providing state-of-the-art medical care to patients in Gwadar. Pak-China Friendship Hospital, regulated by Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) and managed by Indus Hospital and Health Network (IHNN) offers a wide range of services including ICU, emergency care, internal medicine, family medicine, general surgery, urology, orthopedics, pediatric, OBGYN, dental clinic, labor room, pharmacy, operation theaters, laboratories, blood bank, imaging services, and various clinics, all operating 24/7. Additionally, expensive medical tests, treatments, and services are provided free of charge on a daily basis. This hospital not only serves Gwadar but the entire Balochistan region, offering advanced healthcare close to home. The medical staff and therapists are provided with ample facilities in this modern building.—APP

Court Notice

In the Court of Faiza Riaz Civil Judge 1st Class Kharian

Title: Fatima Bibi etc. Versus Muhammad Afzal etc.

Notice to:
2. Muhammad Aslam,
4. Muhammad Akram,
5. Asad Hussain sons of Bashir Ahmed Cast Jatt Residents of Village Dhorja Tehsil Kharian District Gujrat
Suit For Declaration with consequential
Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not be served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 14-04-2025. Given under my hand seal of the court this 3rd day of April 2025.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's first humanitarian aid consignment for earthquake affected areas handed over at Yangon, Myanmar.

Chairman Senate designated Founding Chairman of ISC

The decision to this effect was made during Chairman Gilani's recent highly productive visit to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he attended an exclusive briefing session on the forthcoming Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC), in Seoul, Korea

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark diplomatic triumph for Pakistan, His Excellency Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan, has been designated as the Founding Chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC), a Seoul-based global forum dedicated to fostering parliamentary dialogue, promoting sustainable development and augmenting cooperation in addressing key challenges such as Climate Change, Renewable Energy, and Water Scarcity. The decision to this effect was made during Chairman Gilani's recent highly productive visit to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he attended an exclusive briefing session on the forthcoming Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC), in Seoul, Korea. The formal ceremony in this regard will take place during the forthcoming World Summit 2025, sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) in Seoul Korea. The Summit will be participated by 500 representatives and 45 Speakers of parliaments from 150 countries. In recognition of his visionary leadership, an award was presented to Chairman Gilani, bearing an inscription that lauds his unwavering commitment to building bridges between legislative bodies and advancing a shared global agenda of peace, prosperity, and democratic values. Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani's Kuala Lumpur

visit and his subsequent appointment as the Founding Chairman of the ISC represent significant milestones in Pakistan's growing influence on the global parliamentary stage, particularly towards strengthening inter-parliamentary relations, enhancing regional cooperation, and advancing shared economic and diplomatic objectives. By harnessing the power of parliamentary diplomacy, Pakistan Senate under Chairman Senate is set to drive innovative solutions that bridge divides and foster global peace and prosperity. The ISC under Chairman Gilani will serve as a premier platform for Pakistan and other Member countries to exchange ideas, develop robust policies, and forge partnerships that transcend traditional diplomatic boundaries. Earlier, at the ISC briefing session in Kuala Lumpur, Chairman Gilani delivered an inspiring address that captured the essence of his political ideology and Pakistan's diplomatic ethos. He emphasized that the ISC is more than an event—it is a visionary initiative built on the principles of interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universally shared values. He reiterated that true progress is achieved when legislative leaders work collaboratively to address global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, technological disruptions, and geopolitical tensions. He also stated that in line with ISC agenda, special focus will be laid on building partnerships and collaboration on three key areas i.e. Climate Change; Renewable Energy; and Water

Scarcity. Reflecting on his extensive experience in international relations, including his tenure as Pakistan's Prime Minister, the Chairman stressed that fostering dialogue, inclusivity, and people-to-people connectivity has always been the cornerstone of his political career. He highlighted how forums such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and other such forums have paved the way for enhanced global cooperation. As the Founding Chairman of the ISC, he called upon parliamentary leaders to transform shared ideals into tangible outcomes. "Our collective efforts must translate into actionable policies that ensure regional stability, peace, and sustainable development," he asserted. The Chairman also underlined the ISC's critical role in addressing not only domestic challenges but also in fostering innovative parliamentary solutions for issues on the Korean Peninsula and beyond. The Chairman's address at the conference was well received, emphasizing Pakistan's commitment to regional peace, economic stability, and global legislative cooperation. Accompanying Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani was an esteemed delegation of senior parliamentarians and international representatives, underscoring the global significance of this initiative. Notable members of the delegation included: H.E. Tan Sri Dato' (Dr) Johari bin Abdul, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malaysia; Hon. Chung Woo Lee, Co-Chair of the ISC

Organizing Committee; Hon. Dr. Charles S. Yang, Chair of UPF International; Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, Member of the Federal Parliament of Nepal and ISC Co-Chair; Hon. Dr. Mohd Mata Md Ramli, Senator of Malaysia; Dr. Cho Yong Deok, Secretary General of the Asian Water Council (AWC); Mr. Lai Peng Kong, Secretary General of UPF Malaysia; Ambassador of Pakistan in Malaysia Syed Ahsan Raza and renowned Pakistani businessman in Malaysia Mr. Usman Chaudhry. In another related development, the Chairman Senate also held high-level discussions with H.E. Tan Sri Dato' (Dr) Johari bin Abdul, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia and incumbent President of ASEAN. During the meeting with H.E. Tan Sri Dato' (Dr) Johari bin Abdul, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia, the Chairman Senate praised and acknowledged the fraternal and close bilateral and inter-parliamentary relations and connectivity between the two brotherly countries. The talks reaffirmed the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Malaysia and focused on advancing parliamentary diplomacy through enhanced legislative exchanges. The Malaysian Speaker acknowledged Pakistan's longstanding friendship and expressed Malaysia's keen interest in furthering parliamentary exchanges, committee collaborations, and engagement in ASEAN's parliamentary processes.

Islamabad offices regain momentum

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad returned to its routine on Thursday as the Eid holidays drew to a close, with capital employees flocking back to their offices and exchanging warm Eid greetings where normalcy was restored on the city's roads after a brief lull. According to a report aired by media channels, Capital city's offices sprang back to life on Thursday, with employees returning to their desks and exchanging warm Eid greetings with their colleagues. The atmosphere was filled with joy and camaraderie as coworkers shared stories of their holiday celebrations, exchanging well-wishes, report added. With the brief lull of the holidays now over, the city's offices were once again abuzz with activity, marking a seamless transition back to normalcy. Significant influx of passengers was witnessed at Islamabad's airports and bus terminals as people returned from their hometowns, with authorities ensuring smooth operations to facilitate the travelers. The city's markets, which had been closed for the holidays, also reopened with shopkeepers busy arranging their merchandise and catering to the needs of customers who were out to catch up on shopping they had put off during the holidays "I am feeling refreshed and rejuvenated after spending quality time with my family," said a government employee, as she settled into her office. It is good to be back, but I have to admit, I am already missing my hometown," she added. "I had a wonderful Eid, but I am happy to be back to my routine," added a software engineer. "There's a lot of work to catch up on, but I am looking forward to tackling new challenges," said a banker in Islamabad.

PM grieved over death of test cricketer

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed grief and sorrow over demise of former test cricketer Farooq Hamid. The prime minister offered his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, praying for the elevation of ranks of the departed soul in Jannah. In a statement, he said that late Farooq Hamid brought great honour to Pakistan through his performance in spor—APP

Sugar mafia continues to exploit masses, farmers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Business leader and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, on Thursday, said the powerful sugar mafia should be controlled as it continues to exploit the masses. He said the sugar mafia comprises influential politicians, industrialists, and business tycoons who manipulate the production, pricing, and distribution of sugar to maximize their profits at the expense of the masses. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a state-

ment issued here today that the unchecked control has led to artificial price hikes, shortages, and government bailouts, making sugar one of the most controversial commodities in Pakistan's economy. The business leader said that the sugar industry in Pakistan has always been closely tied to political elites. Policies are often tailored to benefit these groups rather than the public. Sugar mill licenses have always been given to people with strong political connections. This practice has allowed a select few to dominate the market, and the government has, at times, provided subsidies

and export incentives that directly benefit these mill owners while failing to protect consumers. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that one of the most notorious tactics of the sugar mafia is creating artificial shortages. They drive up prices by stockpiling sugar and limiting supply, ensuring maximum profits. He observed that despite sufficient production, sudden shortages frequently occur, leading to price hikes that burden the average consumer. The mafia almost annually unfolds a major sugar crisis by manipulating supply chains and exploiting government policies.—APP

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Global efforts necessary to eradicate the disparities

Pakistan aims to table a resolution in UNGA on Assistive Technology for the persons with disabilities to advocate equity, empowerment and ensuring fundamental human rights

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The third Global Disability Summit (GDS) kicked off in Berlin Today. The event, co-hosted by the Federal Government of Germany, International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the Government of Jordan, invited a wide range of stakeholders from across the globe to share their experiences, achievements and commitments in addressing the issues confronted by the people with disabilities, both at individual and social levels. Pakistan was rep-

resented at the Summit by the Minister of State (MoS) for National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination (NHS-RC), Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath. Addressing the audience in the main event titled, "Health for All: Transforming Health Systems and Ensuring Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities", the MoS noted that "Our presence here must not be merely confined to share ideas but to drive a global movement which includes dignity, equity and inclusion". He also highlighted the steps undertaken by Pakistan at the national and provin-

cial levels to include the persons with disabilities in the main stream like inclusion of disability rehabilitation services in Pakistan's Universal Health Coverage strategy in the National Health and Population Policy (2025-34), job quotas for disabled persons, regular organisation of special Olympics and establishment of special institutes for these differently abled persons. He also mentioned the ongoing projects in Pakistan in KPK, Balochistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) which were being run in collaboration with global partners including the International Red

Cross (IRC), AT Scale and WHO. He thanked the hosts for arranging the summit and underscored that collaborations for sharing best practices and resources can pave way for the future especially in developing and underdeveloped countries. He also reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to work shoulder to shoulder with the global community to address the issue. In this regard, Pakistan aims to table a resolution in UNGA on Assistive Technology for the persons with disabilities to advocate equity, empowerment and ensuring fundamental human rights.

US anti-immigrant frenzy unsustainable

MEXICAN border, the locus of much of the Trump administration's concerns about uncontrolled access to the US. But none of this materialized at the airport, which was relaxed and welcoming. The staff, including immigration officials, were drawn mostly from America's minorities, especially Hispanics and Asians, the same groups vilified by far-right opponents of immigration. The lines moved quickly and the passport screening process took about a minute per passenger, many of whom had flown from Mexican airports nearby. Countries are of course entitled to protect their borders. Immigration policies are usually discretionary, according to economic and security prerogatives. The US should be no exception, especially since it has suffered more than its share of illegal immigration: it is estimated that there are more than 11 million people living there without legal status, about 3 percent of the population. Some have committed heinous crimes in the US or were escaping the consequences of crimes they had committed in their home countries. However, the Trump administration has been criticized for how it is enforcing the law and the rhetoric employed to justify it. For example, it has targeted those holding political views at variance with the administration's, on the war in Gaza for example and the Palestinian issue in general. Many lawful residents have had their status revoked for expressing their views on these matters. Permanent residents, green card holders, were told that they could no longer stay in the US. Valid visas were revoked for students, faculty and researchers, and they were ordered to be deported for expressing their views. There has also been enforcement on ethnically selective grounds, targeting Hispanics, for example. The tactics have been frighteningly reminiscent of those employed by totalitarian or authoritarian regimes that have been roundly panned by the US as violations of the right to free expression and due process. Other states, especially those run by Democrats or with sizable immigrant or foreign-born populations, are also voicing objections to the federal overreach and accompanying xenophobia. The census showed that 50 percent of Texas and 49 percent of New Mexico's population are minorities, especially Hispanics. The District of Columbia and states such as Maryland also have sizable minority populations. Overall, more than 42 percent of the US population were minorities according to the 2020 census. Hispanics and Asians accounted for 60 percent of the minority population. Targeting students and faculty with opposing views has also been criticized by other states, especially those with large student populations. Massachusetts Rep. Stephen Lynch recently said: "Snatching an international student off our streets who is lawfully in our country and attending one of our universities and then bundling her off to an ICE detention center 1,700 miles away without a hearing is a sickening reminder of the Gestapo-like conduct from another age." He added that his district had about 80,000 foreign students "precisely because we have a reputation as a center of learning and intellectual, religious, and cultural tolerance. Let's keep it that way."

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China: a global economic anchor

THE China Development Forum (CDF) 2025 convened in Beijing from March 23 to 24, bringing together global leaders to address the theme "Unleashing Development Momentum for Stable Growth of Global Economy." Participants examined the challenges and opportunities facing the global economy while observing China's economic dynamism and its role as a stabilizing force. Amid growing international recognition of China's growth engine potential, "expanding investments in China" has emerged as a key priority for global businesses. Executives from multinational corporations—including Apple, Siemens, and BMW, — joined industry leaders from Global South countries such as Malaysia and Brazil, representing industries spanning manufacturing, finance, and services. This diverse participation underscores heightened interest in China's market opportunities. Attendees emphasized their confidence in China's market potential, optimism about the opportunities it offers, and commitment to long-term cooperation with China. Workers assemble a massive wind turbine blade at a marine wind power industrial base in Rongcheng city, east China's Shandong province. Ola Kaellenius, chairman of the board of management at Mercedes-Benz, stated that the company has greatly benefited from China's rapid economic growth and reaffirmed its commitment to long-term investment in China. He pledged to accelerate innovation and product localization at "Chinese speed," underscoring Mercedes-Benz's dedication to mutual growth within China. Georges Elhedery, group chief executive of HSBC Holdings, highlighted the expanding opportunities in global trade and investment, expressing enthusiasm for supporting China's future prosperity. He reiterated HSBC's role in fostering deeper integration between China and the global economy. Roland Busch, foreign co-chair of the CDF 2025 and president and CEO of Siemens AG, said China has found the answer to the question of where growth will come from. This year's forum showcased notable highlights that reinforce the resilience, potential, and vitality of the Chinese economy. Thriving consumer markets in film, winter sports, and tourism exemplify the vast potential of domestic economic circulation. Concurrently, technological breakthroughs—epitomized by Hangzhou's innovative startups, often dubbed the "Six Little Dragons"—highlight China's burgeoning innovation capabilities. Meanwhile, the rapid expansion of green home appliance and new energy industries underscores the transformative opportunities driving sustainable development. New momentum across diverse industries continues to gain strength, positioning itself as a sustainable and powerful driver for China's long-term economic advancement. Dilma Vana Rousseff, president of the New Development Bank, commended China's transformative economic evolution, highlighting its shift from the "world's factory" to a "global innovation powerhouse." Through deliberate strategic planning and sustained investment, China has solidified its leadership in renewable energy and artificial intelligence—achievements underpinned by forward-looking policies and proactive governance.

Trump's risky approach will not benefit the US

Mumtaz Ahmed Bhatti



Trump's confrontational posture toward Iran risks entrenching hostilities, pushing the Middle East toward greater instability. Rather than forcing Iran to capitulate, his policies could lead to increased regional conflicts, nuclear proliferation, or further entanglement of U.S. forces in Middle Eastern affairs. A superpower must weigh these risks carefully, using diplomacy alongside pressure rather than relying solely on coercion. Ultimately, Trump's re-election raises a critical question: what kind of superpower does the U.S. want to be? His policies suggest a vision of America as a dominant force...

THE re-election of Donald Trump as President of the United States marks a pivotal moment in the nation's history. Known for his aggressive style, disregard for diplomatic norms, and hardline stance on global issues, Trump's return signals a continuation of policies that prioritize confrontation over cooperation. His transactional approach, akin to running a corporation, risks undermining America's long-term interests. A superpower must go beyond profit-driven logic, embracing justice, understanding, and strategic patience to maintain global influence. During his first term, Trump disrupted global norms—publicly criticizing allies, withdrawing from international agreements like the Paris Climate Accord, and engaging in feuds with world leaders. His re-election suggests that this approach was not an anomaly but a deliberate strategy. His early speeches and policies hint at doubling down on economic and military aggression, favoring ultimatums over diplomacy. Trump has threatened to escalate trade wars with punitive tariffs and confront adversaries like Iran through coercion rather than dialogue. While such tactics might secure short-term concessions, they risk isolating the United States. Nations are not business subsidiaries that can be forced into compliance. Over time, this approach could erode trust, alienate allies, and embolden rivals, leaving the U.S. increasingly isolated. A key aspect of Trump's leadership is his disregard for diplomatic etiquette. He prefers megaphone diplomacy—direct, abrasive, and often unfiltered. His off-the-cuff remarks about foreign leaders, dismissive attitude toward international institutions, and public shaming of allies disrupt long-standing relationships. While some view this as strength, it undermines alliances critical to U.S. hegemony. NATO, for instance, has endured for decades through mutual respect. Trump's rhetoric—such as threatening tariffs on Canada or demanding higher financial contributions from European allies—weakens the alliance and creates divisions within the West. Trump's unpredictability sends a dangerous signal to adversaries. Iran, already in his crosshairs, may interpret his blunt threats as an incentive to escalate its own provocations. If Trump's aggressive style exacerbates tensions, the U.S. may struggle to rally international support in times of crisis. His rejection of diplomatic conventions weakens America's ability to lead, making it appear erratic and unreliable. His threats to impose higher tariffs illustrate this approach. During his first term, Trump imposed tariffs on China, Canada, and the European Union, framing them as necessary for American workers. Post-re-election, he hints at expanding this strategy. Similarly, his messaging to Iran suggests a continuation of the "maximum pressure" campaign through sanctions and military posturing. While such tactics might seem effective in the short run, they carry long-term risks. Tariffs disrupt global supply chains, raise consumer costs, and invite retaliation. China, for

example, responded to U.S. tariffs with its own, targeting American agricultural exports. A renewed trade war could strain an economy still recovering from inflation and post-pandemic challenges. Geopolitically, a hardline stance risks alienating key allies. Canada, a major trade partner, could suffer under Trump's tariff threats. The U.S.-Canada economic relationship is deeply intertwined—Canadian oil powers American refineries, Canadian lumber supports U.S. construction, and manufacturing ties sustain both economies. Tariffs would damage this balance, disrupt supply chains, and create uncertainty. Canada's alienation could push it closer to economic alliances with China or the European Union, reducing U.S. influence. Trump's reliance on business figures in his administration reinforces his transactional outlook. Figures like Elon Musk and corporate leaders reportedly shape his policies, reinforcing the belief that governance should function like a business. In business, relationships are often disposable, and short-term profits take precedence. In statecraft, however, long-term alliances and stability matter more than immediate gains. Running a state is not akin to running a corporation; a superpower's strength lies in enduring partnerships, international norms, and moral leadership. Trump's tariff threats and Iran policy exemplify this businesslike mindset. Tariffs are bargaining chips, used to extract better trade terms, while his Iran strategy resembles a high-stakes negotiation rather than nuanced diplomacy. However, nations are not corporations. Iran, backed by resilient leadership and regional proxies, is unlikely to surrender under pressure alone. Tariff wars, meanwhile, could drive allies like Canada to seek closer ties with China, diminishing U.S. leverage. A fundamental flaw in Trump's approach is the assumption that global relationships function like business deals—where dominance guarantees success. History suggests otherwise. Superpowers thrive by blending strength with diplomacy. The Marshall Plan, for instance, helped rebuild Europe after World War II, cementing U.S. influence. Trump's approach, prioritizing coercion over cooperation, risks squandering this legacy. His stance on Canada is particularly perplexing. Canada has long been a stable partner, sharing the world's longest undefended border and deep economic ties with the U.S. Yet, Trump has repeatedly treated Canada as a competitor rather than an ally. His tariff threats disregard the interdependence between the two nations. Canadian oil, minerals, and goods are essential to U.S. industries. Trade disruptions could damage American businesses, increase costs for consumers, and weaken cross-border cooperation on key issues like security and climate change. A superpower cannot afford to alienate its closest neighbors. Trump's approach risks turning Canada from an ally into a wary partner, reducing trust and cooperation on critical global issues. Economic ties alone do not define the U.S.-Canada relationship—

shared values, strategic interests, and security cooperation are equally vital. If Trump continues treating allies as adversaries, he may weaken the very alliances that sustain American power. Trump's hardline approach is also evident in his Iran policy. His first term saw the U.S. withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), reimpose harsh sanctions, and assassinate Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, escalating tensions. His second term promises more of the same, with blunt warnings to Iran about compliance with U.S. demands. However, history shows that sanctions alone do not topple regimes. Instead, they push adversaries to seek alternative alliances. Iran, for example, has strengthened ties with Russia and China, reducing the impact of U.S. pressure. Trump's confrontational posture toward Iran risks entrenching hostilities, pushing the Middle East toward greater instability. Rather than forcing Iran to capitulate, his policies could lead to increased regional conflicts, nuclear proliferation, or further entanglement of U.S. forces in Middle Eastern affairs. A superpower must weigh these risks carefully, using diplomacy alongside pressure rather than relying solely on coercion. Ultimately, Trump's re-election raises a critical question: what kind of superpower does the U.S. want to be? His policies suggest a vision of America as a dominant force, imposing its will through economic and military might. Yet, history demonstrates that true power comes from leadership, alliance-building, and strategic patience. The U.S. has long championed democracy, human rights, and economic stability. Trump's approach risks discarding this legacy for short-term wins that may prove fleeting. To sustain its global leadership, the U.S. must move beyond Trump's aggressive, business-driven mindset. Justice requires fairness in trade and respect for sovereignty, not unilateral tariffs and economic intimidation. Understanding demands dialogue with adversaries and cooperation with allies, not ultimatums and estrangement. These qualities are not weaknesses but strengths, enabling the U.S. to navigate a complex, multipolar world where interdependence is crucial. Trump's second term presents a stark choice for America. His aggressive tactics may deliver temporary victories—photo ops, trade concessions, or political gains. However, they do not guarantee long-term prosperity or security. The world is too interconnected, its challenges too multifaceted, for a superpower to rely on confrontation alone. The difference between business and statecraft is fundamental. Trump's leadership focuses on striking deals, but a nation must build enduring relationships. Where he sees dominance as success, a superpower must seek legitimacy. The U.S. now stands at a crossroads: it can follow Trump's path, risking isolation and decline, or reclaim its role as a leader based on justice, diplomacy, and mutual respect. The stakes are high—not just for America, but for the stability of the world.

Trump, Iran, and the Threat of War

Qamar Bashir



The cost of full-scale U.S. war with Iran without allied support could initially reach \$300–500 billion, with long-term expenses—including veterans' care and reconstruction—pushing the total to \$1.5–2 trillion. The U.S. military losses could range from 5,000 to 10,000, while Iranian civilian deaths could exceed 250,000–500,000, alongside a potential refugee crisis...

JUST weeks after declaring his desire to be remembered as a "peacemaker, not a warmonger," the U.S. President Donald Trump issued a shocking ultimatum to Iran: "If we don't make a deal, there will be bombing." This threat, made during a phone interview and widely reported by global media in late March 2025, underscores the dramatic contradictions in Trump's foreign policy persona. He either fails to grasp the implications of his own statements and actions, or he is fully aware of what he is pledging—and of the stark contrast between his words and his ultimate intentions. His behavior has become increasingly predictable, forming a clear pattern: he keeps both allies and adversaries guessing—will he follow through on his commitments, reverse course entirely, or oscillate unpredictably between extremes before returning to square one? At the heart of this unfolding crisis is a familiar playbook reminiscent of the Trump doctrine: begin with provocative rhetoric, escalate tensions through threats of force, and use pressure to force opponents into negotiating so-called "better deals." While this approach yielded mixed results in previous instances—such as with North Korea and China—it may prove far more dangerous with Iran. As a major regional power with strategic depth, proxy networks, and nuclear ambitions, Iran is not easily swayed by pressure tactics. Since late 2023, U.S.–Iran tensions have surged, with Tehran accused of backing over 150 proxy attacks on U.S. assets across Iraq, Syria, and the Red Sea corridor. Above all, unlike many secular governments, Iran operates under a deeply religious power structure. The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and his inner circle see themselves as accountable only to Allah. To them, divine will supersedes all worldly authority, including the United States. This makes them inherently resistant to coercive tactics. In Iran, the concept of jihad is not just warfare—it is a sacred duty. Fighting for justice, especially against what is perceived as tyranny or oppression, is seen as a moral obligation. Even in the face of overwhelming firepower, the regime believes that sacrifice will not only be rewarded in this world but also in the hereafter. Thus, threats of bombing do not intimi-

date them; they fortify their resolve. During the U.S.-Iran confrontations, Washington relied heavily on a robust network of allies—Europe, Canada, and the Middle East. Today, those alliances are eroding. Trump's confrontational style has alienated traditional partners. The EU is investing in independent security frameworks. Canada has distanced itself from U.S. foreign policy. Even once-loyal Gulf states are hedging their bets. The cost of full-scale U.S. war with Iran without allied support could initially reach \$300–500 billion, with long-term expenses—including veterans' care and reconstruction—pushing the total to \$1.5–2 trillion. The U.S. military losses could range from 5,000 to 10,000, while Iranian civilian deaths could exceed 250,000–500,000, alongside a potential refugee crisis displacing up to 10 million people. The war's duration could range from a few months (in a limited air and cyber campaign) to 5–10 years in the event of a full invasion and occupation, with no guarantee of success and a high risk of repeating the mistakes of Iraq and Afghanistan. Recently, the United States escalated its military response against the Houthis, an Iran-backed proxy group, drawing sharp controversy reminiscent of past U.S. interventions—most notably Operation Desert Storm. Though initially hailed as a show of strength, Desert Storm not only failed but also followed by a series of diplomatic setbacks, including the deeply criticized deal with Iran to secure the release of American embassy hostages in 1981. The current operation also revealed weaknesses in the U.S. decision-making structure after an unauthorized journalist was included in high-level strategic discussions, raising concerns about the integrity and competence of national security planning and drawing widespread criticism from both the media and defense analysts. The resulting perception of disarray within the U.S. leadership appeared to embolden the Houthis and Iran, who interpreted the confusion as divine validation—reinforcing their belief that their actions are sanctioned by Allah and that they are fighting a righteous cause. Beyond the geopolitical fallout, a military strike on Iran could send economic shockwaves across the

globe. Iran controls access to the Strait of Hormuz, through which about 20% of the world's oil supply passes. A blockade or retaliation in this region could paralyze global trade. Commodity prices would skyrocket, inflation would surge, and recession could ripple across developed and developing nations alike. Ironically, the country most affected by such a crisis could be the United States itself, where energy markets, supply chains, and investor confidence are tightly interwoven with global stability. Trump's approach also assumes that opponents will act rationally in the way the U.S. understands rationality. But Iran's ideology-driven worldview does not conform to that model. In fact, the more it is cornered, the more defiant it becomes. Rather than saber-rattling, what's urgently needed is a viable via media—a middle path that respects Iran's sovereignty while addressing global security concerns. This could include: lifting economic sanctions to encourage goodwill, recognizing Iran's government without trying to reshape its internal politics, reestablishing trade and diplomatic relations to create interdependencies and engaging multilaterally with Europe, Canada and other allies to form a unified diplomatic front. A policy based on respect, economic engagement, and mutual interest can shift Iran from a pariah state to a responsible member of the international community. When a nation becomes economically and diplomatically integrated into the global system, it is more likely to act in ways that preserve its prosperity rather than pursue confrontation. A war with Iran will not just be a regional skirmish—it could spiral into a global crisis. It will strain already weakened alliances, damage America's standing, collapse economies, and create humanitarian disaster. No amount of military might can overcome the ideological conviction of a nation ready to sacrifice everything in the name of faith and sovereignty. Peace is not achieved through intimidation but through understanding, strategy, and respectful negotiation. Extending a hand of friendship, not the threat of bombing, is the only sustainable way forward.

Briefs

Massive cut
in electricity
rates unfurled

FROM PAGE 01
However, he assured that the government was taking further steps to provide maximum relief to them. Highlighting the structural reforms to be taken in power sector, the prime minister said the government will ensure halting power theft which was around Rs600 billion per year. Similarly, he said by establishing open market, the electricity tariffs will be further decreased. He said there was no option but to privatize or commercialize Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) to reduce the burden of line losses and power theft on the national exchequer. "I have directed the team concerned to work diligently to implement reforms in the sector as soon as possible," he added. Appreciating the task force formed to finalize power reforms, the prime minister said the force worked really hard and through their innovative thoughts, they brought different options and managed to convince the IMF to reduce the power tariffs. "We did not pass on the low international petroleum prices and retained the prices to ensure that the government will reduce the power tariffs to which IMF agreed in principle," he added. He said the trust with the IMF that was breached in 2020, was now being restored. Similarly, he said the government successfully negotiated with the Independent Power Producers (IPPs), and praised the government team, led by Sardar Awaish Ahmad Khan Leghari, for their commendable efforts. "After negotiation with the IPPs, our team managed to save Rs 3,696 billion that were to be paid to the IPPs," he added. Likewise, he added that the government was also facing an immense challenge of circular debts of Rs 2,393 billion. However, he informed that the government had also made arrangements to gradually but permanently solve this problem within five years. He also extended his gratitude to his leader and PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and the allied political party leadership for their support and guidance in this regard. Recalling the time when he took over the charge of Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan was on the verge of being default at that time and the nation, especially business community was afraid about the future of the country.

Trump
sparks trade
war with...

FROM PAGE 01
Beijing swiftly vowed countermeasures and called for dialogue, warning the levies would "seriously harm" those involved. "There is no winner in a trade war, and there is no way out for protectionism," its commerce ministry said. The figure for the European Union was 20 percent, and 24 percent on Japan, whose trade minister called the tariffs "extremely regrettable." For the rest, Trump said he would impose a "baseline" tariff of 10 percent, including another key ally, Britain. The 78-year-old Republican brushed off fears of turmoil, insisting that the tariffs would restore the US economy to a lost "Golden Age." "For decades, our country has been looted, pillaged, raped and plundered by nations near and far, both friends and foe alike," Trump said. A hand-picked audience of cabinet members, as well as workers in hard hats from industries including steel, oil and gas, whooped and cheered as Trump promised tariffs would "make America wealthy again." Sweeping auto tariffs of 25 percent that Trump announced last week were due to take effect at 12:01 am (0401 GMT) Thursday. Trump labelled Wednesday's tariffs "reciprocal" but many experts say his administration's estimates for levies placed on US imports by other countries are wildly exaggerated. The US president had telegraphed the move for weeks, sparking fears of a recession at home as costs are passed on to US consumers, and a damaging trade war abroad.



ISLAMABAD: President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh addressing press conference along with others regarding the reforms in power sectors at his office in Federal Capital. – Online

Pakistan gets presidency of Asian Cricket Council

"I am deeply honoured to assume the presidency of the Asian Cricket Council," says Mohsin Naqvi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has become president of the Asian Cricket Council following a decision taken by the regional executive committee. The ACC executive committee held a virtual session in which the decision for Pakistan's presidency was taken. Naqvi, who has served as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman since February 2024 will assume this prestigious role on April 3, the regional cricketing body said in a statement, adding that his appointment ushers in a new chapter of leadership for Asian cricket. "I am deeply honoured to assume the presidency of the Asian Cricket Council," said Naqvi. "Asia remains the heartbeat of world cricket, and I am committed to working with all member boards to accelerate the game's growth and global influence." "Together, we will unlock new opportunities, foster greater collaboration, and take Asian cricket to unprecedented heights. I also extend my sincere thanks to the outgoing ACC President

for his leadership and contributions to the ACC during his tenure." The presidents of the ACC are enlisted on a rotation-based method among the member countries. Naqvi succeeded President of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC)



Shammi Silva. Reflecting on the transition, Silva shared his appreciation for the ACC community: "It has been a privilege to serve as President of the Asian Cricket Council. "The steadfast commitment of our member boards working together has been pivotal in elevating ACC's stature across the region." "As I step down, I have full confidence that under Naqvi's capable leadership, the ACC will continue its remarkable journey and thrive," Silva concluded. Naqvi was appointed PCB chairman in February last year for a three-year term and apart from fulfilling the role of PCB chief, Naqvi is also the interior minister of Pakistan. It was also learnt that Naqvi made decisions to divide his duties with former captain of Pakistan cricket team Waqar Yousif. The PCB chief will focus on administrative matters within the board and the veteran pacer will act as his advisor on cricket affairs. Yousif will oversee the cricket affairs including issues related to international and domestic cricket, the selection committee and the No Objection Certificates (NOCs) of the players. The Constitution of the PCB 2014 allows the chairman of the board to divide or share his power with another official.

Pakistan to enhance bilateral cooperation with Belarus

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan along with a high-level delegation arrived in Minsk, Belarus for a two-day official visit. During the visit, apart from having different meetings, he participated in a Ministerial Session, said a press release issued here on Thursday. Abdul Aleem Khan stressed Pakistan's commitment to enhance bilateral cooperation with Belarus and expressed the desire to make swift progress on existing agreements between the two countries enabling the commencement of practical work across various sectors. He added that both sides should move forward on existing MoUs so that practical progress can be achieved. On the first day, Aleem Khan held meetings with Belarusian Minister of Energy, Denis Moroz and Minister of Transport Alexei Lyakhovich, high-level officials from both sides were also present. Accompanying the Minister were the Federal Secretaries from Pakistan's Ministries of Communications, Industry, Food Security and Interior along with the Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, the Secretary of the Economic Affairs Division, and officials from the Ministry of Commerce. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan, in his discussions with Belarusian Ministers, highlighted the potential for significant improvement in the Communications Sector between Pakistan and Belarus. He emphasized the importance of creating trade corridors between the two countries which could play a key role in facilitating access to Central Asian States through routes in Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, or Iran, ultimately opening up pathways to Eastern Europe. – APP

Pak fined for slow over-rate against NZ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has been fined five per cent of their match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate against New Zealand in the second ODI in Hamilton on Wednesday. Jeff Crowe of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction after Mohammad Rizwan's side was ruled to be one over short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration, said a press release. In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined five per cent of their match fees for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time. Rizwan plead guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing. On-field umpires Michael Gough and Wayne Knights, third umpire Paul Reiffel and fourth umpire Chris Brown leveled the charge. – APP

ICC Women's World Cup 2025 qualifier match officials named

ISLAMABAD: A panel consisting of 10 umpires and three match referees has been named as the officiating team for the upcoming ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 Qualifier in Pakistan. The host nation are one of six countries competing for the remaining two spots at the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025, to be held in India later this year, and Pakistan are represented on the umpiring panel by Faisal Khan Afridi and Saleema Imtiaz, said a press release. In September 2024, Saleema made history by becoming the first Pakistani woman to join an ICC panel of umpires, being successfully nominated to the ICC International Panel of Development Umpires. Speaking at the time, she said, "This isn't just a win for me, it's a win for every aspiring female cricketer and umpire in Pakistan. I hope my success motivates countless women who dream of making their mark in the sport." The similarly trailblazing Sarah Dambanevana is also part of the team. Dambanevana became the first female immbawean umpire to stand in a Cricket World Cup final during the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2023, as well as the first female to officiate in a Zimbabwean domestic men's fixture. There are two Bangladeshi umpires on the panel, with Masudur Rahman Mukul and Shatira Jakir Jesy selected. Masudur has been a regular

feature at ICC events in recent years, including the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cups of 2020 and 2024, while Shathira – who featured in two women's ODIs during her playing career – is looking forward to her maiden appearance. Donovan Koch, who was persuaded to pursue a career in umpiring by Richard Kettleborough during a stint as an overseas professional in Sheffield, England, is also on the panel alongside Babs Gcuma, Candace la Borde, Dedunu de Silva and Shaun Haig. Ali Naqvi, Shandre Fritz and Trudy Anderson will be in place as match referees. ICC Senior Manager – Umpires and Referees, Sean Easey said, "This is an exciting opportunity for our appointed match officials, overseeing this important tournament which is the last step for teams on the path to the World Cup. Our officials are experienced and well prepared, and we look forward to seeing them participate in this event." Referees: Ali Naqvi (Pakistan), Shandre Fritz (South Africa), Trudy Anderson (New Zealand), Umpires: Babs Gcuma (South Africa), Candace la Borde (West Indies), Dedunu de Silva (Sri Lanka), Donovan Koch (Australia), Faisal Khan Afridi (Pakistan), Masudur Rahman Mukul (Bangladesh), Saleema Imtiaz (Pakistan), Sarah Dambanevana (Zimbabwe), Shathira Jakir Jesy (Bangladesh), Shaun Haig (New Zealand). – APP

Feature: Afghan teens chase football dreams despite challenges

KABUL: For many Afghan teenagers, football is more than just a game—it's a dream of changing their destiny. The Afghanistan Football Federation recently hosted a one-day football festival at a stadium in Kabul to inspire young players to participate in the sport. Despite cold and rainy weather, 14-year-old Usman Ghafari attended with enthusiasm and determination. He dreams of one day joining the Afghanistan national football team. "Football plays an important role in my life. It keeps me away from negative influences, benefits my health, and makes me think about my future," Ghafari told Xinhua. "My dream is to represent Afghanistan in the World Cup." He emphasized that sports cre-

ate a positive environment for mental well-being and foster a sense of community among young athletes. Many Afghan children start playing football on dusty fields and face a difficult journey to reach greener pitches. Yaqoub, 13, has been playing football for three years. He considers Cristiano Ronaldo his role model and calls him a legendary player. As a school student, he was thrilled to attend the festival. "I play football for my health and the future of my country. One day, I hope to make my nation proud," he said after an intense practice session. "I tell my peers to never give up on their dreams. I have a strong will to play for the best football clubs in the world." According to Ali Jubair Lali, head of

grassroots and youth football at the Afghanistan Football Federation, around 200 teenage football players from various academies in Kabul participated in the event. "These festivals are held two to three times a month to identify talented players and encourage youth participation in football," Lali said. He hopes that within the next decade, new talents will emerge to strengthen Afghanistan's national team. Meanwhile, Afghanistan's U-17 national football team has qualified for the AFC U-17 Asian Cup and is currently in Saudi Arabia preparing for the competition. As Afghan teens continue to chase their football dreams, the sport remains a symbol of hope, resilience, and ambition for a new generation. – Agencies

PSX hits all-time high as PM slashes..

FROM PAGE 01
The IMF had earlier agreed to a Re1 per kilowatt-hour cut in utility rates under its ongoing \$7 billion loan programme.

Baku welcomes UN rights...

FROM PAGE 01
Overall, despite Armenian side's claims before the Working Group that Ruben Vardanyan was arbitrarily detained, the Working Group's Opinion against these allegations has once again proven that the smear campaign against Azerbaijan regarding his arrest and the judicial process is entirely baseless, and thus Armenian side's attempt to manipulate international law norms has once again failed.

India approves bill to..

FROM PAGE 01
Waqf boards across India, owning some 900,000 acres (365.00 hectares), a multi-billion-dollar property empire that makes them one of the biggest landholders alongside the railways and the defence forces. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju, who tabled the bill on Wednesday, said it would check corruption and mismanagement and reduce the hold of a few entrenched groups. The bill was passed by the lower house of parliament after a marathon debate that stretched into the early hours of Thursday. It is expected to be passed by the upper house of parliament later on Thursday, handing far larger powers to civil servants in the supervision of Waqf boards. Amit Shah, the interior minister and a close Modi aide, said the changes will help "catch the people who lease out properties" for individual gains. "That money, which could be used to aid the development of minorities, is being stolen," he said. Non-Muslims, who will be included in the boards as part of the new bill, will only be involved in "administrative" matters, Shah said. However, opposition parties accuse the government of pushing "polarising politics" at the expense of India's Muslim minority of 200 million.

Dar for bolstering trade with...

FROM PAGE 01
a DPM's Office news release said. The DPM also reiterated the government's unwavering focus on enhancing strategic partnerships and fostering cross-sector collaboration. SAFM Tariq Bajwa, Federal Secretaries for Foreign Affairs, Petroleum, IT, and Economic Affairs, Chairman NHA, Special Secretary Finance & Petroleum, and senior officials from SIFC, MoFA, Communications, and other departments attended the meeting.

Pak slams Israel's latest military...

FROM PAGE 01
He strongly condemned the continued aggression and atrocities committed by Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Gaza. He said that the indiscriminate violence had claimed thousands of innocent Palestinian lives, including women, children, medical personnel, and humanitarian workers, marking yet another dark chapter in Israel's brutal occupation. The spokesperson expressed concerns over the sacrilegious storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex by Israeli occupying forces, on the holy occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. "This provocative act not only violates the sanctity of one of Islam's holiest sites but also demonstrates Israel's determination to escalate tensions and pursue its expansionist agenda at the expense of regional peace," he added. Spokesperson Shafqat Khan said that the massive destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Myanmar's junta chief arrives for Bangkok summit as quake toll surpasses 3,000

SAGAING: The head of Myanmar's junta arrived in Bangkok on Thursday for a regional summit, as the death toll from his country's devastating earthquake passed 3,000. Min Aung Hlaing will join a BIMSTEC gathering – the seven littoral nations of the Bay of Bengal – where he will raise the response to Friday's 7.7-magnitude quake. The junta chief arrived at Bangkok's plush Shangri-La hotel, the venue for Friday's summit, amid tight security, AFP journalists saw. Many nations have sent aid and teams of rescue workers to Myanmar since the quake, but heavily damaged infrastructure and patchy communications – as well as the country's rumbling

civil war – have hampered efforts. Myanmar has been engulfed in a brutal multi-sided conflict since 2021, when Min Aung Hlaing's military wrested power from the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Following reports of sporadic clashes even after the recent earthquake, the junta on Wednesday joined its opponents in calling a temporary halt to hostilities to allow relief to be delivered. AFP journalists saw hectic scenes on Wednesday in the city of Sagaing – less than 15 kilometres (nine miles) from the epicentre – as hundreds of desperate people lined up for the distribution of emergency supplies. Roads leading to the city were packed with traffic on Thursday, many of

the vehicles part of aid convoys organised by civilian volunteers and adorned with banners saying where they had been sent from across Myanmar. Destruction in Sagaing is widespread, with 80 percent of buildings damaged, 50 percent severely Titon Mitra, UNDP resident representative for Myanmar told AFP. "The situation is really devastating," he said. Food markets are unusable while hospitals are overwhelmed by patients and structurally unsound, he said, with patients being treated outdoors in 40 C heat. "We have seen children, pregnant women, injured people there. There's not enough medical supplies," he said. "If you look at the overall impacted area, there's possi-

bly three million plus that may have been affected." Nearly a week after the quake, locals say they face a lack of help. "We have a well for drinking water, but we have no fuel for the water pump," Aye Thikar told AFP. "We also don't know how long we will be without electricity," she said. The 63-year-old nun has been helping distribute relief funds to those left without basic amenities. But many people are still in need of mosquito nets and blankets, forced to sleep outside by the tremors that either destroyed their homes or severely damaged them. "People passing by on the road have generously donated water and food to us. We rely solely on their kindness," she said. – Agencies

Briefs

Search for Malaysia's missing MH370 suspended

KUALA Lumpur: The latest search for Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 has been suspended by maritime exploration firm Ocean Infinity as it is "not the season", Kuala Lumpur's transport minister said, more than a decade after the plane went missing. "They (Ocean Infinity) have stopped the operation for the time being, they will resume the search at the end of this year," Transport Minister Anthony Loke said in a voice recording sent to AFP on Thursday by his aide. Ocean Infinity, based in Britain and the United States, led an unsuccessful hunt in 2018, before agreeing to launch a new search this year. "Right now, it's not the season," Loke said in the recording, which was made during an event at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Wednesday. The Boeing 777 carrying 239 people disappeared from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. the largest search in aviation history, the plane has not been found.—APP

Rupee sheds 40 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday depreciated by 40 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.56 against the previous day's closing of Rs 280.16. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 280.40 and Rs 281.90, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs5.62 to close at Rs 307.94 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.42, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 40 paisa and closed at Rs 1.90, whereas an increase of Rs 5.68 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 368.64 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 362.96. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal also increased by 11 and 09 paise to close at Rs 76.38 and Rs 74.78 respectively.—APP

Belgium urged to end violations of asylum-seekers' rights

LONDON: Amnesty International on Thursday condemned Belgium for denying asylum applications from thousands of people, "forcing them into homelessness." Amnesty accused the EU member of "discrimination against racialized single men," which has "impacted the lives, dignity and human rights of people seeking asylum." It added: "To date, national and international courts have ordered the authorities in Belgium to provide reception more than 12,000 times. "Belgium has consistently refused to fully comply with the judgments, despite these being final and legally binding." Amnesty interviewed people who have experienced homelessness while navigating Belgium's asylum system since 2021. Many said as well as being denied accommodation, access to healthcare is a major problem. Sayed, who traveled from Afghanistan, spent time in a squat in Brussels with other homeless migrants from October 2022 to 2023. "In the beginning it was good enough, there were toilets and showers, and some people brought food in the afternoon," he told Amnesty. "But slowly it was turned completely into a graveyard. Showers and toilets were broken, with the passage of time ... Place was coming up to the place where you were sleeping." He said ordinary Belgians and local charities had been welcoming, but the state had not been. "People were feeling our pain, but not the authorities," he added.—APP

Pakistan urges UNSC to act on attacks against Aid workers

Bureaucratic hurdles, and weaponization of humanitarian access as a war tactic must cease, Ambassador Asim told delegates. "We must ensure public access to accurate and reliable information, monitor misinformation and disinformation related to UN and humanitarian activities, and sanction those responsible for spreading harmful content."

UNITED NATIONS: Amid record high Killing of humanitarian personnel in conflict zones around the world, Pakistan has called on the UN Security Council to push for sanctions and legal action against violators. "Impunity must end," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member Council during a debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. "Impunity is not merely a failure of justice — it is a license for repetition, he said, adding, "Timely, independent and impartial investigations must hold perpetrators accountable." In this regard, the Pakistani envoy urged the creation of a "global implementation dashboard" for that resolution — it should provide real-time public tracking of violations, investigations and their outcomes "for everyone to see and follow". The escalating attacks on humanitarian personnel are not just isolated incidents — "they reflect a growing disregard for international norms," Ambassador Asim said, adding that it is unacceptable that those who work to provide "dignity amidst

displacement" are met "not with gratitude, but with gunfire". According to the Aid Worker Security Database, 379 humanitarian personnel were killed in 2024, making it the deadliest year on record. While there are challenges in various situations such as Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Haiti, Lebanon and Yemen, the Pakistani envoy said, nowhere is this crisis more evident than in Gaza, where 399 humanitarian workers, including 408 humanitarian workers, including 284 UN-RWA personnel, have been killed since the October 23 Israeli war in the enclave. "We are failing those who risk their lives and act as a lifeline to serve others." UNSC Resolution 2730, he said, unequivocally reaffirmed that humanitarian personnel must be protected in accordance with international law, underscoring that the promise of protection must be backed by action. Pakistan also supports the call for mandatory integration of safety provisions into all UN mission mandates, especially during peacekeeping drawdowns and transitions. Bureaucratic hurdles, and weaponization of humanitar-

ian access as a war tactic must cease, Ambassador Asim told delegates. "We must ensure public access to accurate and reliable information, monitor misinformation and disinformation related to UN and humanitarian activities, and sanction those responsible for spreading harmful content." Pakistan, he said, remains committed to supporting the effective implementation of resolution 2730 and to upholding the safety, dignity, and neutrality of all humanitarian and UN personnel," the Pakistani envoy added. "Let us ensure that the courage of humanitarian workers is matched by collective international resolve to protect them; This will be important to restore the credibility of this Council's decisions." Earlier, two senior UN officials appealed in the Security Council for an end to attacks against humanitarians and personnel working for the global organization. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General with UN aid coordination office OCHA, and Gilles Michaud, head of the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) were speaking during a meeting on the protec-

tion of civilians in armed conflict. "Since we are here today to discuss the protection of aid workers, I must ask this Council: what are you going to do to help us find those answers and achieve justice — and avoid more killings?" While there is no shortage of robust international legal frameworks to protect humanitarian and UN personnel, she said political will to comply is lacking. Ms. Msuya noted that the vast majority of those killed, roughly 95 per cent, are local aid workers who are the cornerstone of relief efforts. "These colleagues deserve our highest respect. Yet, conduct harming our local staff rarely elicits reaction or makes the news," she remarked. Humanitarians also face other challenges, such as the criminalization of their work. They are increasingly being detained, interrogated and accused of supporting terrorism simply for delivering aid to people in need. Aid organizations are also targets of disinformation and misinformation campaigns in places such as Haiti, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Yemen. Moreover, funding shortfalls threaten to

make matters worse, forcing the humanitarian community to make impossible choices, Ms. Msuya underscored. She described the adoption of Resolution 2730 as an important step in the right direction, then made three requests to the Council and Member States at large. "First, act to ensure respect for international law and to protect humanitarian and UN workers," she said, listing tangible steps such as Security Council visits, fact-finding missions, or withholding of arms transfers. She also called for speaking out and condemning harm to UN and humanitarian personnel, including local staff, because "silence, inconsistency, and selective outrage only embolden perpetrators." Her final request was for accountability, highlighting the need to strengthen domestic and international legal frameworks to prosecute international crimes. "The Security Council should play a key role in pushing for accountability; for instance, by asking concerned governments to pursue justice and by following up with them," she suggested.—Agencies

Germany urges return to serious talks on Gaza truce

BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called Thursday for a return to "serious" negotiations to end the Gaza conflict as Israel pushed on with a renewed assault targeting Hamas in the territory "What is needed now is a return to the ceasefire and the release of all hostages," Scholz said, urging a return to "serious negotiations with the aim of agreeing a post-war order for Gaza that protects Israel's security." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday that the military was "dissecting" the Gaza Strip and seizing territory to pressure Hamas into freeing hostages still held in the enclave. The war was sparked by Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,218 people, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures. Israel resumed intense bombing of Gaza on March 18 before launching a new ground offensive, ending a nearly two-month ceasefire.—APP

Turkish actor, 10 others detained after boycott calls

ISTANBUL: Turkish authorities on Thursday detained at least 11 people including an actor suspected of spreading calls for a blanket boycott of purchases in protest against the jailing of Istanbul's opposition mayor Prosecutors have opened an investigation into the calls and accused the suspects of "incitement to hatred and enmity," the official Anadolu news agency reported. Five additional suspects were being sought, it added. Among the detainees was Turkish actor Cem Yigit Uzumoglu, who played Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in the Netflix series "Rise of Empires: Ottoman." The leader of the main opposition CHP party called for the purchase boycott on Wednesday to put more pressure on the government after the March 19 arrest of Istanbul's popular mayor Ekrem Imamoglu. Imamoglu is the main rival to President Recip Tayyip Erdogan. His detention set off a wave of mass protests not seen in Turkey for more than a decade.—A PP

Eid break brings Jakarta respite from notoriously polluted air

JAKARTA: The long Eid Al-Fitr break in commercial activities has cleared the skies over Indonesia's notoriously polluted capital, offering a respite for residents who throughout the year are regularly exposed to some of the world's most toxic air. The Jakarta metropolitan area — home to about 31 million people — recorded "good" and "moderate" air on Thursday afternoon, with an air quality index reading between 22 and 76, according to data released by the Ministry of Environment. The numbers showed a marked improvement for a city that regularly records above 100 AQI and "unhealthy" levels of PM 2.5, a measurement of particulate matter — solid and liquid particles suspended in the air that can be inhaled and cause respiratory diseases. "These 'good' and 'moderate' levels of air quality are possibly due to a drop in public activities during Eid holidays, as there has been a marked decrease in transportation and industrial activities in the city," Edward Nixon Pakpahan, air quality protection and management director at the ministry, told Arab News. "We are working to keep the air quality index for Jakarta metropolitan area below 100." Jakarta residents have long complained about the health risks posed by persistent air pollution from heavy traffic, industrial emissions and coal-fired power plants, which have consistently placed Jakarta among the 10 most polluted cities globally. The streets of Jakarta and its satellite cities have been mostly empty since last weekend, after millions of people traveled back to their hometowns for Eid holidays.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning and Development, chaired a steering committee meeting today on Socio-Political Domain with Secretary Planning Mr. Awais Manzoor Sumra & Member Governance Dr. Adnan Rafiq. The meeting reviewed progress, discussed strategies, and outlined next steps for fostering inclusive growth and socio-political engagement across Pakistan. —DNA

DTI, Tapal Tea empower women through recruitment drive Uraan

ISLAMABAD: DTI, in collaboration with Tapal Tea, successfully conducted a Recruitment Drive aimed at hiring female electricians for its flagship women empowerment program, "Uraan". This initiative marks a significant milestone in DTI commitment to gender inclusion, opening new doors for women in technical roles traditionally dominated by men. The recruitment drive received an encouraging response from aspiring female candidates, highlighting a growing interest in technical fields. As part of the "Uraan" program, Tapal Tea aims to create sustainable career opportunities for women in industrial roles such as electrical work. Additionally, discussions were held with DTI to expand the program by introducing specialized training in workplace safety and forklift operations, further enhancing participants' skills and employability. Adding his thoughts, DTI General Manager Murtaza Ali shared, "We believe that skill development is the key to unlocking new opportunities for women in technical fields. Our collaboration with Tapal Tea on the 'Uraan' program is a great example of how industries can come together to create an inclusive and skilled workforce for the future. We look forward to expanding this initiative and helping more women step confidently into technical careers." DTI and Tapal Tea representatives praised the collaboration, emphasizing the vital role of industry partnerships in promoting social change and creating inclusive opportunities for women in Pakistan's workforce. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the "Uraan" program, ensuring women gain access to technical career pathways and the skills needed for long-term success. —DNA

China arrests 3 Filipinos suspected of spying

BEIJING: China on Thursday said it had "destroyed" an intelligence network set up by the Philippine espionage agency and arrested three spies from the country. The announcement comes as the two countries continue to confront each other over disputed territory in the South China Sea and tensions mount over the Philippines' security ties with ally the United States. At least five Chinese nationals were arrested on suspicion of espionage in January and another two in February by Philippine authorities. And the latest arrests in China come two days after Beijing's embassy in Manila issued a travel warning to its citizens about frequent "harassment" from Philippine law enforcement agencies. On Thursday, state broadcaster CCTV reported that authorities had identified one of the suspected spies as a Philippine national who had lived and worked in China long-term and had been found conducting espionage near military facilities.—APP

Migrant boat sinking kills 7 in Greece

"If you want to enter Greece illegally and are not entitled to asylum, we will do whatever we can to send you back where you came from," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in parliament on Wednesday. "Smugglers and NGOs cooperating with them will not determine who enters our country," he said

ATHENS: Seven people, including two children, died and 23 others were rescued Thursday when an inflatable boat carrying migrants capsized off the Greek island of Lesbos, the coast guard said. The coast guard initially said four bodies had been discovered in the Aegean Sea but after a search by patrol boats, three others were found, a spokeswoman told AFP. The boat was carrying about 30 people and capsized in mild weather a short distance from the coast of neighbouring Turkey. "Their boat took on water and started to sink," the spokeswoman said, adding that searches for any other survivors were ongoing. Among the dead were four women, a boy and a girl, the coast guard said. No details have been released about the three others, including their country of origin. Greece's location in the far southeast of Europe in the eastern Mediterranean Sea makes its islands a common passage for undocumented migrants from Asia and the Middle East trying to reach western Europe. Deaths are commonplace during the perilous crossing. The UN said nearly 2,500 people were reported to have died last year. Last month, Greek maritime police said one migrant died and 18 others were rescued after a smuggler abandoned them as they tried to cross from Turkey. According to the UN refugee agency, nearly 9,000 people have entered Greece since the start of the year, most of them by sea. There were over 54,000 entries in 2024, according to the agency's figures. Greece's conservative government has hardened the country's stance on migration. "If you want to enter Greece illegally and are not entitled to asylum, we will do whatever we can to send you back where you came from," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in parliament on Wednesday. "Smugglers and NGOs cooperating with them will not determine who enters our country," he said.—DNA

Libya crackdown forces aid groups to cease operations

DNA

TUNIS: Diplomats in Libya have said in a letter to authorities seen by news agency that several international humanitarian organizations were forced to suspend operations after threats by security services and forced resignations. In the letter, which was obtained by AFP on Wednesday, 17 mainly European ambassadors and a UN official accuse the Internal Security Agency (ISA) of an "ongoing crackdown" on non-governmental groups and humanitarian aid workers. In war-torn Libya split between two rival administrations, the ISA reports to the interior ministry in the capital

Tripoli, seat of the UN-recognized government. "Between March 13 and 27, the ISA summoned at least 18 staff members from six international NGOs for questioning," said the letter addressed to the Tripoli-based foreign ministry. ISA agents "seized some of their passports," forced them to "resign from their positions" and pledge in writing never to work for an international NGO again, the letter added. It also said the security service "sealed some of their offices." Beyond the six groups directly affected, the diplomats said that "many other organizations are suspending activities as a matter of precaution." AFP was not able to independently verify the claims made in the letter,

dated March 27. The authorities in Tripoli did not immediately comment on the matter, but announced a press conference later on Wednesday to address "the work of international NGOs." Libya has struggled to recover from the chaos that followed the 2011 NATO-backed uprising that overthrew longtime dictator Muammar Qaddafi. It remains split between the UN-recognized government in Tripoli and a rival authority in the east, backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar. The diplomats' letter does not name the organizations affected by the ISA's alleged measures, but a source familiar with the issue said on condition of anonymity that they include

the International Rescue Committee, the International Medical Corps and the Danish Refugee Council. Contacted by AFP, the Danish Refugee Council said it "could not comment" on the matter. There was no immediate comment from the other groups. The source said that some foreign NGO staff members had been ordered to leave Libya, while others had been barred from returning after recent trips abroad. The source mentioned that the authorities had already imposed visa restrictions on foreign humanitarian workers between July 2022 and December 2023, but operations had continued using local staff or individuals who did not re-

quire visas. In their letter, the diplomats from the European Union, France, Britain and other countries as well as a top UN humanitarian representative voiced concern about the impact of the measures. The crackdown including detention and questioning of staff members has had a "particularly alarming" effect "on the provision of humanitarian primary health assistance," the letter said. It urged authorities to allow the NGOs to "reopen their offices and safely restart humanitarian operations as soon as possible." It also demanded that seized passports be returned to staff members, and "any resignation letters or pledges signed at the ISA office" invalidated.

Briefs

China to
continue to
empower
development
through green
energy: FM

DNA

BEIJING: China will continue to work with other parties, empower development through green energy, and promote cooperation through the blue economy, foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a daily news briefing on Wednesday. China's commitment to green and low-carbon development is an inherent requirement of its pursuit of high-quality economic growth, which also serves as a driving force for global climate response and sustainable development, said Guo. In 2024, four out of every 10 kilowatt-hours of electricity in China was generated by clean energy. As the largest exporter of clean technologies, China creates 46 per cent of the job opportunities in the global renewable energy industry, Guo said. Noting that "green transition" and "blue contributions" stand out in China's cooperation with neighboring countries for sustainable development, Guo said that China has conducted cooperation with Vietnam, Thailand and other countries on clean energy, signed cooperation documents on blue economy with Indonesia, among other countries, and promoted cooperation in relevant fields.

Best medical
facilities to
be ensured,
says Kamal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal on Thursday said that quality medicines and treatment facilities will be delivered to the doorsteps of the people with modern technology. Talking to media during visit to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), the minister said that negligence will not be tolerated in the health sector as it is not possible to rectify mistakes in this area. He said that work is being done on the ongoing projects at PIMS at a fast pace. "We have always fulfilled our responsibilities like a challenge and medicines and treatment facilities will be provided to the people at their doorsteps." He said that there is a need to pay full attention to the health sector and assured that positive changes will be seen in this sector in the coming days. He said that innovation and positive reforms will be introduced and basic health centers will be activated in a modern and complete manner. He said that we have to move towards telemedicine and the government is working to introduce one patient one ID system.

Unexploded
munitions
a threat to
Gaza children

JERUSALEM: War has left Gaza littered with unexploded bombs that will take years to clear, with children drawn to metal casings maimed or even killed when they try to pick them up, a demining expert said. Nicholas Orr, a former UK military deminer, told AFP after a mission to the war-battered Palestinian territory that "we're losing two people a day to UXO (unexploded ordnance) at the moment." According to Orr, most of the casualties are children out of school desperate for something to do, searching through the rubble of bombed-out buildings sometimes for lack of better playthings. "They're bored, they're running around, they find something curious, they play with it, and that's the end," he said. Among the victims was 15-year-old Ahmed Azzam, who lost his leg to an explosive left in the rubble as he returned to his home in the southern city of Rafah after months of displacement. - APP

Malaysian High Commission hosts
sumptuous Eid Milan Open House

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Malaysian High Commission in Islamabad warmly welcomed the families of Pakistanis and Malaysians to its annual Eid Milan Open House, a vibrant celebration of unity, culture, and the spirit of Eid. The event, held at the High Commission's premises, was attended by diplomats, community members, and distinguished guests who gathered to mark the joyous occasion together. The High Commissioner of Malaysia Dato Azhar bin Mazlan and Puan Amelia Amani Lee Abdullah greeted the guests upon arrival. Heads of Missions of the ASEAN countries and Dean of the African Group Mohammad Karmoune Ambassador of Morocco, Russian ambassador, Charge d Affaires of the Australian High Commission, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Ambassador of Nepal, diplomats from Tajik and Kyrgyz embassies also attended the event. The Eid Milan Open House is a cherished tradition that fosters harmony between the Malaysian and Pakistani communities in Pakistan. This year's event featured a warm reception by His Excellency the Malaysian High Commissioner, along with senior diplomats and officials from the High Commission. Attendees were treated to an array of traditional Malaysian and Pakistani delicacies, symbolizing the deep-rooted culinary and cultural ties between the two nations. The traditional KP dish, Nameekn Ghost (salted meat), was also served to the guests, who thoroughly enjoyed it. A variety of engaging activities and performances enriched the celebration. Guests enjoyed the lively atmosphere, exchanging greetings and strengthening friendships that transcend borders. In his address, the Malaysian High Commissioner expressed his gratitude to the attendees for their participation and emphasized the significance of such gatherings in reinforcing bilateral relations. "Eid is a time of togetherness, reflection, and gratitude. Today, as Malaysians and Pakistanis come together under one roof, we celebrate not only our shared values but



also the strong and enduring bond between our two nations," he remarked. The event also provided an opportunity for attendees to network and discuss cultural and economic collaborations between Malaysia and Pakistan. Many participants expressed

their appreciation for the Malaysian High Commission's efforts in bringing communities together and looked forward to more such events in the future. The Eid Milan Open House concluded on a high note, leaving guests with cherished memories of

a delightful evening filled with laughter, joy, and the true essence of Eid. This annual celebration continues to serve as a beacon of friendship and goodwill between Malaysia and Pakistan, strengthening the cultural bridge that unites their people.

PPP won't construct
Cholistan Canal: CMShah calls upon PM to promptly
announce the termination
of the Marot Canal project

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: As the Cholistan Canal project becomes a matter of contention between the federal and provincial governments, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday said that the PPP won't allow the Centre to proceed with the construction without the province's consent. Firmly opposing the proposed construction of the Marot Canal before the media in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, Shah stated: "How can the canal be constructed when it hasn't even received approval?" He stated that as long as the PPP existed, the canal would not be built. He lamented that some political parties, instead of opposing the canals, have taken to the streets to protest against the PPP. Shah was accompanied by provincial ministers Saeed Ghani and Nasir Hussain Shah. It may be noted that the Marot Canal is a proposed irrigation canal designed to extend from the Sulemanki Barrage on the Sutlej River to Fort Abbas in the Cholistan Desert. Shah clarified that in July, only preliminary profiling covering a few hundred feet was conducted, which does not equate to the commencement of construction. He criticised certain news channels for spreading misinformation regarding the canal project and urged them to report responsibly. Highlighting the Bilawal Bhutto-led party's commitment to Sindh's interests, the chief minister asserted that the party is prepared to make

any sacrifice to protect the province's rights. He recalled past allegations against the PPP, including claims that former premier Benazir Bhutto allocated funds for the controversial Kalabagh Dam, which were proven unfounded. Murad Shah emphasised the necessity of consulting provinces on water-related issues, as mandated by the constitution. He revealed that despite multiple requests for a Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting to discuss the canal project, no response had been received from the federal government. "They cannot evade this issue; the constitution requires provincial consultation on water matters," CM Murad said that the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has approved Punjab's request for 0.8 million acre-feet (MAF) of water for the Cholistan Canal project, a decision that has generated strong opposition in Sindh, and his government has opposed it strongly. Murad noted that Punjab argues, based on historical data from 1976 to 2022, that an average of 27 MAF of water flows downstream to Kotri Barrage annually, while the officially required environmental flow is 8.5 MAF which he said should be 10 MAF. In contrast, Sindh maintains that at least 20.5 MAF is essential to prevent seawater intrusion and sustain the Indus Delta ecosystem. The chief minister added that with an existing national water shortage of 11 MAF and only 8 MAF currently reaching the Arabian Sea, Punjab claims that 7 MAF constitutes surplus water, justifying its demand. However, Sindh has raised concerns regarding the potential depletion of its water resources, warning that further diversions could exacerbate water shortages in its agricultural regions and endanger the fragile delta ecosystem.

Norwegian party faces backlash
Imran Khan nomination
For noble peace prizeCritics accuse Norway's Partiet Sentrum party of "using
a possible Peace Prize nomination to win votes"

OSLO / MUBASHAR BHATTI

THE Party Sentrum, a Norwegian political party, has come under fire for nominating former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan for the Nobel Peace Prize for services related to human rights and democracy — a move that has ignited a wave of criticism against the party in the Scandinavian country. The Norwegian party announced via social media that they, in collaboration with an unnamed individual possessing nomination rights, had put forward the name of the ousted premier, Anadolu Agency reported. "We are pleased to announce on behalf of Partiet Sentrum that in alliance with somebody with the right to nominate, have nominated [Imran] Khan the former prime minister of Pakistan to the Nobel Peace Prize for his work with human rights and democracy in Pakistan," the party said on X. The Nobel Peace Prize is one of five Nobel Prizes established by the will of Swedish industrialist, inventor, and armaments manufacturer Alfred Nobel, along with the prizes in Chemistry, Physics, Physiology or Medicine, and Literature. The prize aims to recognise and encourage efforts towards peace, international cooperation, and the reduc-


tion of conflict. Every year, the Norwegian Nobel Committee receives hundreds of nominations, after which they select the winner through a lengthy eight-month process. The nomination period for this year's prize concluded on January 31, and the committee registered 338 candidates for the 2025 Peace Prize, of which 244 are individuals and 94 are organisations. However, the committee does not disclose the names of the nominators or nominees for the prize. The party refrained from disclosing the identity of the intermediary who facilitated the nomination, adding to the growing controversy. However, former PTI leader Shabaz Gill also took to X to announce Khan's Nobel nomination. "Nobel For Khan! Thank you to the Centre Party, Norway @partiet_sentrum Geir Lippestad for keeping his promise from our Oslo meeting to support former PM [Imran] Khan's Nobel Peace Prize nomination. Grateful to him, Miss Samina T and party officials for their efforts," Gill wrote on X, along with two videos featuring his meeting with Geir Lippestad, the leader of Partiet Sentrum and the Khan's nomination announcement. Norwegian party faces backlash for nominating Imran Khan for Nobel Peace Prize. The jailed founder of the PTI lost power following a no-confidence vote in April 2022 and has been incarcerated at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail since September 2023, owing to his legal woes comprising around 100 cases.

Pakistan records lowest
inflation in 711 monthsHeadline inflation increased by 0.9% MoM in
March, compared to 0.8% fall in February

DNA

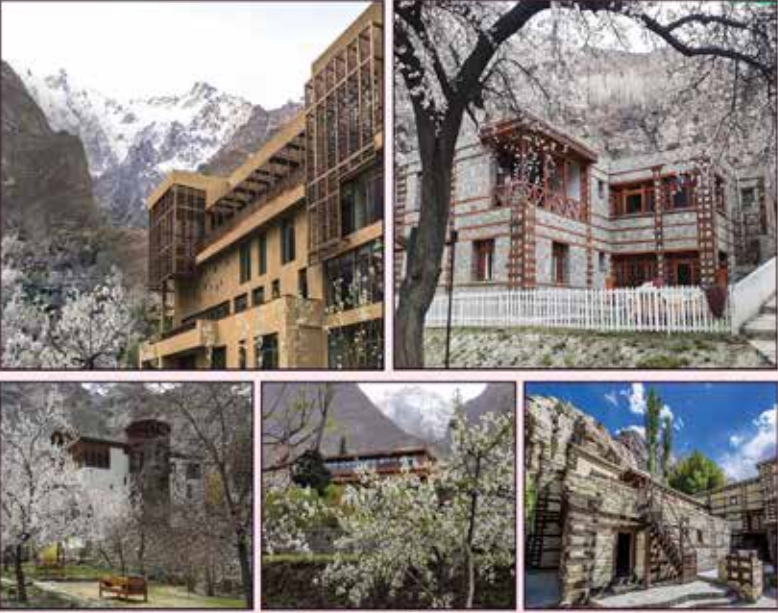
KARACHI: Pakistan's Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation has hit a historic low, with the reading dropping to 0.7% year-on-year in March 2025 — the lowest in 711 months since December 1965. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rose 0.7% year-on-year (YoY) in March 2025, down from 1.5% in the previous month and significantly lower than the 20.7% recorded in March 2024, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The data suggests that CPI inflation increased by 0.9% month-on-month (MoM) in March 2025 compared to a 0.8% decrease in the previous month. "This is the lowest reading since De-

cember 1965, i.e. 59-year low, according to SBP data," said Arif Habib Limited (AHL) in a report. CPI inflation during 9MFY25 averaged 5.25% as compared to 27.06% in 9MFY24. Urban CPI inflation slowed to 1.2% year-on-year (YoY) in March 2025 from 1.8% in February 2025 and 21.9% in March 2024. The month-on-month increase for urban CPI was 0.8% in March 2025, following a 0.7% decrease in the previous month. Policymakers will likely welcome the continued moderation of headline CPI inflation. The State Bank of Pakistan will need to balance the need to support economic growth to maintain price stability. In its meeting last month, the SBP decided to pause its rate cuts, maintaining the interest rate at 12%.



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