



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Max Verstappen beat Lando Norris to claim F1 Japanese Grand Prix

Detailed News On Page-06

Pakistan, Russia share common goals for peace

Detailed News On Page-07

Iran to respond to threat with all its might

Detailed News On Page-08

Eric Meyer arrives tomorrow

US Congressional delegation to visit Pakistan next week

During their visit, members of the US Congress will hold meetings with Pakistan's top political and military leadership. The delegation is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also

ALI FURQAN / DNA

ISLAMABAD: A United States congressional delegation will visit Pakistan from April 10 to 15, 2025 to strengthen the bilateral relations. The delegation will be led by Congressmen General Jack Bergman (Republican) and Tom Suozzi (Democrat). During their visit, members of the US Congress will hold meetings with Pakistan's top political and military leadership. The delegation is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, and leaders of various political parties. The US delegation will also visit Azad Jammu and Kashmir, where they will be briefed on the latest situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir and the security conditions along the Line of Control (LoC). In addition, the congressional delegation will tour the Kartarpur Corridor, where they will pay respects at the shrine of Baba Guru Nanak. Imran Igra, the organizer of the visit and president Pakistan Overseas Society, the purpose of this visit is to strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States. The agenda includes key issues such as economy, trade, defense and military cooperation, and education. Imran Igra clarified that the delegation will not meet former Prime Minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan, nor will his release be discussed. He stated that the delegation has no interest in Pakistan's internal politics, and rumors suggesting otherwise are unfounded. Meanwhile, Senior Bureau Official (SBO) for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Eric Meyer will lead an interagency US delegation traveling to Islamabad from April 8-10, the US State Department said in a statement on Saturday. The purpose of the visit will be to advance US interests in the critical minerals sector at

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Afghan interim govt promoting trade of illegal arms

The US-made weapons are being smuggled to the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan

AGENCIES

NEW YORK: A recent report issued by the United Nations has revealed that the interim Afghan government has promoted the trade of illegal weapons since the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan in 2021. The report said banned organisations - TTP, al-Qaeda, and other 'Fitna al-Khwarrij' - managed to have access to the weapons, adding Afghanistan has become a black market of illegal arms. "The US-made weapons are being smuggled to the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan and being used against them by the terrorists," the report said. It further said that according to President Trump weapons worth billions of dollars were left in Afghanistan at the time of the US troops' abrupt withdrawal from Afghanistan.

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Pak hands over 2nd aid shipment to Myanmar

This shipment comprising 35 tons of goods, brings the total relief assistance to 70 tons

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has handed over the second consignment of emergency relief aid to Myanmar for its earthquake-affected. Pakistan's Ambassador to Myanmar Imran Haider officially gave the consignment to Chief Minister of Yangon Region at Yangon International Airport. This shipment comprising 35 tons of goods, brings the total relief assistance dispatched to Myanmar after the recent

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Peace Jirga supports army action

They thank Pakistan army for launching welfare projects in Darazanda

SHAMIM SHAHID

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Leaders and elders of Sherani tribe in a grand peace Jirga announced support for Pakistan army in its operation against terrorists, Dunya News reported here on Sunday. The Jirga held with the cooperation of Pakistan army was attended by Ulema, tribesmen, and elders of Sherani cast. The tribe leaders paid glowing tributes to the army Jawans, who sacrificed their lives in war against Khawarji terrorists, and expressed their full supports from

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Israel deports two British MPs

Top British diplomat slams Israel's detention and deportation of Labour MPs

AGENCIES

LONDON: Israel has detained and deported two British members of parliament, refusing them entry as part of a parliamentary delegation, according to

Continued on Page 06



YANGON: Pakistan's second consignment handed over to Myanmar authorities at Yangon International Airport, Myanmar. - DNA

Balochistan govt warning

Mengal may be detained if BNP heads to Quetta

He said that the BNP-M's call to block national highways at this time would only add to public hardship. "The administrations of all districts have been instructed that national highways will not be shut," Rind added

STAFF REPORT

QUETTA: The Balochistan government on Sunday warned Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M) chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal that he would be arrested if his party marched towards Quetta, amid ongoing protests against the imprisonment of Baloch activists. In a statement, Balochistan government spokesperson Shahid Rind said Mengal was alerted at 6am about the orders to arrest him under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO). "Mengal refused to surrender. The administration and the police have clearly told him that if he moves towards Quetta, he will be arrested, and this is why law enforcement agencies

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PTI split into various factions, says Kh. Asif

"We don't need to abuse them, they themselves are abusing each other," says defence minister

DNA

SIALKOT: Referring to recent infighting among senior figures of the former ruling party, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Sunday claimed that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) fragmented into various factions.

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Eight terrorists killed as forces foil infiltration bid

Security forces detect terrorists attempting to cross border in North Waziristan's Hassan Khel area, says ISPR

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: At least eight terrorists were neutralised as security forces successfully thwarted their bid to infiltrate through the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the military's media wing said on Sunday. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the security forces picked up movement of a group of militants, who

were trying to infiltrate through the Pak-Afghanistan border in the general area of Hassan Khel, North Waziristan district, on the night between April 5-6. "Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. After an intense exchange of fire, eight Khawarji [terrorists] were sent to hell, while four Khawarji got injured," it added. Pakistan has consistently been asking the interim Afghan government to ensure

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Briefs

Canals project shouldn't be politicised

The forum of CCI is here to discuss such issues

DNA

LAHORE: Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the canals project shouldn't be politicised. Addressing a press conference in Lahore on Sunday, the senior minister said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif issued categorical statements over the issue and it shouldn't be politicised anymore. "The forum of Council of Common Interests (CCI) is here to discuss such issues," she said. Marriyum Aurangzeb added that the water share of Punjab and Sindh is very well defined in the constitution. Earlier, she criticised PTI for creating divisions and hatred in the country. "The incompetent rulers were imposed in this country for four years," she said. The senior minister said that inflation was 60pc during the tenure of PTI and now it is at 0.7pc.

All 130 boat passengers rescued

DNA

ISLAMABAD: All 130 passengers stranded after a boat ran aground near Tarbela Dam in the Haripur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hazara Division were rescued safely, the deputy commissioner said. Haripur Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shauzab Abbas said, "All passengers have been rescued successfully." Earlier today, DC Abbas said that a rescue operation was underway to bring back the stranded passengers, while food was also being provided to them. "The operation started at 2pm and concluded before sunset," he added.

Public support crucial: Tarar

Cut in electricity tariff to boost economic activities

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said that the strength and resilience of the people of Pakistan continue to serve as the biggest source of inspiration for the government. Addressing a workers' convention in NA-127, Lahore, he said that with public support and determination, even the most complex national challenges can be overcome. Tarar said that the true strength of any government lies in its people, and when the leadership demonstrates firm resolve, sincere intentions, and a clear direction, divine support follows and success becomes inevitable. He noted that the government, under PM Shehbaz, was working round the clock to

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PM, Nawaz Sharif likely to visit London

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is also likely to accompany her father

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif are expected to depart for London next week, according to sources close to the Sharif family. Nawaz is scheduled to undergo a routine medical check-up during his stay, which is likely to last around two weeks, sources said.

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Relief measures: government needs to do more

OPINION

ANSAR M BHATTI



PRIME MINISTER Shehbaz Sharif has announced a much-anticipated relief package for both domestic and industrial electricity consumers, aiming to provide financial respite amid rising inflation and economic pressures. The move has been welcomed by both business communities and the general public, as it is expected to lower operational costs for industries and ease the burden on household budgets. While the initiative is being largely appreciated, some experts and economic analysts argue that there was considerable room for a more substantial reduction in electricity tariffs. They contend that the government could have utilized available financial buffers and reforms to provide even greater relief. However, given the challenges in the power sector—such as inefficiencies, circular debt, and distribution losses—policymakers have adopted a cautious approach to ensure sustainability. While unveiling the package, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasized the urgent need to address systemic issues in the power sector, particularly electricity theft, which contributes significantly to revenue losses and inefficiencies. He reiterated that eliminating power pilferage and enforcing stricter controls would not only reduce losses but also create the fiscal space necessary for further reductions in tariffs. The prime minister further assured con-

sumers that the government is committed to making energy more affordable and sustainable. He hinted at the possibility of additional tariff reductions in the near future, subject to improvements in power sector management and economic conditions. With this announcement, the government aims to strike a balance between providing relief to consumers and maintaining financial stability in the energy sector. As implementation unfolds, all eyes will be on the impact of this initiative on businesses, households, and Pakistan's broader economic landscape. Despite recent developments, several pressing questions remain unanswered. The relief came only after the government decided to do away with the dormant power plants. Additionally, the government announced the cessation of capacity payments, primarily targeting state-owned power plants. However, it remains unclear whether this policy will extend to private power producers, particularly those operated by Chinese companies. At first glance, it appears that the measure will impact only government-owned independent power producers (IPPs). The issue of so-called "ghost power plants" that have not generated a single kilowatt of electricity yet received billions of rupees is a serious one. It raises fundamental concerns about accountability, governance, and the misuse of public funds. The critical questions remain: Will there be any action against these plants? Will an independent audit be conducted to determine the extent of financial losses and identify those responsible? It is evident that the burden does not lie solely with the Independent Power Producers (IPPs). The government machinery that facilitated these transactions must also be scrutinized. This situation

"In recent developments, reports indicate that negotiations between the Establishment and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have made significant headway—a move that many see as a step toward de-escalating long-standing political tensions. Moreover, the recent decision allowing PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif to travel abroad has further fueled speculation that behind-the-scenes consensus-building efforts are in motion"

suggests a deeper network of systemic failures, possibly involving regulatory bodies, policymakers, and oversight agencies that allowed such arrangements to persist. To move forward, there needs to be a transparent and independent audit to trace where the funds went and how much was extracted from the public exchequer. If wrongdoing is confirmed, legal consequences should follow—not just for the IPPs but also for those within the government who enabled these transactions. Without meaningful action, public confidence in the power sector and government oversight will continue to erode. Beyond the power sector, several other areas require immediate government attention. The continuous depreciation of Pakistan's currency against the US dollar is severely impacting imports of raw materials, affecting industries such as the newspaper sector. One does not need to be an Aristotle to recognize that the currency will only strengthen when exports increase. However, there appears to be no serious effort from the government to encourage businesses to boost exports. While high electricity tariffs have been a major obstacle, the recent rate cuts are unlikely to provide significant relief or drive export growth. A comprehensive strategy is needed to address the root causes and create a more export-friendly environment.

Pakistan's most pressing challenge arguably stems from its meagre foreign exchange reserves. In realistic terms, these reserves hold little weight without the financial support extended by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Political and economic analysts believe that both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi deliberately maintain their deposits in Pakistan's central bank to retain strategic leverage over Islamabad—a tool they can deploy whenever their regional interests demand it. This external financial dependence is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy decisions in the future, particularly when the sensitive issue of recognizing Israel inevitably surfaces. Quite recently, a major UAE airline sought to commence operations in Pakistan. However, in a familiar pattern, bureaucratic red tape and administrative delays on our end hindered the timely granting of necessary permissions. It wasn't until the UAE halted the operations of all its airlines to Pakistan for several hours—a move that underscored the depth of our economic reliance—that the required approvals were promptly granted. This incident is a stark reminder that true national independence is intrinsically tied to economic sovereignty. The sooner our decision-makers and power-wielders internalize this reality,

the better it will be for the country's long-term stability and global standing. There is no doubt that internal political stability serves as a cornerstone for sustained economic progress. Without a predictable and coherent political environment, economic planning, investment, and public confidence remain under constant threat. In recent developments, reports indicate that negotiations between the Establishment and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have made significant headway—a move that many see as a step toward de-escalating long-standing political tensions. Moreover, the recent decision allowing PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif to travel abroad has further fueled speculation that behind-the-scenes consensus-building efforts are in motion. If these trends continue and lead to a broader political settlement or at least a temporary détente, the effects on the economy could be profound. Political calm encourages investor confidence, improves market sentiment, and enhances the government's ability to focus on policy rather than firefighting crises. Ultimately, Pakistan's economic well-being is inextricably linked to its political stability. The sooner the political stakeholders agree on a path forward, the better positioned the country will be to tackle pressing economic challenges, attract foreign investment, and improve the lives of its citizens.

CM praises operation to protect rare wildlife

The CM pointed out the steps taken by the Punjab government to promote sports in the province, including the launch of the "Khalita Punjab" program, aimed at increasing participation in sports. "The Pink Games in Punjab symbolize peace and equal development," she added

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has lauded the efforts of the Wildlife Department, district administration, and police for conducting the largest-ever combing operation in South Punjab to protect rare birds and wildlife. While appreciating the coordinated efforts of the teams involved in the successful operation, the CM said, "Excellent work — you have fulfilled your duty with great courage. We pay tribute to each of you." Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb also praised the raiding team, stating, "We salute the entire team that bravely enforced the law despite facing fierce resistance. A zero-tolerance policy is in full effect when it comes to wildlife protection." She added that, under the Chief Minister's directive, illegal wildlife markets are being eradicated across Punjab. She urged citizens to report illegal wildlife activities immediately by calling the government's helpline, 1107. The operation was conducted under the recently enacted Punjab Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2025, which classifies illegal wildlife trade as a non-bailable offense, punishable by up to seven years imprisonment and a fine of Rs 5 million. Raids were carried out at the notori-

ous Godri Bird Market and Pigeon Market in Multan under the leadership of Director General Wildlife Department Mudassar Riaz Malik. The authorities recovered hundreds of rare animals and birds, including parrots, chakors, peacocks, and pheasants. Additionally, eight trucks loaded with illegally traded wildlife were taken into custody from the Pigeon Market. The operation met strong resistance, including violence and gunfire from the mafia involved in illegal wildlife trafficking. Police responded swiftly, arresting eight armed individuals and sealing over 40 shops. An attempted murder case has been registered against unidentified suspects involved in the attack at Godri Market, and further raids are ongoing to apprehend those at large. In a firm move, a case has also been lodged under anti-terrorism laws against the illegal wildlife traders, reinforcing the government's strong stance on environmental protection and law enforcement. Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has emphasized the crucial role of sports in fostering peace, development, and social progress. In her message on International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, the CM highlighted that the day serves to

promote the positive impact of sports in society. The CM stated, "International Day of Sport for Development and Peace aims to raise awareness about the importance of sports in our communities and its contribution to peace." The chief minister emphasized the government's commitment to providing equal sports opportunities to all individuals, including youth, senior citizens, differently-abled people, and those from underdeveloped areas. "Sports events pave the way for peace and development within society," she said, adding that promoting social development and peace within communities was the core essence of celebrating this day. She further noted that peace and sports are inseparable. Where there is peace, there will be sports, and where there is sports, there will be peace. Highlighting the role of sports in youth development, she mentioned, "Sports play a vital role in nurturing teamwork, competition, and resilience among youth." The CM pointed out the steps taken by the Punjab government to promote sports in the province, including the launch of the "Khalita Punjab" program, aimed at increasing participation in sports. "The Pink Games in Punjab symbolize peace and equal development," she added.



ISLAMABAD: People are enjoying Sunday holiday at Damn-e-Koh in the Federal Capital.

KP native poets peep through annals of history

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a unique province of Pakistan having a vibrant cultural history and its literary tradition is deeply rooted in the expressions of its native poets. Preservation and promoting region's culture, language and history, these native poets of Urdu, Pashto, Hindko, Chitrali, Hazarwal, Serakai, Kohistani, Gojri and others languages reflect diverse history, blending themes of love and traditions, valor, warmth, mysticism, social justice and mutual coexistence. Standing tall among them is Khushal Khan Khattak (1613-1689), often regarded as Father of Pashto literature for his versatile poetry, covering themes of unity of Pashtun tribes, patriotism and education. "He was not just a poet, but a great warrior and a statesman, who stood tall for freedom," said Professor Dr Abbasin Yousafzai, an educationist from Islamia College Peshawar. "His poetry delves into ethics of leadership, unity of Pakhtoon tribes and struggle against foreign invasion. His most famous work, Khushal Khan Khattak's Diwan, remains a cornerstone of Pashto literature," Dr Abbasin said. "Pashto literature and Khushal Baba can't be separated." In the rich landscape of Pashto literature, Rahman Baba (1632-1706) is another icon recognized as 'Prince of Pashto Poets' with his unparalleled contributions to cultural and literary heritage. —APP

DC lauds private companies role for supporting subsidies

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon chaired a meeting in his office in which the Islamabad administration acknowledged the role of private companies that provided essential items at subsidized rates during Ramadan. Representatives from various companies dealing in poultry, eggs, sugar, ghee, and grocery items attended the session. Assistant Commissioners from all city zones were also present, said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration here. Speaking at the meeting, DC Irfan Nawaz Memon appreciated the support provided

by the private sector. He said that these companies played a significant role in helping the administration deliver essential items at reduced prices through stalls set up across Islamabad. He also distributed appreciation certificates to the representatives of companies that actively participated in the subsidy initiative. The Deputy Commissioner said that during Ramadan, the administration remained available round the clock to address public needs. He added that continuous efforts by officers and field staff ensured that affordable goods were made available throughout the month. According to DC Islamabad, the private

sector's cooperation made it possible to provide relief to citizens by offering food items at controlled prices. He emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between public and private sectors in addressing market challenges. Officials said that the administration plans to further strengthen this cooperation in the future to ensure that residents continue to receive price relief during key times of the year. The meeting ended with a renewed commitment to joint efforts for improving service delivery and ensuring public convenience through timely interventions. —DNA

KP govt releases 80pc uplift funds by March: Muzamil

DNA

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the KP Finance Minister, Muzamil Aslam said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had disbursed 80 percent of its development funds by the end of March, setting a record compared to other provinces. In a statement, he said that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has approved an additional 27 percent increase in the development budget, with Rs. 27 billion expected to be released soon for ongoing and new projects. "In my two-decade-long career, I have never witnessed development funds surpassing initial estimates like this," he said. He highlighted the provincial government's commitment to accelerated progress. The swift fund release aims to boost infrastructure, health, and education projects across the province, ensuring timely completion.

AJK to have own Rangers, CTD, says Anwar

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq has announced that the proposed induction of Rangers personnel into AJK has received formal approval from the cabinet as 1,000 troops and 300 officers will be recruited in accordance with existing rules and regulations. In an exclusive interview with media, he informed that the command of the Rangers Force will rest solely with officials from Azad Kashmir, and no nonstate individuals will be inducted into the force. Condemning the negative and misleading propaganda by certain elements, the AJK prime minister said, "Dissemination of toxic and baseless narratives against state institutions is deeply regrettable. Those responsible will be brought to justice." He also revealed that the government is in the final stages of launching a Counterterrorism Department (CTD) to safeguard AJK citizens from the threats of terrorism. "This initiative is vital in the current security scenario, especially considering the sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces to ensure the safety of the people," he emphasized. Speaking about governance and economic challenges, Anwar-ul-Haq said despite a

deficit of Rs. 71 billion, the government has successfully paid salaries before Eid, released funds to local bodies, revived dead projects, and provided grants to universities. "Three quarters have passed under financial constraints, but the government has delivered," he said. He also mentioned progress on key infrastructure and education projects. "The 'Out-of-School Children' project is going to be launched, and the Prime Minister of Pakistan has approved a Rs. 3 billion Danish Schools project. The Shounter Tunnel in Muzaffarabad will also begin with financial support," he added. To further improve the financial sector, the AJK prime minister confirmed that AJK Bank will meet the necessary requirements to become a scheduled bank before June 30. "All tasks under the government's mandate have been completed for digitalization and scheduling. The remaining steps are being handled by the bank's administration," he explained. Highlighting administrative progress, he said that negotiations with local government representatives have been successfully concluded. "Local bodies are an integral part of the government under the AJK Constitution, and we will take them along in the governance process," he asserted.

He further mentioned that the issue of development funds for MLAs will be addressed through a constitutional mechanism, either via court appeal or legislation in the Assembly. The Prime Minister refuted allegations of political bias in hiring, stating, "Recruitments have always been made on merit and after proper advertisement. In rare cases, especially to meet medical needs in remote areas, the condition of 'state subject' was relaxed. However, for forces like Rangers and Police, the recruitment criteria strictly exclude nonstate residents." Commenting on the regional security situation, Anwar-ul-Haq said, "The recent wave of terrorism is being fueled by our traditional enemy, India. The Indian intelligence agency RAW, in collaboration with hostile elements, is actively working to destabilize Pakistan. If not dealt with in time, the consequences could be disastrous." He strongly criticized attempts to malign the role of Pakistan's armed forces. "For the past 77 years, the Pakistan Army has made countless sacrifices to defend the Line of Control (LoC) and support the people of Azad Kashmir, especially during natural disasters and times of crisis. Unfounded criticism of such institutions is unacceptable. —APP

Ahsan calls for removing peak hours electricity rate

ISLAMABAD: Member of the Central Core Committee of United Business Group (FPCCI) and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, has welcomed the decision to reduce electricity prices, stating that Prime Minister Mian Shabbaz Sharif has fulfilled the promise he made to the nation and the business community. However, he emphasized that peak hours should be abolished immediately and a uniform system should be introduced so that people can truly benefit from the relief. He expressed these views during a conversation with a high-level delegation of the business community today. Ahsan Bakhtawari praised the efforts of United Business Group (UBG) leader Gohar Ejaz and Patron-in-Chief S.M. Tanveer in achieving this reduction in electricity prices, stating that under their leadership, UBG made strong efforts on this crucial issue and raised the voice of the business community. Their continued dedication and determination brought the issue to the attention of Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif, resulting in this welcome decision. Ahsan Bakhtawari stressed that if no changes are made to the current peak hours system, the actual benefits of this relief will not reach the business sector and industries. He emphasized the immediate abolition of peak hours and the implementation of a uniform system. He noted that peak hours are currently set from 5 PM to 11 PM, which is exactly when business activities are at their peak—especially in the commercial centers of Islamabad. Declaring these hours as peak hours and setting the highest electricity rates during this time is outright injustice. Ahsan Bakhtawari appealed to Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif to instruct the relevant authorities to review this policy so that the business community can receive genuine relief. He further stated that nowhere in the world are peak hours applied during business and industrial operating hours. On the contrary, governments ensure electricity supply and offer special concessions in tariffs during these times to facilitate businesses and keep the wheels of the economy moving efficiently. —DNA

Climate change a serious challenge

NUSRAT KHAN

Pakistan is among the ten countries most affected by climate change, this challenge is spreading throughout South Asia, where a large portion of the world's population is being impacted. South Asia has emerged as a global hotspot for climate change, and scientific evidence shows that the environmental and climatic changes occurring in this

region are unprecedented in history. The multiple and growing challenges faced by our region are shared. There has been a dramatic shift in snowfall patterns, while the melting of glaciers and permafrost has further intensified the issues. The monsoon season, which has historically supported agriculture, has now become unpredictable. Additionally, the region can no longer reliably depend on surface and groundwa-

ter sources. The effects of the region's climatic aspects are different from and more severe than immediate environmental impacts. It is extremely important to understand the significance of these non-traditional security threats. These threats are neither purely internal nor entirely international. Global discussions on climate change have often overshadowed our regional and domestic conversations, and at times

have also affected efforts to find local solutions and pursue regional cooperation. However, these challenges do not necessarily have to lead to situations where no one benefits. Instead, they can create opportunities to find solutions that benefit all countries. This is especially important because the environmental crisis gives rise to non-traditional security threats that cannot be addressed through conventional mean.



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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

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- Bomb Disposal.....15
- Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
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- & Rescue Services.4451122
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- RGH.....9290301-7
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- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
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- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Govt vows economic stability amid challenges:Kayani

Kayani ended his speech by thanking the local PML-N leadership for organizing the event. He promised that demands raised by the people of the area would be addressed and better public facilities would be ensured

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani, on Sunday, said the reduction in electricity prices reflects the government's commitment to provide relief to the public and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, with the support of PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif, had kept the promise made to the people. Addressing a public gathering Kayani said the decrease in electricity rates will benefit all segments, including households, farmers and industries. He also said further cuts are expected in the coming months, especially when compared to June 2024. These reductions, according to him, are part of long-term planning. He pointed out that despite economic challenges, the government had not only reduced electricity costs but also brought

down petrol prices and controlled inflation. "The economic journey is on track. We are moving toward stability while making sure the public sees the results in their daily lives," he said. Kayani said that power plants that were not generating electricity had been shut down to save public funds. He claimed that these savings have now been passed on to consumers in the form of reduced prices. "We did not just make promises. We took practical steps," he added. Talking about past mismanagement, he said the previous government had pushed the economy toward default. In contrast, he said, the current leadership had not only avoided default but also stabilized the economy. "We believe in responsible economic management and will continue to work for long-term improvements," he said. The Minister also mentioned that a task force

formed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had played a key role in achieving the electricity price cuts. Negotiations with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and other stakeholders were also part of this effort. He said the government is planning more reforms, including the establishment of an open electricity market and a crackdown on power theft. These steps, he said, will bring further relief to the public and support the business sector. Kayani said the PML-N government remains focused on job creation and public welfare. "Development in all sectors is the party's top priority. This has been our agenda and we have delivered on it before," he said. He praised both Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif for their consistent efforts in providing relief to citizens, adding that the same commitment is now visible in Punjab under Chief Minister

Maryam Nawaz Sharif. "You can see the results on the ground," he said. He spoke about the "Clean Punjab" initiative and said it had improved cleanliness in both cities and rural areas. He also mentioned ongoing development work in sectors like water supply, healthcare and education. Major infrastructure projects like the Lahore-Sialkot-Rawalpindi Motorway are progressing, he added. Kayani said the government is also focusing on ending misuse of public money and is working to modernize Pakistan through digital tools. These goals, he said, are part of the Prime Minister's broader vision. He claimed that international institutions, including the IMF and World Bank, have acknowledged Pakistan's recent economic performance. He said inflation is now under control and the policy rate has been

reduced from 22 percent to 12 percent, making it easier for people to access credit and support businesses. "The economy is improving. We are working on structural reforms, boosting industry and supporting farmers. Every Pakistani will benefit from this progress," he said. Kayani also touched on national security. He said the country is not only managing economic challenges but also fighting terrorism. He praised the sacrifices made by the people of Jhelum district in this regard. He referred to a recent meeting with the father of Captain Hasnain Akhtar, who was martyred in an anti-terror operation in D.I. Khan. Kayani said he was deeply moved by the strength and patience shown by the martyr's family. "Jhelum has always stood at the front line for Pakistan. Every graveyard here holds the story of a sacrifice," he said.

DIG orders crackdown on corrupt elements

ISLAMABAD: A high-level crime meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Muhammad Jawad Tariq, to review the overall crime situation and operational performance across all police zones.

A police spokesperson told APP that the meeting was attended by Zonal SPS, SP Dolphin, SDPOs, and SHOs. DIG Islamabad reviewed the performance of each zone and directed officers to strengthen crime control efforts and improve the quality of investigations.

DIG Tariq emphasized that all pending case challans should be completed and submitted in a timely manner based on merit. He also underscored the importance of arresting proclaimed offenders and absconders without delay. He instructed that a comprehensive crackdown must be launched against those involved in car and motorcycle thefts, along with proactive measures against active criminal gangs. The DIG stressed that effective redressal of public complaints at the police station level must be ensured to build trust in the force. —APP

Experts warn of growing cyber risks to young minds

ISLAMABAD: Notable cybersecurity experts Sunday stressed the importance of collective efforts from parents, educators and stakeholders to mitigate the adverse effects of digital influences on young minds, who are often overlooked by their families and instead find guidance online. Former Additional Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency Ammar Jaffri, while speaking to PTV News, explained Pakistan's cyber-crime wing and its efforts to combat online threats, emphasizing the need for collective action from all stakeholders. Ammar Jaffri also emphasized the need for strict checks and balances to combat cybercrimes and ensure online safety. The establishment of the NCCIA was approved by the federal cabinet in December 2023, and it's a significant step towards enhancing cybersecurity in Pakistan, he added. The Federal Government has activated the National Cyber Crimes Investigation Agency (NCCIA) to tackle online fraud cases and raise awareness about cybercrimes with an aim to enhance cybersecurity and protect citizens from online threats. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Workers are busy placing plants in pots along the roadside in the Federal Capital.

Convention to unite overseas with homeland initiatives

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director of Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) Mohammed Afzaal Bhatti Sunday informed about the hosting of a three-day Overseas Pakistanis Convention to be held in Islamabad from April 13-15, 2025, to bolster homeland ties. In an exclusive conversation with PTV news, he said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was all set to unveil initiatives addressing overseas Pakistanis' concerns. Mohammed Afzaal Bhatti praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's concern for overseas Pakistanis, acknowledging their significant contributions to the country and described the upcoming three-day Overseas Pakistanis Convention as a landmark initiative. He said that this convention will provide a platform for overseas Pakistanis to share their experiences, ideas, and concerns and will help bridge the gap between the diaspora and the government, ultimately fostering a sense of belonging and strengthening Pakistan's global connections. He said this convention will showcase the government's commitment to strengthening ties with the overseas Pakistani community. OPF MD also highlighted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's past efforts as Chief Minister to engage with overseas Pakistanis. He noted that Sharif is now spearheading the Overseas Pakistanis Convention 2025, a three-day event in Islamabad aimed at strengthening ties with the diaspora community. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will engage with overseas Pakistanis to understand and address their concerns, strengthening ties between them and their homeland, MD added. This connection aims to resolve issues faced by overseas Pakistanis and explore opportunities for collaboration and investment, he mentioned. Mohammed Afzaal Bhatti further stated that OPF is playing a vital role in promoting Pakistan's prosperity. He emphasized the organization's efforts in promoting national development and leveraging the expertise and resources of the diaspora community to drive economic growth and innovation in Pakistan. —DNA

Rahim's artistic work captivated guests a reception

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Rahim Khetran's artistic work captivated guests at a reception held at Pakistan Embassy in UAE. He is an internationally acclaimed artistic photographer and visual anthropologist. Mr. Khetran's exhibition featured a carefully curated collection of artistic photographs—portraits, land-

scapes, and scenes from cultural life—that brought Pakistan's diverse regions and traditions to life. With his distinctive approach that merges visual anthropology with artistic photography, he offered attendees an immersive experience into the soul of Pakistan—its people, heritage, and natural wonders. Guests praised the exhibition as the standout moment of the evening, describing it as a "visual

ly poetic journey across Pakistan." His ability to humanize the narrative of Pakistan and celebrate its richness through artistic photography was recognized as both powerful and timely. Importantly, it is worth mentioning that Mr. Rahim Khetran has collaborated with the Paris-based art gallery Galaxy Art, which actively promotes his artistic work in France and across Europe. This

international partnership not only elevates Mr. Khetran's presence on the global art stage but also continues to introduce the cultural vibrancy of Pakistan to audiences across the continent. The Pakistan Embassy lauded Khetran's role in fostering cross-cultural understanding, stating, "His artistic photography is a bridge — connecting people to the heart of Pakistan beyond borders, through stories only the lens can tell."

Services' exports grow by 6.03% to \$5.45b

Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the period under review was recorded at \$17.899 billion against the deficit of \$17.128 billion last year, showing an increase of 4.50 percent

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The export of various services witnessed 6.03 percent increase during the first eight months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. According to PBS data, Pakistan earned \$5.459 billion from the export of various services during July-February (2024-25) as compared to \$5.148 billion in July-February (2023-24). On the other hand, the services' imports also witnessed an increase of 12.03 percent during the months under review and were recorded at \$7.709 billion as compared to the import of \$6.881 billion in July-February (2023-24). Based on the figures, the

services' trade deficit increased by 29.85 percent during the period under review by growing from \$1.732 billion last year to \$2.250 billion during the ongoing fiscal year. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports of services in February 2025 increased by 5 percent to \$709.96 million from \$676.17 million in February 2024. On the other hand, the imports also grew by 32.70 percent by going up from \$763.42 million to \$1,013.02 million, according to PBS data. On month-on-month basis, the export of services increased by 2.50 percent in February 2025 when compared to the imports of \$692.62 million in February 2024. The imports of services however witnessed a decrease of 1.08 percent in February 2025 compared to

imports of \$1,024 million in February 2024, PBS reported. Meanwhile, the merchandise exports from the country increased by 7.69 percent during the first three quarters of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year. Exports during July-March (2024-25) were recorded at \$24.690 billion against \$22.926 billion during July-March (2023-24), according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data. On the other hand, imports into the country went up by 6.33 percent by growing from \$40.054 billion last year to \$42.589 billion during the first nine months of the current year. Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the period under review was recorded at \$17.899 billion against the deficit of \$17.128 billion last year, showing an increase of 4.50 percent.

IRSA releases 63,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 63,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 63,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1410.27 feet which was 8.27 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17,000 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1089.50 feet, which was 39.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 18,600 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 37,900, 31,600, 16,600 and 6,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 17,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 5,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala. —APP

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Briefs

AIP President urges dialogue

ISLAMABAD: Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) President and MP Baramulla Engineer Abdul Rasheed has called on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to initiate a meaningful dialogue process to clear the dark clouds of uncertainty, injustice and political alienation looming over Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, Engineer Rasheed in his speech in Indian Parliament in New Delhi dismissed IIOJK Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's claim of a "clear sky" in Kashmir and stressed that only meaningful dialogue can dispel this darkness. Rashid emphasized that governance and the rights of Kashmiris must not be overlooked due to his incarceration. "As Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is heading to Kashmir to inaugurate the Katra-Baramulla railway. As I remain in jail, I urge Modi, for God's sake, take care of my people. My constituency covers 18 assembly segments and my people should not be deprived of their rights," Rashid said.—APP

Islamabad Police arrest 15 criminals

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Sunday arrested 15 criminals, including eight suspects allegedly involved in heinous crimes, during separate operations across the federal capital. An official told media that the crackdown was carried out under the special direction of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi to ensure the safety of life and property of the citizens and maintain peace in the city. He said police teams from Koral, Aabpara, Sangjani, and Bhara Kahu police stations arrested eight suspects and recovered 1,250 grams of hashish, 290 grams of ice (methamphetamine), five liters of liquor, three pistols of different bores, and a rifle along with ammunition from their possession. He said cases have been registered against the accused and further investigations are underway. He said during a special campaign to apprehend proclaimed offenders and court absconders, eight wanted criminals were also arrested. SSP Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan stated that the Islamabad Police is fully committed to protecting the lives and property of the public and no one would be allowed to disrupt peace in the city. He said ensuring the safety of citizens remains the top priority of the Islamabad Police.—APP

Lower tariff to make industry more competitive: Experts

Highlighting the structural reforms to be taken in power sector, the PIAF Chairman said the government should 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

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Association Front (PIAF) has appreciated the government for taking structural reforms especially in power sector to ensure further relief for the consumers and overall development of the country. The PIAF Chairman Fahimur Rehman Saigol, Senior Vice chairman Nasrullah Mughal and Vice chairman Tahirm Manzoor Chaudhry in a joint statement said this reduction will help industrialists produce cheaper and more competitive products. They noted that the common people had to suffer a lot in the past due to high inflation rate and electricity bills. However,

they asked the government to take further steps to provide maximum relief to them. Highlighting the structural reforms to be taken in power sector, the PIAF Chairman said the government should 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 privatise or commercialise Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) to reduce the burden of line losses and power theft on the national exchequer. It is to be noted that Prime Minister had announced a significant reduction of up to Rs 7.69 per unit in the electricity prices for the consumers, pledg-

ing to provide further relief in near future through structural reforms in the power 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 PM has 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 finalise power reforms, he 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. The govt 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 Awais Leghari for their commendable efforts. "After negotiation with the IPPs, the govt managed to save Rs 3,696 billion that were to be paid to the IPPs. 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 the govt took over the charge 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 He said the government even had to face difficulties to open LCs for importing petroleum products and other essential items. He underscored that the inflation rate in March 2025 was recorded at just 0.7 percent, a dramatic drop from 20.7 percent in the same month last year which was the lowest inflation level in six decades.

Robust security steps to be ensured during PSL

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired a meeting on Sunday to review the security plan for the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) matches. A police spokesperson told APP that the meeting was attended by SSP CTD Hamza Humayun, CTO Islamabad Captain (ret'd) Syed Zeeshan Haider, the Director of Safe City, and other senior officers. He said the meeting discussed in detail a foolproof security plan for the PSL matches. IGP Rizvi directed all officers to ensure strict security arrangements at sports venues, players' residences, and along their transportation routes.

He said all buildings and routes should be continuously monitored through Safe City cameras and that the Counter Terrorism Force should remain on alert to respond to any untoward situation immediately.

IG Rizvi also instructed the CTO Islamabad to ensure effective traffic management, including the creation of alternative routes and parking arrangements, so that citizens do not face difficulties during the movement of players and matches. IG Rizvi reiterated that Islamabad Police would utilize all available resources to ensure the security of both foreign and domestic players and maintain law and order across the city. He added that protecting the lives and property of citizens remains among the top priorities of Islamabad Police. As the country grapples with rising inflation and economic challenges, this decision marks a turning point in the government's efforts to support businesses and ease the financial burden on consumers. The leadership of BMP looks forward to continued dialogue with the government to ensure that such pro-business and pro-growth measures are sustained and expanded, further advancing Pakistan's economic prosperity.



KHANPUR: Children are enjoying the ride of Camel at Khanpur Dam, which is a favorite destination of tourists from surrounding areas of the City.

Govt taking historic public service initiatives

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Senior Minister Maryam Aurangzeb has said that the present government has brought the country out of a difficult time through well-coordinated and intensely engaged efforts. She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the federal government and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in Punjab, have written a new history of serving the people. She said that the country is destined for progress and development only when passionate and able leadership is cognizant of people's problems. She remarked this while addressing the participants of a meeting held at Commissioner's Office to review the progress of various ongoing projects in Rawalpindi. The senior minister highlighted that CM Maryam Nawaz has made the development of the entire Punjab, including the Clean Punjab, Dhi Rani Programme, Kisan Card, Himmat Card, Scholarship Programme, Laptop scheme all of which were swiftly executed for prompt benefits delivery. She further highlighted that the utmost priority of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz was to provide relief to the people. She underlined that the common man will get relief from the joint efforts of the administration and public representatives, which is the vision of the CM. She informed the participants that on the instructions of the Chief Minister, the parking plaza schemes and Nala Lei project would be included in the upcoming Annual Development Plan. "The feasibility of Nala Lei should be completed in the next four months and the work should be started", she directed the concerned officials, Maryam Aurangzeb also reiterated for timely completion of Rawalpindi Ring Road (RRR) project. The minister conveyed CM's 'congratulation' to the district administration on the 100 percent implementation of the Suthra Punjab program in Rawalpindi Division. She directed the removal of weaknesses in the program to further improve its impact. Regarding the solarization of all tube wells, Maryam directed MD WASA to prepare a feasibility report within fifteen days. "Installation of all LED lights in Rawalpindi city, including metro pillars, should be completed soon", she instructed. She urged the relevant quarters to take necessary steps to eradicate the scourge of drugs saying "Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz has a zero tolerance policy against drugs". —DNA

ICCI leadership urges prudent water management

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The leadership of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), including President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, have jointly called for re-

sponsible and efficient use of water resources amid growing concerns over a potential shortage in the federal capital. In a statement issued on Saturday, the ICCI leadership emphasized the critical importance of water for human survival, agriculture, and industrial growth. They warned that Islamabad, like many other

parts of the country, is at high risk of a severe water crisis, particularly with the summer season fast approaching. "The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is already well aware of the concern, but it would be prudent for them to double the efforts to ensure sufficient water supply for both industrial and residential sectors,"

remarked President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi. Urgent and collaborative measures are essential to address the challenge effectively. The ICCI also expressed its readiness to actively contribute to initiatives aimed at promoting water conservation and supporting the CDA in improving water management systems.

Continue working with businessmen for long-term tariff stability

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has said that the relief in power tariff is a step in the right direction, asking the government to continue working closely with the businessmen to monitor energy pricing and ensure long-term tariff stability for the trade and industry. The FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar, while appreciating Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement of a substantial reduction of Rs7.59 per unit

in electricity tariffs for industrial consumers, stated that it is a critical move that will ease financial pressure on both businesses, emphasizing that the relief package came at a time when it was needed the most. Anjum Nisar called the initiative a historic intervention and a bold step towards providing relief to millions of households and thousands of businesses across the country. This tariff reduction would have far-reaching positive effects, which will not only ease the financial burden on consumers but also revitalise the industrial sector, fostering economic growth, enhancing exports, and contributing to a more competitive business

environment, he said. It is an essential catalyst for the growth of local industries. Over the years, high energy costs have hindered industrial productivity, and this reduction will bring tangible benefits to manufacturing and exports, which are the key drivers of economy, he remarked. It is to be noted that business community across the country has welcomed the reduction of power tariff for industrial consumers and expressed hope that this move would enhance exports, production capacity and reduce cost of manufacturing and help reduce inflation. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has announced a decrease of Rs 7.41 in elec-

tricity prices for residencies consumers and a decrease of Rs 7.41 in electricity tariff after receiving approval from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reduce tariff differentials. While highly appreciating Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for his timely and impactful announcement of a substantial reduction in electricity tariffs by Rs7.59 per unit for industrial consumers and Rs7.41 per unit for domestic consumers, stated that it was undoubtedly a critical move to alleviate the financial pressure on both citizens and businesses that have long struggled with the burden of exorbitant energy costs.

Traders laud recent cut in power tariff

DNA

ISLAMABAD: DDr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, a respected business leader and former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), on Sunday praised the recent reduction in power tariffs as a commendable step forward. However, he firmly argued that a further reduction is essential, as current tariffs for the struggling industrial sector continue to exceed those of the United States, the European Union, China, and various other nations. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that this disparity highlights the urgent need for more competitive pricing to foster economic growth and support consumers. He noted that Pakistan's do-

mestic consumers are still paying a very high electricity price compared to India and Bangladesh. Moreover, our industrial sector pays almost double the electricity prices compared to the United States, China, and India and even higher than the European Union, adversely affecting its export competitiveness. According to the International Energy Agency, the average 2024 electricity rates in the United States and India were 6.3 cents each per kilowatt-hour, 7.7 cents in China, 4.7 cents in Norway, and 11.5 cents in the European Union. In comparison, he informed that average electricity prices for energy-intensive industries in Pakistan hovered around 13.5 cents per unit in 2024, indicating difficulties Pakistani industries face at home and in exporting products

abroad. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the recent tariff cut is insufficient as it translates into a reduction of almost 2.56 cents per unit, which is not enough to trigger industrialization. Pakistan's economy is facing many problems due to expensive electricity, and it is promoting de-industrialization as high energy costs are pushing industries elsewhere. He added that many industrialists have closed down their units and started trading or property businesses, which do not contribute to the economy as much as the industrial sector does. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that affordable power is vital for economic growth as high electricity prices continue to undermine the competitiveness of energy-intensive industries. Global electricity consumption was expected to increase fastest from 2025

to 2027, fuelled by growing industrial production, rising air conditioning use, accelerating electrification, and expanding data centres worldwide. Global electricity demand rose 4.3 percent in 2024 and is forecasted to grow by close to 4 percent through 2027. Most of the additional electricity demand through 2027 will come from emerging economies, which are expected to make up 85 percent of the growth. More than half of global electricity demand growth in 2024 came from China, which grew by 7 percent, similar to the previous year. Electricity demand in China is forecast to increase by 6 percent annually until 2027, while India's demand is estimated to grow at an average of 6.3 percent annually over the next three years.



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SHINGLES VACCINE, SHINGRIX

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This vaccine requires two doses for optimal protection.

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The vaccine is recommended for those over 18 with a weakened immune system and for older patients above 50 years of age.

Shingles can be very painful and is more likely to affect older individuals. This is often due to a weakened immune system, which can happen with age, stress, or certain medical conditions and treatments.

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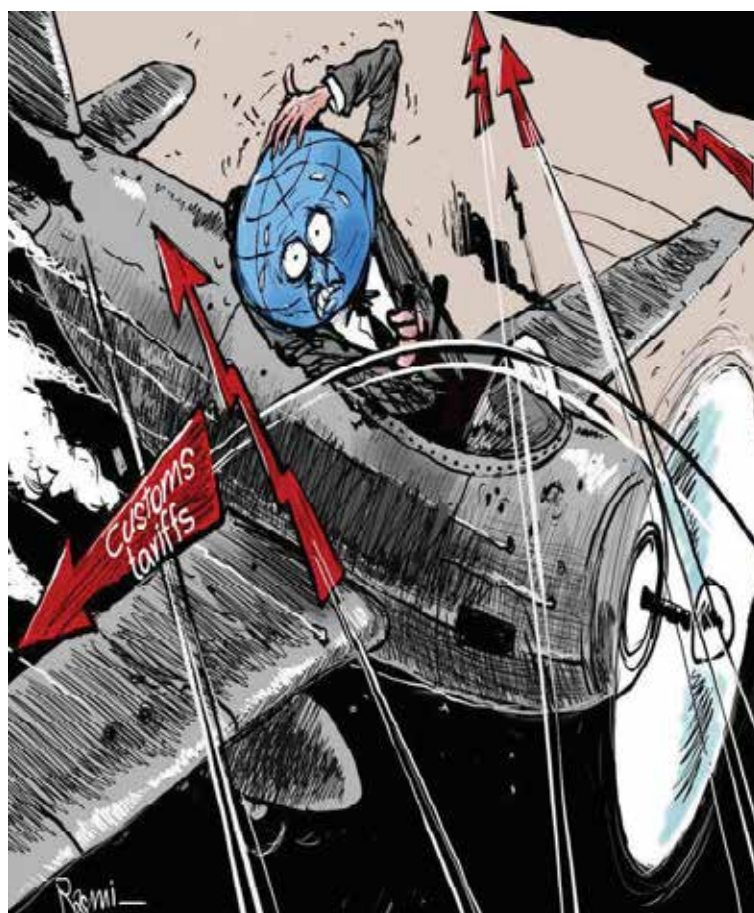
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Whose lives matter?

As the world is consumed by seemingly intractable crises, the norms and values that once guided professional responses are being challenged daily. From international humanitarian law, which governs the conduct of war, to humanitarian aid, public health, and even journalism, the frameworks that once ensured impartiality, probity, and fairness have been shaken – and in some cases, undermined. Powerful revisionist forces in the West are using threats against the media and freedom of speech in academic institutions to influence public perceptions of events like the war in Gaza. Meanwhile, in the Global South, disillusionment with the international order is growing. “Decoupling and derisking has disrupted trade. Justice for Palestine is more remote than ever, and unauthorised wars are being launched without UN Security Council approval,” veteran Chinese diplomat Lu Kang lamented in a recent speech. Clearly, notions of balance and objectivity are easily misunderstood – especially when people argue for what is effectively false balance or moral equivalence when pushing their agendas. As the philosopher Hannah Arendt argued, impartiality should not be confused with scientific objectivity. The erosion of impartiality extends to journalism, which remains essential for reporting on conflict. News gathering is no longer simply about balanced coverage. The distinction between factual and fake news has never been so blurred. The BBC, for instance, has faced accusations of bias from all sides – both for allegedly failing to report the full horror of Gaza’s tragedy and for supposedly giving voice to Hamas in a controversial recent documentary. Meanwhile, Israel’s ban on international journalists in Gaza has left reporting almost entirely to Palestinian journalists, 170 of whom have died since the war began in October 2023. How did we build a moral framework for managing conflict, only to abandon it so quickly? The manipulation of humanitarian aid and information is not new. During the Vietnam war, the US military tried unsuccessfully to suppress critical news coverage, while America’s aid programmes in Asia were driven by Cold War anti-communist ideology. After the Cold War, a period of idealism emerged. In the Middle East, there was cautious optimism after the Camp David Accords in 1976 and the Oslo Accords in 1994. With globalisation gaining momentum after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, UN agencies and organisations like the ICRC and Medecins Sans Frontieres asserted norms of impartiality in aid delivery. UN peacekeepers stabilised conflict zones, and international humanitarian law was generally upheld. International NGOs flourished, and the media committed itself to factual, unbiased reporting. Institutions like the International Crisis Group reinforced rigorous, evidence-based analysis. This edifice began to crumble after the September 11 attacks. Suddenly, neutrality was no longer an option. “You are either with us or against us” became the mantra of the US-led war on terror, culminating in the Iraq war, where the international community was forced to take sides. Since then, the world has lost its sense of normative balance. Even historically neutral countries have shifted. Sweden joined Nato after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2021, while peace talks in Switzerland failed to get off the ground because Russia couldn’t be invited. When I asked a Swiss official whether Switzerland might mediate between Palestinian factions, I was told unequivocally no.



Taking provocations head-on

In recent weeks, a series of Iranian leaders issued pointed threats toward “Israel” and the US, warning the occupation not to underestimate Tehran’s response capabilities. Ali Larjani, senior advisor to Iran’s Supreme Leader, has warned that any attack under the garb of nuclear weapons would prompt Tehran to muster its defenses. IRGC Navy Commander Alireza Tangsiri has redoubled Iranian support for Resistance groups, sending a powerful message to an occupation that spares no effort in distorting Tehran’s actual position on regional peace. Iran’s Leader Sayyed Ali Khamenei and his advisor have also reiterated defiance to external hostility. Here is why all this matters. First, foreign warships in the Gulf necessitate Tehran’s alarm. The US is in the process of exercising so-called “deterrence” with Iran as it bolsters additional deployments and seeks to threaten Tehran with F-35 combat jets, bombers, and destructive drones. It is not the call of a foreign, interventionist power like the United States to wield its muscle in the sovereign waters of Iran and its neighbors. This is the situation amid claims that the deployments aren’t a lead-up to an attack, but can a hostility-driven, warmongering Trump administration ever be trusted? Ground realities suggest the US is using cruise missile-carrying destroyers and other warships in the region to stir up possible aggression. For Tehran, a vocal supporter of regional stability, the threat to “stand up against any threats to protect its rights and interests” is thus a necessary deterrent and sovereign imperative. “If foreigners attempt to attack us, pressure us, or endanger our interests, we will stand against them with full force,” affirmed Alireza Tangsiri, the commander of the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy. Second, Trump’s threat to attack Iran under the garb of the ‘nuclear program’ could prove to be a recipe for self-capitulation. First, it would strengthen Tehran’s legitimate justification to pursue accelerated development of the program, given the public’s interests in placing the country’s territorial integrity and sovereign defenses above all else. Second, the gravity of Washington’s threat – and its tendency to operate in tandem with the occupation – could corroborate Iran’s position that remaining on high-alert is a major prerogative beyond any compromise. Let’s not create double standards on the sovereign defenses of Iran and the rest of the world: if Washington was the subject of such an outrageous bombing threat, it would’ve invoked the UN Charter and focused energies around deterrence and proportional response. Besides, the US would be ill-advised to forego an opportunity to engage on an equal footing with Tehran, given the space for overlapping economic interests that could bridge divisions and prove mutually beneficial. The Trump administration’s military threats could prove to be an own goal as they could prevent a convergence of economic interests, as mentioned by Ali Larjani, senior advisor to the Iranian Leader Sayyed Khamenei. Beyond economics, it is worth an ask: how would the remotest attempt at attacking Iran benefit US interests? Washington is squarely to blame for violating the hard-won nuclear pact of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and for an administration that claims its hand at a nuclear compromise, raising temperatures through attack threats would only work to its detriment.

Redrawing Middle East boundaries

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Conversely, Turkey’s increasing involvement in Middle Eastern affairs over the past seven decades has positioned it as one of the system’s main participants.

Based on this approach, the Middle Eastern system comprises sixteen state actors: Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Yemen. These states are central to regional security and political dynamics, particularly concerning the Arab–Israeli conflict and Gulf security. Additionally, the Middle East is characterized by the presence of influential non-state actors that often challenge the authority...

LEONARD Binder was among the first scholars to question the geographical and political scope of the Middle Eastern system in 1958. In defining this system, Binder considered various criteria, including the existence of regional organizations and defense pacts, the interrelationship between domestic and international politics, conflicting intra-area policies the role of religious opposition to nationalism, government policies, and historical and colonial experiences. Based on these factors, Binder argued that “the Middle East proper stretches from Libya to Iran, with fringe areas including Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Maghreb, and the core area comprising the Arab states and Israel.” This conceptualization of the Middle East underscores its broad geographical span, while also highlighting the unifying elements of religion and colonial legacy that link its individual components. Binder’s formulation initiated a debate regarding the composition and scope of the Middle Eastern system. This discourse revealed the diversity of perspectives on what constitutes the Middle East. One school of thought, for instance, identified ‘Ottoman political culture’ as the primary determinant of regional inclusion, which led to the exclusion of Morocco and Iran from the system. Another approach concentrated on Israel, its neighboring Arab states, and the involvement of extra-regional great powers, consequently omitting Iran, Turkey, and the Maghreb states. A third perspective restricted the definition of the Middle East to Arab states, emphasizing Arab nationalism as the central criterion. These differing approaches illustrate the inherent subjectivity in defining the Middle East, as the system’s boundaries expand or contract depending on the criteria adopted. This issue of defining the Middle East becomes more complex when considering the impact of Islamist movements. If Islamist ideology is treated as the binding element of the system, the Middle Eastern system could theoretically encompass a vast area stretching from Morocco to the Philippines. Such a broad conceptualization, however, renders the system analytically ineffective due to its sheer size and complexity. In response to this challenge, Buzan and W ver introduced the notion of regional subcomplexes within larger systems. They proposed that, given the significant number of states in the Middle East, it is necessary to recognize distinct subcomplexes to better understand regional dynamics. Specifically, they identified the Levant subcomplex, consisting of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, and the Gulf subcomplex, which includes Iraq, Iran, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. However, Buzan and W ver do not offer explicit criteria for distinguishing these subregions beyond geographic proximity. They acknowledge the considerable overlap and interconnections between these subcomplexes, making clear-cut distinctions challenging. Additionally, their assertion that Turkey lies outside the Middle East is contentious, as Turkey has played a significant role in the region’s geopolitics, particularly in both the Levant and the Gulf. Turkey’s foreign policy initiatives, military interventions, and diplomatic engagements have frequently positioned it as a key actor in Middle Eastern affairs, further complicating its exclusion from the system. An alternative approach to conceptualizing the Middle Eastern system is to view it as a structure defined by the foreign policy priorities of its core states. From this perspective, the Middle Eastern system comprises states that primarily focus on two inter-related geopolitical issues: the Arab–Israeli conflict and Gulf security. This framework provides a coherent and analytically useful understanding of the region, as it centers on key security dynamics that shape regional interactions. Within this context, North Africa is largely excluded from the Middle Eastern system. Although North African states may engage with the Arab–Israeli conflict, their influence on the issue is not primary. Conversely, Turkey’s increasing involvement in Middle Eastern affairs over the past seven decades has positioned it as one of the system’s main participants. Based on this approach, the Middle Eastern system comprises sixteen state actors: Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Yemen. These states are central to regional security and political dynamics, particularly concerning the Arab–Israeli conflict and Gulf security. Additionally, the Middle East is characterized by the presence of influential non-state actors that often challenge the authority of state governments and contribute to regional instability. Among these non-state actors are militant groups such as ISIS, al-Qaeda, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and Hamas; paramilitary organizations like the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq; and political movements, including Kurdish nationalist groups, Palestinian factions such as Fatah and Hamas, and the Muslim Brotherhood. The influence of these non-state actors varies depending on their resources,

organizational capacities, and ideological motivations. The significance of non-state actors in the Middle East is particularly evident in their ability to shape security dynamics and state policies. For instance, Hezbollah’s military capabilities and political influence in Lebanon make it a critical actor in the Levant subcomplex, while the role of the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq highlights the intersection of state and non-state security structures in the Gulf subcomplex. Similarly, Hamas and Islamic Jihad exert considerable influence over the Palestinian territories, complicating efforts to resolve Israeli–Palestinian conflict. These non-state actors operate within and across state boundaries, further blurring the lines between domestic and international politics in the region. Furthermore, external powers play a crucial role in shaping the Middle Eastern system. The involvement of great powers such as the United States, Russia, China, and the European Union influences regional security, economic policies, and diplomatic engagements. The U.S. has historically maintained a strategic presence in the Gulf, ensuring the security of energy resources and supporting regional allies. Russia, on the other hand, has strengthened its ties with Iran and the Syrian government, asserting its influence in the Levant. Meanwhile, China’s growing economic footprint in the Middle East, particularly through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative, signals an evolving geopolitical landscape that further complicates the dynamics of the regional system. The Middle Eastern system is a complex and multifaceted geopolitical structure whose definition is subject to varying interpretations. Binder’s initial conceptualization of the region provided a broad framework that underscored the significance of historical, religious, and political factors in shaping the Middle East. Subsequent scholarly debates have refined this framework, introducing alternative criteria based on political culture, Arab nationalism, and security concerns. The recognition of regional subcomplexes by Buzan and W ver offers a more nuanced approach to understanding the Middle East, although challenges remain in clearly delineating these subregions. Ultimately, the Middle Eastern system is best understood as comprising state and non-state actors that are primarily engaged in issues related to the Arab–Israeli conflict and Gulf security. This perspective allows for a coherent analysis of regional interactions, while also acknowledging the critical role of external powers and non-state actors in shaping the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East.

But perhaps even more heartbreaking is the role—or the lack thereof—played by the Muslim world. There are 57 Muslim-majority countries on this planet. Together, they possess tremendous wealth and military capacity. Collectively, Muslim countries control trillions of dollars in sovereign wealth, vast energy resources, and hold significant shares in global trade and finance. In terms of military strength, the Muslim world commands more than five million active and reserve personnel, thousands of tanks and fighter jets, and even nuclear capabilities. Some Muslim countries like Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt have advanced defense industries and modernized weapon systems, yet when it comes to Gaza, all this power remains unused, locked behind closed borders and political calculations. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “The example of the believers in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion is like that of a body; when any limb aches, the whole body responds with sleeplessness and fever.” (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim) Why, despite this enormous potential, do Muslim countries keep silent in the face of Israel’s brutality? The answer lies in a complex web of fear, division, and dependency. Many Muslim states are entangled in economic, political, or military partnerships with Western powers that support Israel. Others are afraid of diplomatic isolation or sanctions. Some are too divided among themselves—embroiled in regional rivalries and internal crises—to unite for a collective response. The spirit of the Ummah has been weakened by decades of fragmentation, and Gaza is paying the price for that disunity. Gaza shares borders with several Muslim countries—most notably Egypt, and nearby lie Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria—all Muslim-majority nations. Yet, none have opened their borders to offer significant refuge or medical assistance at scale. None have taken steps to halt the bloodshed or

protect the people of Gaza from the wrath of Israel’s military machine. Political hesitation and self-interest have overtaken the principles of Islamic brotherhood and humanitarian obligation. This silence is not neutrality—it is complicity. When the world does nothing while war crimes are committed in plain view, it sends a message that the lives of Palestinians are expendable. That the destruction of their homes, hospitals, and futures is tolerable. That their suffering is not worth more than a few sound bites in the news cycle. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Whoever sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot, then with his tongue; and if he cannot, then with his heart—and that is the weakest of faith.” (Sahih Muslim) How many more bodies must fall before the world decides that enough is enough? How many more children must be buried under collapsed buildings before the Muslim world realizes that its strength lies not in numbers, but in unity and action? The crisis in Gaza is not just a humanitarian tragedy—it is a moral test. And so far, the world is failing. The time for statements is over. What Gaza needs is immediate humanitarian aid, diplomatic pressure, and sustained political support. Muslim countries must rise above their divisions and come together, not just in sorrow, but in strategy and solidarity. They must leverage their influence at the United Nations, in global forums, and with their Western allies to demand a ceasefire and the lifting of the siege. They must provide material support to rebuild what has been destroyed, and most importantly, they must protect the dignity and rights of the Palestinian people. “Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.” (Qur’an, Surah Ar-Ra’d 13:11) History will remember this moment. It will remember the innocent lives lost and the silence that followed. It will remember the countries that stood by and did nothing. And it will ask: When Gaza was burning, where were you?

Gaza under fire, humanity under trial

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Why, despite this enormous potential, do Muslim countries keep silent in the face of Israel’s brutality? The answer lies in a complex web of fear, division, and dependency. Many Muslim states are entangled in economic, political, or military partnerships with Western powers that support Israel. Others are afraid of diplomatic isolation or sanctions

THE tragedy of Gaza has once again exposed the deep cracks in the conscience of the global community and the paralyzing inertia of the Muslim Ummah. As the tiny strip of land continues to burn under Israel’s relentless bombardment, the world watches in silence, save for a few customary condemnations and hollow resolutions. The screams of innocent civilians, the wailing of mothers, and the crushed bodies of children buried under rubble have failed to stir any meaningful action from either the so-called champions of human rights or the Muslim countries that surround Gaza. “And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and [for] the oppressed among men, women, and children who say, ‘Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a protector and appoint for us from Yourself a helper?’” (Qur’an, Surah An-Nisa 4:75). Gaza is not just another battlefield. It is a densely populated area home to over two million people, more than half of them children. Since the most recent aggression began, over 32,000 Palestinians have lost their lives, the majority of them women and children. Tens of thousands more are injured, displaced, or missing. The infrastructure of Gaza has been turned into dust. Hospitals, schools, residential buildings, water pipelines, electricity grids—nothing has been spared. The United Nations has estimated that over 70% of Gaza’s infrastructure has been completely or partially destroyed, making it unlivable for its residents. In the face of such devastation, the reaction of the world has been shamefully muted. The self-proclaimed torchbearers of human rights and international law have done little beyond issuing carefully worded statements and non-binding resolutions. These gestures, no matter how loud, do not stop bombs. They do not heal the wounded or feed the hungry. They do not bring back the dead children pulled from the rubble of their homes.

Briefs

US Congressional delegation...

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The two-day Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum that will kick off in Islamabad on Tuesday. According to the statement, the delegates will meet senior Pakistani officials to expand opportunities for American businesses in Pakistan and promote the deepening of economic ties between the two countries. Meyer will also engage with senior officials to underscore the vital importance of the continued collaboration between the two countries on counterterrorism.

Afghan interim govt promoting..

FROM PAGE 01
"The terrorists of al-Qaeda under the Afghan interim government are armed with the US rifles, and the Afghan government has made it its sate policy to generate revenue from selling and smuggling the US abandoned weapons to banned terrorist groups," the report said. Many local commanders in Afghanistan view weapons obtained during the insurgency as personal property, or property of their respective fighting group, and therefore resist efforts to register and manage these arms centrally, according to the report. Additionally, internal divisions within the Taliban, along with the personal networks of commanders, provide informal pathways to acquire weapons, bypassing formal approval processes. These challenges led to significant variations in control practices from province to province based on the influence of local commanders and their relationship with Afghan central authorities, it said.

Cut in electricity tariff to...

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provide real and sustainable relief to citizens. "Despite inheriting a fragile economy, widespread inflation, and political polarization, the government made tough but necessary decisions in the interest of the nation," he added. Tarar said that when Pakistan was confronted with unprecedented challenges, the prime minister prioritised the state over political gains and refused to jeopardize the country's future for short-term political advantage. He remarked that elements responsible for economic and institutional destruction are now facing political isolation. "The people of Pakistan have rejected those who prioritized chaos and conflict over development and stability," he said.

Eight terrorists killed as...

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effective border management on their side of the border. "Interim Afghan government is expected to fulfill its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by Khawarij for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan," the ISPR added. Meanwhile, a sanitisation operation was being conducted to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area as "security forces are determined and remain committed to secure its borders and wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country".

Mengal may be detained if BNP...

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(LEAs) are present there," the spokesperson added. He said that the BNP-M's call to block national highways at this time would only add to public hardship. "The administrations of all districts have been instructed that national highways will not be shut," Rind added. The BNP-M began a "long march" from Wadh to Quetta on March 28, protesting the detention of BYC leaders and activists, including Dr Mahrang Baloch and Sammi Deen Baloch, alongside the police action against their sit-in in the provincial capital.

Ethiopian envoy opens women journalists' sports gala 2025



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ethiopia Jemal Beker opens cricket tournament held under the aegis of the National Press Club. President National Press Club AzharJatoi along with other office bearers, welcomed the Ethiopian ambassador upon arrival at the venue. — DNA

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, inaugurated the Women Journalists' Sports Gala 2025 here in Islamabad at Margharz Cricket Ground on Sunday. The

event was jointly organized by the National Press Club (NPC), the Women Journalists Caucus, Capital Premium League, and other partners. Upon his arrival, the Ambassador was warmly welcomed by Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) President Mr. Afzal Butt, NPC President Mr. AzharJatoi, NPC General Secretary and Chairperson of the Women Journalists Caucus Ms. Nayer Ali, and Chairman Pakistan

Africa Friendship Association (PAFA) Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari. Ambassador Dr Jemal played the ceremonial first ball to commence the match and addressed the media, highlighting the importance of sports and women's empowerment for Pakistan's prosperity and development. He expressed his passion for sports, noting its significance in ensuring social cohesion, national unity, building a healthy nation, and facilitating

cultural exchanges among nations. The Ambassador praised Pakistanis as a sports-loving nation and reiterated his commitment to strengthening people-to-people relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia, which is known for success in athletics, particularly long-distance running games. He extended his best wishes to the women journalists participating in the match, and also in their professional endeavors.

PCB announces illustrious commentary panel for PSL X

DNA
LAHORE: Former England Test captain Sir Alastair Cook is all set to make his HBL PSL debut behind the mic as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced a star-studded commentary panel for HBL PSL X here on Sunday. The six-team tournament is scheduled to commence from 11 April at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium and will conclude on 18 May, with the final taking place at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. The 34 matches will be played in Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi. Cook will be joined by former MCC President Mark Nicholas — a renowned

commentary panel for PSL X since retiring from competitive cricket in 1995. Nicholas also remained associated with SKY Sports in England and Channel 9 in Australia. Joining Cook and Nicholas are fellow countrymen Dominic Cork and Mark Butcher, while South Africa's Jean-Paul Duminy and Mike Haysman will also be part of the panel. From Bangladesh, it will be Athar Ali Khan, and he will be joined by New Zealand's former Test cricketer Martin Guptill. Australia's two-time ICC Women's World Cup winner Lisa Sthalekar will also lend her voice to the tournament. Commentators from Pakistan: Four former Test captains — Aamir Sohail, Ramiz Raja, Waqar Younis and Wasim Akram will lead

Free entry for during Women's WC qualifiers

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has allowed free entry for cricket fans to watch ICC Women's World Cup 2025 qualifiers at the Gaddafi stadium. The ICC Women's World Cup 2025 qualifiers will be played between April 9 and April 19. Six teams including Pakistan, Bangladesh, West Indies, Ireland, Scotland and Thailand will vie for two top spots to qualify for the main event in September-October in India. A total of 8 matches will be played at Gaddafi Stadium during the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifying Round. Pakistan will play their first match against Ireland on April 9 at Gaddafi Stadium, with the match starting at 9:30 AM. — APP

Dutch sports icons to visit Pakistan

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Pakistan is delighted to announce the upcoming visit of two renowned Dutch sports personalities, Floris Jan Boveler and KayanatBokhari, to Pakistan at the end of April 2025. This visit coincides with the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP), observed annually on April 6th, which highlights the transformative power of sports in promoting peace, development, and inclusion. Floris Jan Boveler, a legendary hockey player and Olympian, is celebrated for his exceptional penalty corner skills. As a key player in the Netherlands team that defeated Pakistan in the 1990 Hockey World Cup final in Lahore, Boveler's visit will celebrate the shared passion for hockey and the historic ties between the two nations. His presence is expected to inspire young athletes to pursue excellence in sports. KayanatBokhari, a Dutch-Pakistani footballer who represents Pakistan at the international level, will join Boveler on this visit. As a passionate advocate for women's football, Bokhari aims to showcase Pakistan's talent on the global stage and highlight the role of sports in empowering women and promoting inclusivity. During their visit, both sports icons will engage with local communities, youth, athletes, and organizations to share their experiences and emphasize the unifying power of sports.

Foreigners run in Pyongyang Marathon

SEOUL: North Korea held its first Pyongyang International Marathon in six years on Sunday, with hundreds of runners taking to the streets of the capital and citizens cheering them on. Foreign athletes had arrived in the city ahead of the running contest, held to celebrate the birth of its founding leader Kim Il Sung in 1912. AFP photos showed foreign runners crossing the starting line at Kim Il Sung Stadium, some taking photos on their phones, as North Korean spectators cheered them on. Another image showed elite North Korean and foreign runners competing on the streets of Pyongyang, with citizens lining the route appearing to cheer. Another photo shows North Korean spectators in the stands, cheering with sticks. The marathon is the largest international sporting event in the reclusive country. The race offers a rare opportunity for visitors to run through the streets of the tightly controlled capital. Images posted on the Instagram account of Simon Cockerell, general manager of Koryo Tours which organises trips for foreign amateur runners to participate, showed Pyongyang citizens gathering to watch. "A few pics of today's Pyongyang Marathon in North Korea. Amazing event and a race like no other," Cockerell wrote. The last edition of the Pyongyang Marathon was held in 2019 before the pandemic, during which the nuclear-armed state sealed its borders in an effort to contain the virus. Foreign participants are currently in the capital on a six-day trip organised by Koryo Tours, the Beijing-based travel agency which describes itself as the exclusive travel partner of the marathon. "The Pyongyang Marathon is an extremely unique experience as it provides an opportunity to interact with locals," the Beijing-based firm said on its website. — DNA

'Pakistan experience has soured my love for coaching'

'Even if Australia comes calling—no, I'm not interested,' said Gillespie

SYDNEY: Former Pakistan head coach Jason Gillespie has opened up about how his brief but tumultuous tenure with the national team has led him to reconsider his future in coaching. The Australian fast bowler, who briefly led Pakistan's Test and white-ball sides in 2024, admitted that his experience with the team had "soured" his love for coaching and left him questioning whether he wants to pursue full-time roles in the future. Speaking candidly on a recent episode of the Wisden Cricket Weekly podcast, Gillespie shared his disillusionment, revealing that his time in Pakistan was a turning point in his coaching career. "Right now, I'm not sure I'm interested in coaching full-time," Gillespie said. "Even if Australia comes calling—no, I'm not interested," he added. His appointment as Pakistan's red-ball coach in April 2024 ended abruptly in December of the same year after a series of internal disagreements and communication breakdowns with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). He briefly served as interim white-ball coach following Gary Kirsten's departure but stepped down shortly after leading Pakistan to a historic ODI series win in Australia. The former fast bowler did not hold back when discussing his time with the team, particularly his relationship with Aqib Javed, who succeeded him as interim head coach. The 49-year-old accused Javed of undermining his



authority and criticized the internal politics that marred his tenure. "He was a clown," he said bluntly, referring to Javed. "The internal politics and lack of cohesion made the job untenable." Reflecting on his time with Pakistan, Gillespie confessed that it had left a lasting impact on his view of coaching. "The Pakistan experience has soured my love for coaching, I'll be honest," he added. "It really disappointed me how that all ended. It's made me question whether I want to coach full-time again." While Gillespie has stepped away from full-time coaching, he has not ruled out future involvement in the game. — Agencies

Max Verstappen fends off Norris to win in Japan

TOKYO: Red Bull's Max Verstappen fended off a race-long challenge from the McLarens of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri to win the Japanese Grand Prix. The Dutchman's fourth consecutive victory at Suzuka was his first of the year and moves him to within one point of Norris at the head of the drivers' championship. Verstappen's drive was cool under intense pressure, with rarely more than two seconds between him and Norris, and founded on a quite brilliant pole position lap on Saturday. McLaren had feared that the Red Bull would be difficult to pass if Verstappen held the lead at the start, and so it proved. Rain overnight and on the morning of the race helped ensure there was no repeat of the grass fires that affected practice and qualifying on Friday and Saturday. Verstappen led the two McLarens for the entire first stint, the three laps ending closely together. There were questions as to why McLaren pitted Piastri first, when it might have made sense to attack Verstappen with Norris making an earlier pit stop, potentially giving the Briton the opportunity to get ahead. McLaren had already radioed Norris for a 'dummy' stop two laps earlier and Norris was within 1.5 seconds of Verstappen — theoretically just about within range of an undercut — on the lap Piastri stopped. McLaren said they had to pit Piastri because he was at risk of being undercut by Mercedes' George Russell, who stopped on lap 19 and was quick on his hard tyres. Verstappen and Norris stopped on the same lap, one later than Piastri, and there was an immediate flashpoint. As Verstappen and Norris pitted, they were separated by just 1.5 seconds. McLaren's stop was faster by a second, and as they left the pits the McLaren was halfway alongside the Red Bull. But Verstappen held his line, and Norris ran out of track, taking to the grass.

Norris complained about Verstappen's driving, saying he had been pushed off, while Verstappen countered by saying his rival had driven off by himself. The stewards agreed with the four-time world champion. After the race, Norris said: "He had the position and he had the right to do what he did, so fair play." From then on, Norris and Piastri tracked Verstappen for the final 32 laps, with just over two seconds separating them most of the time. But Norris could not get within a second of Verstappen, and in fact it was Piastri who looked to have the best pace, sometimes closing to within 0.5secs of his team-mate. Piastri suggested to the team that he felt he had the pace to beat Verstappen — a thinly veiled request to be let past. But McLaren did not interfere in their battle and the first three drivers crossed the line in the order they had held all race, separated by just 2.2 seconds. Piastri moves into

third place in the championship ahead of Russell, and is 13 points behind his team-mate. Verstappen said: "It was tough, just pushing very hard on the last set. The two McLarens were pushing me very hard. I'm incredibly happy. It started off quite tough this weekend but we didn't give up, we carried on improving the car and today it was in its best form. Starting on pole was very important." Norris added: "The pace was too similar to do anything more. Long race, a lot of pushing, flat out from start to finish, but nothing special we had to get Max on. He deserved it. They were quick, they've made some improvements and we'll have to work hard." The top three were in a race of their own and the entire grand prix was pretty static in terms of order. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc held off Russell for fourth place, while the Briton's team-mate Andrea Kimi Antonelli put in a strong final stint to close to less than two seconds behind his team-mate. Italian Antonelli led the race after Verstappen, Norris and Piastri pitted and became the youngest driver in Formula 1 history to do so, at 18 years and 224 days. Verstappen was four days older when he won the 2016 Spanish Grand Prix. Antonelli also became the youngest driver to set the fastest lap, again beating Verstappen from the 2016 Brazilian Grand Prix. Lewis Hamilton, on an alternate tyre strategy, took seventh from eighth place on the grid, getting ahead of Racing Bulls' IsackHadjar early in the race. It was the only position change in the top 10. Alex Albon drove an attacking race, complaining to the Williams team about his strategy, to take ninth, ahead of the Haas of Briton Oliver Bearman. In his first race for Red Bull, Yuki Tsunoda finished 12th with the man he replaced, Liam Lawson, 17th in the Racing Bull.



Pak hands over 2nd aid shipment...

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earthquake to 70 tons. As per the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, National Disaster Management Authority efficiently coordinated and expedited the dispatch of these consignments within a short time-frame. Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to provide humanitarian assistance to earthquake affected people of Myanmar.

Peace Jirga supports army action

FROM PAGE 01
the armed forces in their fight to send the terrorists to hell. They thanked the Pakistan army for launching welfare projects in the Darazanda, particularly educational projects for girls of the areas and health initiatives for the area people. The Jirga participants pledged to cooperate with Pakistan army in its war against militants and peace efforts in Dera Ismail Khan.

Israel deports two British MPs

FROM PAGE 01
the United Kingdom foreign secretary, David Lammy. Labour MPs Yuan Yang and Abtisam Mohamed flew from London to Israel on Saturday and were rejected because they were suspected of plans to "document the activities of security forces and spread anti-Israel hatred", Sky News reported, citing a statement from the Israeli immigration ministry. Lammy said in a statement that Israel's actions were "counterproductive, and deeply concerning". "I have made clear to my counterparts in the Israeli government that this is no way to treat British parliamentarians, and we have been in contact with both MPs tonight to offer our support," he said. "The UK government's focus remains securing a return to the ceasefire and negotiations to stop the bloodshed, free the hostages and end the conflict in Gaza," Lammy added.

PM, Nawaz Sharif likely to visit...

FROM PAGE 01
The trip will also include political engagements. Nawaz is expected to address the PML-N overseas convention in London, where party workers from Europe and beyond are set to gather. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is also likely to accompany her father on the visit, according to party insiders. Family sources further indicated that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to join them in London following his official visit to Belarus. Key meetings involving senior members of the Sharif family are also said to be scheduled during the London stay.

PTI split into various factions...

FROM PAGE 01
Addressing an event in Sialkot, the defence minister took a jibe at the Imran Khan-founded, saying: "The party is as divided as the number of its members is." "We don't need to abuse them, they themselves are abusing each other," he added. It is pertinent to mention here that a tug-of-war is currently underway between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati and former Senator Azam Swati. Also, former minister Taimur Saleem Jhagra is engaged in a war of words with the party's internal accountability committee. Local media has also been reporting rifts between KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur and PTI provincial chapter President Junaid Akbar. Last week Akbar confirmed that he had differences with CM Gandapur when he was taking over the office of the party's KP president, adding that they buried the hatchet in line with Khan's directions. Moreover, following a fresh statement from Gandapur, rifts within the PTI have intensified.

Briefs

Lebanon ministry says two dead in Israeli strike on south

BEIRUT: Lebanon's health ministry said two people were killed Sunday in an Israeli strike on the country's south, as Israel said it hit Hezbollah operatives amid a fragile truce. The toll in the "strike launched by the Israeli enemy on the town of Zibqin rose to two dead," the health ministry said in a statement, adding that the toll was final after earlier reporting one dead. The Israeli military said it carried out an air strike targeting two Hezbollah operatives in the Zibqin area, adding in a statement that they were "attempting to rebuild Hezbollah terror infrastructure sites." A fragile ceasefire in late November largely halted more than a year of hostilities between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group, but Israel has continued to carry out strikes in Lebanon. The latest raid came after visiting US deputy special envoy for the Middle East Morgan Ortogus discussed the situation in south Lebanon with senior officials on Saturday. On Friday, Israel killed a commander of Palestinian militant group Hamas in a pre-dawn raid in the south Lebanese port city of Sidon that also killed his adult son and daughter. A day earlier, Israel's military said it carried out an air strike targeting a Hezbollah member in south Lebanon. On Tuesday, Israel struck south Beirut, killing a Hezbollah Palestinian liaison officer, in only the second raid on the capital since the November 27 ceasefire.—APP

Rain complicates recovery in quake-hit Myanmar as death toll rises

YANGON: Rain is compounding misery and presenting new hurdles for relief efforts on Sunday in Myanmar, where state media reported the death toll from a devastating earthquake has risen to nearly 3,500 people. The 7.7-magnitude quake struck on March 28, razing buildings, cutting off power and destroying bridges and roads across the country. Damage has been particularly severe in the city of Sagaing near the epicenter, as well as in Mandalay, Myanmar's second city with more than 1.7 million residents. State media in the military junta-led country now say that the earthquake has caused 3,471 confirmed deaths and injured 4,671 people, while 214 remain missing. With people either having lost their homes entirely or reluctant to spend time in cracked and unstable structures, many residents have been sleeping outside in tents. Around 45 minutes of heavy rain and winds lashed tent cities Saturday evening in Mandalay, according to the UN Development Programme.—APP

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



IN the ever-shifting landscape of Pakistani politics—shaped by power struggles, ideological rifts, and regional complexities—Ikhtiar Wali Khan stands out as a symbol of steadfast loyalty and principled politics. As a key figure of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a province long dominated by the rival Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Wali has emerged as a tireless advocate for his party's vision. Known for his logical rebuttals, unwavering support for party

Pakistan among 14 countries facing Saudi Arabia visa ban

Ministry of Religious Affairs approves Hajj 2025 schedule commencing from April 29 and comprising five airline

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia has imposed a temporary visa ban on 14 countries, including Pakistan, ahead of the Hajj 2025 season, media ported on Sunday. The sources say that the visa ban will apply to Umrah, business and family visas, with the restrictions likely to end in mid-June. With the diplomatic sources saying that the Umrah visa holders can enter Saudi Arabia until April 13, other countries

subjected to the visa ban include India, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Jordan, Algeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Tunisia and Yemen. With the possibility of a five-year restriction on staying in Saudi Arabia despite the ban, the sources added that the Saudi government has officially informed Pakistan about this decision. They also mentioned that Pakistani Umrah visa holders have been instructed to return to their country by April 29. Meanwhile, separately, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has approved the Hajj flight schedule. Under the government Hajj scheme, 89,000 pilgrims will travel to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj through five airlines. The schedule will be available on the Pak Hajj mobile application from today. All pilgrims can know about their flight from the application. The first Hajj flight will depart on April 29, while the last flight will leave on May 31. Five flights will depart from Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta and Multan on April 29.

Pilgrims have been instructed to get vaccinated at their respective Hajj camps ten days before their flight, which is mandatory. The second phase of pilgrim training will begin on April 8. Meanwhile, PIA has announced its pre-Hajj operations, which will continue from April 29 to June 1. During this period, the national airline will transport more than 56,000 Pakistani pilgrims to Saudi Arabia through 280 special flights, belonging to both government and private schemes. Boeing 777 and Airbus

320 aircraft will be used to make the journey more comfortable and organized. PIA's post-Hajj operation will begin on June 12 and will continue until July 10. It is to be noted that as many as 179,210 Pakistani pilgrims will perform the Hajj this year. The cost of the 40-day-long Hajj package has been reduced by Rs25,000, bringing the total to Rs1,050,000. Similarly, the 25-day short Hajj package has been further reduced by Rs50,000, setting the new price at Rs1,100,000.

Call for regional trade boost amid global uncertainty

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik has stressed the urgent need to address the challenges cropped up in the wake of Trump tariffs by fully reviving regional cooperation though SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) to strengthen intra-regional trade. In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said by becoming more resilient and less dependent on major powers, Pakistan can better shield its economy from future global trade shocks. He said to mitigate Trump tariff impact, Pakistan must adopt a multi-pronged strategy with essential diversification of export markets and expanding trade ties with Africa, Central Asia, and the European Union can reduce risk. He said Pakistan should invest in value-added industries and technology to make its exports more competitive. Improving the ease of doing business and political stability would help attract foreign investors despite global uncertainties. He said Pakistan's textile and manufacturing sectors, which rely heavily on imported raw materials and machinery, will bear the brunt of higher costs due to volatility in global prices. He said policy reforms to attract and protect foreign investment, along with greater integration into global value chains, will also help mitigate external shocks. Strengthening domestic industries and encouraging import substitution will definitely further shield the economy from global trade uncertainties. By adopting a proactive and diversified economic strategy, Pakistan can reduce vulnerability to global policy shifts like the Trump tariffs. He said Pakistan must focus on enhancing the competitiveness of its industries through modernization, better infrastructure, and skill development. He said improving trade ties with regional partners through CPEC can open new export avenues. He cautioned that "we should also bear in mind that global trade war is posed to reduce demand for Pakistani exports, particularly textiles, which form the backbone of the economy". The government must take all stakeholders into confidence in framing result oriented strategy to offset the impact of tariffs on Pakistan economy especially exports, he concluded.—DNA

PSBA projects to operate on self-sustaining financial model

LAHORE: 'Sahulat on the Go' and other Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) projects will operate on a self-sustaining financial model. This will ensure that the bazaars remain financially viable without relying on recurring government subsidies. The initiative also aims to promote small businesses and local entrepreneurship by providing an affordable and regulated space for vendors to sell their goods. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was briefed about the 'Sahulat on the Go' initiative, which aims to make essential commodities more accessible and affordable through mobile bazaars. The project will begin as a pilot in Lahore before expanding to other districts. With a total investment of Rs630.50 million, the initiative is expected to generate Rs93.6 million in annual revenue. The government plans to introduce 14 mobile bazaars in densely populated and high-traffic areas, removing encroachments and creating structured market spaces that enhance both accessibility and urban aesthetics. The project is scheduled for completion within three to four months, after which it will be extended to smaller tehsils across the province. The initiative was presented to the CM by PSBA representative Naveed Razaqat Ahmad, who has been instrumental in modernising Punjab's market regulation efforts. A chartered accountant from England and Wales and a Certified Business Analyst from the UK, Ahmad has extensive experience in public sector reform, governance, and financial restructuring. Since joining the then.—DNA

Al-Shabab launches mortar attacks near Somalia's main airport

MOGADISHU: Al-Shabab militants fired multiple mortar rounds near Mogadishu's airport on Sunday morning, disrupting international flights to Somalia, a security official told AFP. The attack comes just weeks after a roadside bomb blast narrowly missed the convoy of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, with Al-Shabab claiming responsibility. According to security sources, the mortars were launched from the outskirts of Mogadishu and landed in an open area of Aden Adde International Airport. "There were about two to three mortar shells that struck an open area of the airport early this morning," a security official, who requested anonymity, told AFP. A Turkish plane scheduled to land at the airport was rerouted to Djibouti, an airport employee said, also speaking on condition of anonymity.—APP

Tunisia shuts down large migrant camps

EI AMRA, Tunisia: Tunisia has dismantled camps housing thousands of undocumented migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, police said, following a campaign against them on social media. Around 20,000 migrants had set up tents in fields in the eastern regions of El-Amra and Jebeliana, said national guard spokesman Houcem Eddine Jebabli. He said around 4,000 people of various nationalities had left one of the camps cleared by authorities, and operations would continue over the coming days. Some of the migrants had "dispersed into the countryside," with pregnant women and the infirm taken care of by the health authorities, he added. The camps had prompted anger from residents in nearby villages, raising pressure on the authorities. Jebabli said locals had taken legal action over the occupation of their olive groves by the migrants.—

Sri Lankan navy seizes 800 kg of heroin

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan naval forces have made a record drug seizure after finding more than 800 kilograms of heroin and crystal methamphetamine on a fishing vessel off the country's west coast. The island nation of 22 million people is known as a hub for drug trafficking. There has been an increase in drug-related incidents in recent years, with about 162,000 people arrested in 2023 for such offenses, government data showed. In 2017, the number was about 81,000. In a special operation on the high seas on Saturday morning, the Sri Lanka Navy confiscated a multi-day fishing trawler and arrested seven suspects. "This is the largest amount of drugs caught by the Sri Lanka navy from a multi-day Sri Lanka fishing trawler," Sri Lanka Navy spokesman Cmdr. Buddhika Sampath told Arab News on Sunday. They were brought to Dikkowita Harbor, about 10 kilometers north of the capital Colombo, for an inspection carried out by the Police Narcotic Bureau. "They scaled them and found ICE (crystal meth), approximately more than 671 kilograms, and heroin approximately more than 191 kilograms," Sampath said. The drugs were "meticulously hidden" in the multi-day fishing trawler, the navy said in a statement. Because investigations are still ongoing, authorities have yet to confirm the origin and destination of the trawler used to transport the drugs. The Sri Lanka Navy said it has been working with local and international intelligence agencies to tighten "its grip on criminal networks operating" in Sri Lankan waters. "No illegal substances, particularly narcotics, will be allowed to enter the country via sea routes," the navy statement read.—APP

Macron to hold Gaza summit with Egyptian, Jordanian leaders

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday said he would hold a trilateral summit on the situation in Gaza with Egypt President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Jordan's King Abdullah II. Israel has pushed to seize territory in Gaza since the collapse of a short-lived truce in its war with Hamas, in what it has called a strategy to force the militants to free hostages still in captivity. Simultaneously, Israel has escalated attacks on Lebanon and Syria. "In response to the Gaza emergency and during my visit to Egypt at President El-Sisi's invitation, we will hold a trilateral summit with the Egyptian president and the King of Jordan," Macron wrote on X ahead of his trip. The French president is expected in Cairo on Sunday evening, where he will hold talks with his Egyptian counterpart on Monday morning. The trilateral summit will be held the same day in the Egyptian capital, according to Macron's office. On Tuesday, Macron will also visit the Egyptian port of El-Arish, 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of the Gaza Strip, to meet humanitarian and security workers and demonstrate his "constant mobilization in favor of a ceasefire.—APP

Tens of thousands of Spaniards march to protest growing housing crisis

BARCELONA, Spain: Tens of thousands of Spaniards marched in protests held across the European country on Saturday in anger over high housing costs with no relief in sight. Government authorities said that 15,000 marched in Madrid, while organizers said 10 times that many took to the streets of the capital. In Barcelona, the city hall said 12,000 people took part in the protest, while organizers claimed over 100,000 did. The massive demonstration of social angst that is a major concern for Spain's left-wing government was organized by housing activists and backed by Spain's main labor unions. The housing crisis has hit particularly hard in Spain, where there is a strong tradition of home ownership and scant public housing for rent. Rents have been driven up by increased demand. Buying a home has become unaffordable for many, with market pressures and speculation driving up prices, especially in big cities and coastal areas. A generation of young people say they have to stay with their parents or spend big just to share an apartment, with little chance of saving enough to one day purchase a home. High housing costs mean even those with traditionally well-paying jobs are struggling to make ends meet.—APP



TASKKENT: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani met with Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Valentina Matvienko on the sidelines of the 150th meeting Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Ikhtiar Wali: PML-N's staunch defender in PTI's heartland

workers, and personal integrity, he exemplifies a rare kind of politician—one who prioritizes loyalty and clean politics over self-interest. Wali's political journey is deeply rooted in his longstanding affiliation with the PML-N—a relationship that began during his student years. Unlike many who switch allegiances for political convenience, Wali's commitment to the party has never wavered. He has consistently upheld the PML-N's core values of economic development, infrastructural progress, and centralized governance—principles often in contrast with PTI's populist and decentralized approach in KP.

Since 2013, KP has been a PTI stronghold, with leaders like Pervez Khattak and later Ali Amin Gandapur consolidating their party's influence. In this challenging political environment, Wali has remained a defiant and eloquent voice of opposition, countering PTI narratives and striving to keep the PML-N relevant in a province where electoral successes have been elusive. Despite the popularity of PTI's initiatives—such as the Billion

Tree Tsunami and health reforms—Wali has never shied away from pointing out their limitations. He has consistently raised concerns about economic mismanagement and the province's lingering security issues. What distinguishes his criticism is the use of logical argumentation rather than populist sloganeering, which has earned him respect across political lines. A defining aspect of Wali's political style is his deep connection

with the party's grassroots. While many political leaders retreat into elite circles, Wali has remained accessible to workers and supporters, nurturing unity and motivation within the PML-N's KP chapter. Whether the party is in power or in opposition, his commitment to grassroots activism has helped keep the party's message alive in a politically hostile environment. Wali's integrity is especially notable in a political climate

often marred by opportunism and backdoor dealings. He has consistently distanced himself from power-driven motives. Despite being offered the governorship of KP on three separate occasions by rival parties, he declined each offer, choosing instead to stand by his principles and his party. This act alone speaks volumes about his character and his rejection of politics for personal gain.

His appointment on March 6, 2025, as Coordinator to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Information for KP Affairs, was a testament to the trust he enjoys within the party leadership. Although the role does not carry the status of a cabinet position, it signifies Wali's growing influence and his importance in representing the party in KP. True to form, he has used this role to strengthen the PML-N's voice in the province, not to promote personal ambitions. Wali's accessibility to PML-N workers remains one of his most admired traits. In a political culture where many leaders become inaccessible once in office, Wali remains approachable,

offering both moral and strategic support to his party's foot soldiers. This personal touch is not merely symbolic—it is a strategic necessity for a party trying to gain ground in a province where PTI's organizational structure runs deep. His rise from party activist to elected representative highlights the meritorious side of PML-N—a party often criticized for dynastic politics. Wali was elected as a Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) from PK-63, Nowshera, in a hotly contested by-election on February 19, 2021, a significant achievement in a PTI-dominated region. Upon taking his oath on March 1, 2021, he made his allegiance clear with slogans like "Mian Nawaz Sharif Zindabad" and "Vote Ko Izzat Do," reaffirming his ideological alignment with the party's leadership. Even during the tumultuous 2024 elections—where PTI-backed independents made substantial gains despite Imran Khan's imprisonment—Wali played a crucial role in maintaining PML-N's presence in KP. His efforts contributed to sustaining the

party's momentum, offering a counterbalance to PTI's narrative of victimhood and alleged establishment meddling. Wali's future in Pakistani politics will depend on his ability to navigate a landscape fraught with challenges while staying true to his values. His current role offers a platform to shape policy and public opinion, but converting this influence into electoral victories remains an uphill battle. Nonetheless, if history is any indication, Wali's dedication to his party and to ethical politics will remain unwavering. In many ways, Ikhtiar Wali's political struggle mirrors the broader battle for relevance, integrity, and democratic values in Pakistan's often chaotic political arena. As a staunch defender of the PML-N in PTI's heartland, he has relied on logic, accessibility, and principles to build and maintain a political identity that resonates with many. While the path ahead is uncertain, his legacy is already being written—in loyalty, in service, and in the undying struggle for political decency.



Briefs

CTD official injured in Bannu firing

DNA

PESHAWAR: A Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) official was injured by the firing of unidentified assailants in the Bannu Township area on Sunday. Police said the incident occurred within the limits of Bannu Township, where unknown motorcyclists opened fire, injuring a CTD police official, Atif. Police responded promptly and shifted the injured official to Khalifa Gul Nawaz Hospital for medical treatment. Following the incident, a search operation was launched in the Bezan Khel area to track down the accused.

Anti-Trump protests held across US

WASHINGTON: Crowds of protesters gathered in cities across the US on Saturday to denounce President Trump, in the largest nationwide show of opposition since the president took office in January. The "Hands Off" protest planners aimed to hold rallies in 1,200 locations, including in all 50 US states. Thousands of people turned out in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Washington DC, among other cities. Protesters cited grievances with Trump's agenda ranging from social to economic issues. Coming days after Trump's announcement that the US would impose import tariffs on most countries around the world, gatherings were also held outside the US, including in London, Paris and Berlin. Follow live updates In Boston, some protesters said they were motivated by immigration raids on US university students that have led to arrests and deportation proceedings. Law student Katie Smith told BBC News that she was motivated by Turkish international student Rumaysa Ozturk, whose arrest near Boston-area Tufts University by masked US agents was caught on camera last month. - Agencies

Briton, 79, describes 'hell' of Taliban prison

LONDON: A 79-year-old Briton imprisoned in Afghanistan is living in "the nearest thing to hell I can imagine." Peter Reynolds and his wife Barbie were detained on Feb. 1 along with their Chinese-American friend Faye Hall and their interpreter Jaya in Bamiyan province. The couple, who both hold Afghan passports, have lived in the country for 18 years, where they married in 1970 and run various educational projects. They were arrested after flying to Bamiyan from Kabul in a small rented plane which they were later told lacked proper landing permission. In a phone call, details of which were shared with the Sunday Times, Peter Reynolds described conditions in Pule-Charkhi prison as living in "a cage rather than a cell." He added: "I've been joined up with rapists and murderers by handcuffs and ankle cuffs, including a man who killed his wife and three children, shouting away, a demon-possessed man." - Agencie



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Arshad Health Associates hosted a vibrant diplomatic get-together, bringing together members of the international diplomatic community for an evening of cultural exchange and hospitality. The event was graced by several distinguished guests of over 50 different nationalities, including Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey, High Commissioner of Brunei Kamal Ahmad, Ambassador of Myanmar Wunna Han, Ambassador of Brazil Olyntho Vieira, Ambassador of Argentina Sebastian Sayus, Ambassador of Ireland Mary O'Neill, Ambassador of Poland Maciej Pisasrski, Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov, Acting Australian High Commissioner, Chargé d'Affaires of Canada and other senior diplomats, dignitaries and distinguished personalities from the business and medical fraternity. Guests were treated to an array of traditional Pakistani cuisines, offering a rich taste of the country's culinary heritage. Adding further charm to the evening, traditional musical performances were held, showcasing the cultural vibrancy and artistic spirit of Pakistan. The gathering provided an excellent opportunity for diplomats to connect in an informal setting while experiencing the warmth and hospitality that Pakistan is known for. - DNA

Israel walks back account of killing of 15 medics in Gaza

UN and Red Cross demand independent inquiry into incident

NEWS DESK

DOHA: The Israeli military backtracked on its account of the killing of 15 Palestinian medics by its forces last month after phone video appeared to contradict its claims that their vehicles did not have emergency signals on when troops opened fire on them in the Gaza Strip. The military initially said it opened fire because the vehicles were "advancing suspiciously" on nearby troops without headlights or emergency signals. An Israeli military official, speaking late Saturday on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said that account was "mistaken." The footage shows the Red Crescent and Civil Defense teams driving slowly with their emergency vehicles' lights flashing, logos visible, as they pulled up to help an ambulance that had come under fire earlier. The teams do not appear to be acting unusually or in a threatening manner as three medics emerge and head toward the stricken ambulance. Their vehicles immediately come under a barrage of gunfire, which goes on for more than five minutes with brief pauses. The owner of the phone can be heard praying. "Forgive me, mother. This is the path I chose, mother, to help people," he cries, his voice weak. Eight Red Crescent personnel, six Civil Defense workers and a UN staffer were killed in the shooting before dawn on March 23 by Israeli troops conducting operations

Iran not a warmonger, but will stand up to bullying: Top General

TEHRAN: Iran's top general says Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei gave an "appropriate" response in accordance with his strategies and directives to a letter sent by US President Donald Trump to him last month. Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri made the remarks in a meeting with commanders, managers, and staff of the Armed Forces and the Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base on Sunday. Baqeri emphasized that Iran is not a warmonger but will firmly oppose any form of bullying. He highlighted the Leader's strategy, which asserts that while Iran will not initiate war, it will respond decisively to any threats. "The Islamic Republic of Iran is not a warmonger, but it does not accept bullying and will stand against it," he said. "We seek [to promote] peace in the region... We are not pursuing nuclear weapons but rather addressing the needs of our own nation in the nuclear issue," the top Iranian general emphasized, citing the Leader's strategy on the nuclear case. Pointing to Ayatollah Khamenei's stance on engaging in dialogue with the United States, he noted that Iran would not hold direct negotiations "but there is no problem with indirect talks." Baqeri said Ayatollah Khamenei has described Trump as the "most unreliable and unfaithful" party in previous negotiations "and therefore, there is no trust in you." On March 7, Trump announced he had written to Iran to call for nuclear negotiations and threaten military action. The letter was delivered to Tehran on March 12 by UAE presidential adviser Anwar Gargash. On March 27, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that Tehran's official response to the US president's letter had been sent through Oman. In contradictory approaches, the US president called on Tehran to hold direct negotiations on its nuclear program while threatening to bomb Iran if diplomacy fails. Iran has stressed time and again that it will not sit at the negotiating table with the US administration as long as Trump continues his pressure campaign against Tehran. The Iranian general hailed the Leader's "reasonable and very wise" response, which would inform both the Iranian people and all nations across the world that the Islamic Republic's strategy is to defend its own interests and make progress. - Agencies

in Tel al-Sultan, a district of the southern Gaza city of Rafah. Troops then bulldozed over the bodies along with their mangled vehicles, burying them in a mass grave. UN and rescue workers were only able to reach the site a week later to dig out the bodies. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society's vice president, Marwan Jilani, said the phone with the footage was found in the pocket of one of its slain staffers. The Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations distributed the video to the UN Security Council. The Associated Press obtained the video from a UN diplomat on condition of anonymity because it has not been made public. One paramedic who survived, Munzer Abed, confirmed the veracity of the video to the AP. Two block-shaped concrete structures visible in the video are also seen in a UN video released Sunday showing the recovery of the bodies from the site - a sign they are in the same location. Asked about the video, the Israeli military said Saturday that the incident was "under thorough examination." The head of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, Younes Al-Khatib, called for an independent investigation. "We don't trust any of the army investigations," he told a briefing at the UN on Friday. One medic, Assaad al-Nassara, is still missing, the Red Crescent says. Abed said he saw al-Nassara being led away blindfolded by Israeli troops. Al-Khatib said the organization has asked the military where it is holding the staffer.

Married daughter eligible for job under deceased quota

"Woman's legal rights, her personhood, and her autonomy are not erased by marriage," states verdict

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has nullified the decision to terminate a married woman from her position as a primary school teacher, declaring her eligible for employment under the deceased government employee's quota. The top court's two-member bench including Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah issued a written verdict on an appeal of a woman whose appointment had been withdrawn by an education officer in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Karak district without issuing a show cause notice. The nine-page verdict authored by Justice Shah stated that the petitioner's services were terminated based on a clarification letter that "stipulates that the benefit of appointment under the deceased son/daughter quota is not available to a female who has contracted marriage."

Deportation of undocumented Afghan migrants continues

Among those deported, 2,874 men, 1,755 women, and 2,071 children have returned to Afghanistan

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The repatriation of Afghan refugees continues as the deadline set by the government has passed, with 944 foreign families, comprising 6,700 individuals, deported from Pakistan since April 1st. Immigration sources reported that these individuals were transported to the LandiKotal transit camp, where they underwent necessary processing before being deported through the Torkham border. Among those deported, 2,874 men, 1,755 women, and 2,071 children have returned to Afghanistan. The repatriation, which

began on September 17th 2023, has seen a total of 70,494 Afghan families, representing 469,159 individuals, return to their homeland. In addition to the deportations, a police crackdown in Rawalpindi continues, targeting Afghan nationals residing illegally in the country. Since the beginning of April, 353 Afghan nationals have been detained for lacking valid residence documentation. The authorities have been focusing on those without Proof of Residence (PoR) cards and those with expired Afghan Citizen Cards. This ongoing operation has intensified the security measures at the GolraMor holding centre, where detained Afghan nationals are being processed for deportation.

China states its position on opposing US abuse of tariffs

Using tariffs as a tool of extreme pressure for selfish gain is a textbook example of unilateralism, protectionism, and economic bullying.

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: The Chinese government's position on opposing U.S. abuse of tariffs was released, pledging to safeguard China's development interests. Recently, under various pretexts, the United States has imposed tariffs on all trading partners, including China, which severely infringes upon the legitimate rights and interests of nations, severely violates World Trade Organization rules, severely harms the rules-based multilateral trading system, and severely disrupts the stability of the global economic order. The Chinese government strongly condemns and firmly opposes this, INP reported on Sunday quoting Xinhua. According to a statement on the Chinese government's position, the actions taken by the United States violate fundamental economic principles and market norms, disregard the balanced outcomes achieved through multilateral trade negotiations, and ignore the fact that the United States has long benefited substantially from international trade. Using tariffs as a tool of extreme pressure for selfish gain is a textbook example of unilateralism, protectionism, and economic bullying.

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Ethiopia-Pakistan relations given new dimensions