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**Ursula: EU pauses countermeasures amid Trump's reprieve**

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**IPL: MS Dhoni named Chennai Kings captain**

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## Calls for end to Gaza war

# Imposition of US tariffs can have far-reaching effects

Said the recent discontinuation Global Undergraduate Exchange Programme between Pakistan and the United States marks the end of a fifteen-year engagement which has played a pivotal role in the academic and cultural enrichment of thousands of Pakistani students

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan says that considering the interconnected nature of global trade, the imposition of tariffs by the United States can have far-reaching effects, particularly on developing countries. At his weekly media briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said Pakistan hopes for a swift and mutually beneficial resolution of the issue. He mentioned that, as for the imposition of tariffs on Pakistan is concerned, he said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has constituted a steering committee and a working group to examine the new tariffs. Replying to a question, the Spokesperson said the recent discontinuation Global Undergraduate Exchange Programme between Pakistan and the United States marks the end of a fifteen-year engagement which has played a pivotal role in the academic and cultural enrichment of thousands of Pakistani students. He said Pakistan believes that student exchange programmes play an important role in strengthening bilateral relations by focusing on education, scientific and technological collaborations and people-to-people contacts. Regarding the prevailing situation in Gaza, the Spokesperson reaffirmed Pakistan's full support for the upcoming high-level international conference on the peaceful settlement of the Palestine dispute and the implementation of a two-state solution, hoping that the moot would rise to the occasion and restore hope in peace and justice through meaningful action. He also lauded France and Saudi Arabia for co-chairing the preparatory consultations for the June 2025 Conference. Shafqat Ali Khan said Pakistan sincerely hopes that the June Conference

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## Mufti Usmani calls for peaceful boycott to support Palestine

However, the scholar emphasised: Islam is a religion of balance. It is not a religion of vandalising [property] or hurting someone by merely getting carried away by emotions

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Islamic scholar Mufti Taqi Usmani, a former judge of the Federal Shariat Court, on Thursday stressed on avoiding violence while boycotting products in support of Palestine, adding that such activities must be done peacefully without harming lives and properties. Mufti Usmanis remarks came in the wake of multiple recent attacks on outlets of international fast-food chains across the country. An outlet of a fast-food chain came under an attack on Wednesday in Lahores Defence Housing Authority (DHA) when scores of people pelted it with stones, shattering windowpanes and damaging some of its portions. Video clips surfacing on social media soon after the incident showed a mob attacking the building in the DHAs Phase IV, known for housing outlets of different food chains.

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MINSK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif lays floral wreath at Victory Monument. – DNA

## PM arrives in Belarus on two-day visit

Belarus PM Alexander Turchin and officials of Pakistan embassy in Belarus warmly welcomed PM

NEWS DESK

MINSK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived here on Thursday for a two-day official visit to Belarus from April 10 to 11, 2025, at the invitation of President Aleksandr Lukashenko. Belarus Prime Minister Alexander Turchin and officials of Pakistan embassy in Belarus warmly welcomed the prime minister. PM Shehbaz Sharif was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Information and Broadcasting Minister Attaullah Tarar and Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi.

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## Nepra nods Rs1.71 per unit power tariff cut

Reduction will apply to consumers nationwide, including those in Karachi, for the period from April to June 2025

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has approved a government proposal to reduce electricity tariffs by Rs1.71 per unit, citing a relief in the Petroleum Development Levy (PDL). The reduction will apply to consumers nationwide, including those in Karachi, for the period from April to June 2025.

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## 38 transit points established

# Afghan refugees being repatriated in dignified manner: Talal Chaudhry

*Repatriated Afghan citizens can visit, work, and stay in Pakistan under one-document regime policy: minister*

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Amid the ongoing country-wide drive against illegal foreigners and Afghan Citizen Card holders, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Thursday said that the Afghan citizens were being repatriated in a dignified manner. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Talal said that transit points were established in all the provinces to facilitate Afghan citizens, adding that a helpline was also set up for the citizens of the neighbouring country. He maintained that the repatriation of illegal foreign nationals, including Afghan Citizen Card holders, will continue with no extension to the deadline that expired last month. He said so far, 857,157 illegal foreign nationals and Afghan Citizen Card holders had been repatriated to their respective countries.

Continued on Page 06

# PTI bigwigs at loggerheads over meeting Imran Khan

Barrister Gohar, Ali Zafar call on PTI founding chairman in jail despite their names not being included in visitors list

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The senior leadership of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is engaged in a verbal sparring over the matter of meeting the party's founding chairman, Imran Khan. Sources claimed that the list provided to Rawalpindi's Adiala jail officials did not include the names of PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Barrister Ali Zafar, but they both still met the party founder. Upon which, some senior PTI members have raised objections, The News reported. Barrister Gohar on

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## Briefs

### Will speak when time is right

The senior politician made this informal remark while speaking to the media

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former federal minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Thursday that it was not the time to speak, hinting he would speak when the right time came. The senior politician made this informal remark while speaking to the media during his appearance at a court in Islamabad. He expressed his grievance, saying, "This is the third time I've come to court, but the case still hasn't been scheduled for a hearing. I can't understand why this is happening. Ahmed further stated, "One cannot explain the reason in court – when the time comes, well speak. Right now, it's not the season to speak."

### PIA to restart privatization

The government will seek new expressions of interest for the sale of the national carrier later this month

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The government will seek new expressions of interest (EoI) for the sale of PIA later this month, following the national carrier's first annual profit in over 20 years, a government adviser announced on Thursday. Efforts to privatize PIA were hindered by unresolved issues regarding taxation and the airline's balance sheet. Muhammad Ali, government adviser on privatization, stated that these issues have now been addressed. The new EoI is expected to be published by the end of April 2025, with plans to complete the privatization before the end of the year.

## Civilian's military trial

# SC questions lack of independent forum

Do cases go to military courts because harsher punishments are expected there, asks judge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court constitutional bench observed that while the Army Act is a valid law, questions remain about the absence of an independent forum for military trials. The remarks came during a hearing on the legality of trying civilians in military courts. The case was heard by a seven-member larger bench, led by Justice Aminuddin Khan. During the proceedings, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar pointed out that "Defence of Pakistan" and "Defence Services of Pakistan" are two separate concepts. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan remarked that entering a restricted area is also considered a violation. Shopping malls have been built inside Cantonment areas. If I forcibly enter without a permit, will I also be tried in a military court?he asked. This is the first case under the post-1967 amendments that we are hearing. More to read: Supreme Court's pending caseload hits record high He added that civilians could be at risk in cities like Lahore, Quetta, and Gujranwala where Cantonment areas exist.

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## IHC summons IGP Islamabad, Punjab

Justice Muhammad Asif hears Afghan woman Gull Seemas petition for recovery of her four sons

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has summoned the inspectors general of police (IGPs) of Islamabad and Punjab on a womans plea seeking recovery of her four sons. Justice Muhammad Asif, while hearing Afghan woman Gull Seemas petition for recovery of her sons, summoned the Islamabad and Punjab IGPs for April 16 to explain away their stance. The four brothers had gone missing in January 2024 and since then their mother has been moving from pillar to post to

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# Ethiopia-Pak relations given new dimensions: Amb. Jemal

Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan Jemal Beker Abdula gave an exclusive interview to CENTRELINE, Daily Islamabad POST and Diplomatic News Agency (DNA). Here are excerpts from his interview. Here is the Part-1 on of the interview

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

**1: Could you share insights into your journey as a diplomat/politician and how it led you to your current role as the Ethiopian ambassador to Pakistan?**

Let me say it with great humility that my deep passion for my country and diverse experiences has made my journey to becoming Ethiopia's Ambassador to Pakistan a fascinating and fulfilling one. It all began in 2003, fresh out of university, with a deep commitment to education. Those four years spent as an educator were truly formative, shaping my understanding of human potential and the power of knowledge. The classroom was my first diplomatic arena, where I honed my skills in communication, understanding diverse perspectives, and fostering growth. But the call to serve my country on a larger scale motivated me to the foreign services in 2010. In a first, I joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) after getting six months diplomatic training, initiating my journey as



an International Organization Officer that further launched me into a dynamic path where I had both the honor and privilege of serving in various capacities – from consular services and public diplomacy to the Director for Middle East. Each role presented unique challenges and opportunities, allowing me to develop a comprehensive understanding of



international relations. My dedication and proactive approach didn't go unnoticed. Soon, I was entrusted with the crucial task of establishing Ethiopia's Embassy in Canberra, Australia, as Minister Counsellor for Economic Diplomacy. Laying the groundwork for a new diplomatic mission was incredibly rewarding. It de-

manded strategic thinking, resourcefulness, and a proper skill for building bridges between nations. This experience stimulated a passion into me for pioneering new frontiers. So, when I was appointed State Minister of Innovation and Technology in 2018 upon returning from Australia, I got the chance to drive transformative change.

I along with my team spearheaded initiatives like technological solutions for agriculture, industry, office services, startups, and fintech, modernizing government operations and fostering a culture of innovation and creativity. Perhaps, this pioneering spirit led me to

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X-RAY



RADIOLOGICAL



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ECG



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OPD



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Neurology

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<b>National Days and Armed Forces Days</b>
<b>APRIL</b>
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



<b>Emergency</b>
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& Rescue Services.....4451122
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CAA.....9281092



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



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CDA.....9208301-04
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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

<b>Water Tank</b>
Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# NUML hosts ORIC meeting to strengthen academia-industry ties

The meeting concluded with valuable insights from all dignitaries on overcoming challenges and enhancing collaboration between academia, research institutions, and industry



**DNA**

ISLAMABAD : The 7th Steering Committee meeting of the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) was held at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Ibn-e-Rushd Block, on Wednesday. The meeting was chaired by Pro-Rector (Academics), Dr. Safer Awan, and brought together prominent stakeholders from academia and industry to explore ways of bridging the gap between academic research and industrial application. The meeting was attended by former Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting and senior media analyst Murtaza Solangi, a representative from the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), the Marketing Manager of Faisal Town, CEO Atom Global, and all Deans of NUML. In his opening remarks, Dr. Safer Awan appreciated the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for its initiative in establishing ORIC offices in universities, emphasizing that such platforms are crucial for fostering academic-industry linkages. He highlighted NUML's commitment to this cause and stressed the need for deeper collaboration, citing the potential of NUML students in developing impactful software solutions under expert faculty guidance. Dr. Atta Ullah, Assistant Professor and Director ITCN & BICON delivered a comprehensive presentation outlining NUML's progress across various domains. He noted a significant improvement in the university's performance on the HEC scorecard—rising from 40 to 68 points—and securing a place in the X-category (Top 11 institutions). He called for intensified efforts in the areas of innovation and commercialization, and showcased in-house software projects developed by NUML students. Speaking on the occasion, the Marketing Manager of Faisal Town emphasized the value of joint ventures, stating that industry partnerships could not only provide practical training but also open up employment opportunities for students. CEO Atom Global, Mr Waqas Ahmad identified the need to shift from a technology-centric to a function-centric approach, proposing platforms where students can gain practical exposure. He also pointed out current import restrictions on AI and quantum computing hardware, urging the creation of indigenous platforms with a "bring your own cup of coffee" culture to foster open, business-driven innovation. Veteran media personality Murtaza Solangi underscored the importance of aligning academic theory with real-world practice. "When the organic connection between theory and practice breaks, problems arise. Practice is the mother of theory," he noted. He highlighted the transformation in the media landscape due to technological advancements and expressed willingness to support student-industry linkages in the media sector. The meeting concluded with valuable insights from all dignitaries on overcoming challenges and enhancing collaboration between academia, research institutions, and industry. Participants agreed on the need for sustained dialogue, joint ventures, and practical platforms to foster innovation, employability, and real-world impact.

# ISSI hosts roundtable with chinese delegation

Highlights evolving global dynamics, strengthening CPEC

**MAHNOOR ANSAR**

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) Thursday, hosted wide-ranging Roundtable with Chinese delegation comprising senior officials from the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) and accomplished scholars from China's leading Universities. The participants from Pakistan side included eminent practitioners and academics. The discourse focused on the evolving global order, regional developments, the centrality of China in Pakistan's foreign policy, and ways to strengthen CPEC and the Pakistan-China 'All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership'. It also highlighted the importance of forging robust people-to-people ties through enhanced engagement with youth, media, and academia, and the optimal utilisation of social media platforms. The Chinese delegation was led by Mr. LEI Xin, Deputy Director General of the Information Center, IDCPC. He was accompanied by DING Hui, ZHU Caiyun, ZHOU Chenyu, Prof. Zhang Jiadong, HUANG Yunsong, ZHANG Jiegen, and MA Zheng—respected scholars and senior officials from Fudan University, Sichuan University, and Sun Yat-sen University. On the ISSI side, participants included Ambassador Zamir Akram, Ambassador Masood Khalid, Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi, Ambassador Babar Amin, Mr. S. M. Hali, Mr. Khalid Banuri, Dr. Hassan Daud Butt, Dr. Azhar Ahmad, and others. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI emphasized that the Pakistan-China relationship is a unique model in inter-state relations, founded on the principles of mutual respect, mutual trust, and unwavering support for each other's issues of core interest. He reaffirmed that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) remains a central pillar of this partnership, contributing significantly to Pakistan's economic development and regional connectivity. He underscored Pakistan's pride in China's peaceful rise under President Xi Jinping's visionary leadership and reiterated that Pakistan's strategic partnership with China enjoys national consensus and is vital for regional stability and prosperity. He expressed confidence in the continued strengthening of bilateral ties across all domains, including political, economic, security, and people-to-people exchanges. In his remarks, Mr. LEI Xin shared valuable insights on the role of the IDCPC's Information Center in supporting the CPC's external engagements. He extended a warm welcome to the newcomers and highlighted the crucial role the Planning Commission continued to play in shaping the country's future. "The Planning Commission serves as a key think tank of the nation," he said, adding it consistently provided the government with a vision and roadmap for a better future. With the completion of a major recruitment phase, Ahsan Iqbal said the Ministry now boasted what he described as "a strong and professional team," comprising individuals selected entirely on merit. "Every professional joining us today has been chosen based on ability — beyond recommendation and regardless of political affiliation," he stressed, reminding this was a team built on competence, which reflected our commitment to transparency and excellence. The minister said many talented young individuals have stepped forward to serve the nation through the Planning Commission and expressed confidence that their energy and ideas would be instrumental in driving progress. He pointed out that no other ministry in Pakistan currently has access to such a large and diverse human resource base, urging that this potential be channeled into tangible development outcomes. "This talent must be invested in productive and forward-thinking work," he said. However, he also acknowledged existing logistical hurdles, particularly the shortage of workspace due to the expanded team, saying with assurance "We are aware of the space constraints and are actively working on a solution." Secretary Planning Awaiz Manzoor Sumra echoed this commitment, saying, "We will do our utmost to provide every possible facility. The issue of space is being resolved as a priority." Ahsan Iqbal reaffirmed the Ministry's long-term development framework "URAAN PAKISTAN," which he described as a comprehensive roadmap for national economic progress. "The policy and action plans are already in place across sectors. Now, the focus must shift to implementation," he added. Stressing performance and accountability, the minister reminded the team that their work would be assessed against the goals outlined in URAAN PAKISTAN.—DNA

# CDA's cleanliness, plantation campaign on its peak during spring

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA)'s cleanliness and tree plantation campaign in the federal capital on its peak during the spring season to focus on planting as many trees as possible to enhance the green cover and ensure clean ambience. Talking to APP on Thursday, an official of CDA told that in line with the direction of Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, the campaign would ensure neat and clean environment to the residents of the metropolitan. He said that this year, CDA in collaboration with Ministry of Education and Ministry of Climate Change will plant one million trees across the city as part of the Spring Tree Plantation Campaign. He urged the residents, civil society, educational institutions, corporate sectors and the private sector not to only cooperate with CDA but actively participate in the Spring Tree Plantation Campaign 2025. The official informed that this species, fruit-bearing trees such as loquat, guava, figs, pomegranates, and other fruit plants will be planted. Similarly, indigenous species like mulberry, citrus, maple leaf, and other varieties will also be included in the campaign. Olive, rubber plants, willow, and other varieties are also part of the Spring Tree Plantation Campaign. He stressed that everyone should join hands and contribute actively to make the plantation campaign a success. Fatima Rasool, a resident of G-II, highly appreciated CDA's drive which would provide healthy atmosphere to the citizen in the federal capital—DNA

# Chairman SB for obtaining NOC for PHA-F residencia housing project

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works Nasir Mehmood Butt on Thursday visited the PHA-F Residencia Housing Project in Surizai here and emphasized the urgency of obtaining the remaining No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from KP-EPA and the KP Forestry Department to prevent any delays in the project. During his visit, the chairman expressed satisfaction with the progress on the project and stressed the need for transparency and ensuring the project's timely completion. Both PHA-F and KP-PHA reaffirmed their commitment to completing the project within five years. This joint initiative between the PHA Foundation (Federal) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Housing Department aimed to provide quality and affordable housing to the public. Earlier the chairman was briefed about the project's scope, development progress, and future strategy. The chairman was informed about the overall advancements, including the approval of the 8,500-kanal master plan by PHA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on October 3, 2023. Officials also shared that land disputes with the Talaband community had been resolved through mutual agreements, ensuring the allocation of 168 residential plots to affected residents. Technical evaluations, including topographic surveys, geotechnical analysis, electrical resistivity surveys, and seismic risk assessments, have already been completed. The Phase 1, Block A plan, which includes 2,510 residential units and a front commercial area, has been approved with an estimated cost of Rs. 43.7 billion. —DNA

# Gilani greets nation on constitution day

ISLAMABAD:Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday extended congratulations to the nation on Constitution Day, marking the adoption of the unanimous 1973 Constitution on April 10. In his message, the Chairman said the credit for this historic milestone goes to Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and his contemporaries, who laid the groundwork for a democratic framework that empowered the people of Pakistan. He described the 1973 Constitution as a landmark achievement and paid tribute to all political leaders who prioritized the nation's interests to establish a lasting democratic order. Gilani said that Constitution Day is a powerful reminder of the need for unity and collective efforts toward national development. He called upon all schools of thought to join hands in formulating a unified strategy for strengthening national cohesion and democratic values.—APP

# ITP finalizes special traffic plan for PSL

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has deployed over 300 officers and finalized a special traffic plan to ensure the smooth movement of Pakistan Super League (PSL) teams during the HBL PSL 2025 matches. A police spokesman told APP on Thursday that over 300 officers and personnel will be deployed on special duties to ensure uninterrupted traffic flow during team movements. As per the PSL 2025 schedule announced by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), matches will be played from February 8 to March 24, 2025, in Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan, with Rawalpindi hosting a significant number of matches, affecting Islamabad traffic due to close proximity. Due to the team movements, heightened security measures have been implemented at Expressway, Faizabad, Club Road, Murree Road, Faisal Avenue, 9th Avenue, and Srinagar Highway at various times of the day. ITP officials said traffic may slow down temporarily on Srinagar Highway and Expressway due to movement along designated routes. Citizens traveling to Blue Area have been advised to use the H-8 underpass, while those heading to sectors I and H should utilize Rawalpindi-Peshawar Road via the IGP check post and adjacent service roads. Murree Road from Serena Hotel to Faizabad via Rawal Dam will remain closed during team movements. Citizens should opt for service roads linked with Srinagar Highway. Traffic heading toward Red Zone and Serena Hotel should take Margalla Road, Express Chowk, Jinnah Avenue, Bari Imam and NADRA Chowk. Commuters can also use service roads from Islamabad Chowk to G-11 via Jinnah Avenue and Margalla Road. Heavy traffic will be prohibited from entering Islamabad during team arrivals and departures. Travelers from Bahara Kahu have been advised to use Korianwala Chowk and Srinagar Highway.—APP

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## Briefs

## PSDE 38 sets the stage for Pakistan's digital takeoff

## DNA

ISLAMABAD : As the digital era reshapes economies around the globe, Pakistan is envisioning a new growth trajectory built on innovation, inclusion, and digital empowerment. This vision takes center stage at the 38th Annual Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE), organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), under the bold theme "URAAAN Pakistan: Growth Through Digital Transformation." Scheduled from April 15 to 17, 2025, at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, the conference will bring together economists, technologists, policymakers, and global thought leaders to explore how Pakistan can harness digital transformation to unlock human potential, increase productivity, and set course toward a trillion-dollar economy by 2035.

Rooted in a vision of reform and innovation, the conference builds on the continued efforts of Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives. His leadership has been instrumental in championing digital inclusion, knowledge-driven development, and institutional reform—principles that now form the backbone of the URAAN framework.

Speaking on the urgency of the moment, Dr. Nadeem Javaid, Vice Chancellor of PIDE and President of PSDE, emphasized that Pakistan stands at a critical inflection point. "Once, the symbol of progress was the rising chimney of a factory. Today, it's a glowing screen in the palm of a dreamer. With just a smartphone, a data signal, and an idea, the world opens up—and so does Pakistan's future," he said. "Digital transformation is no longer a choice—it's the runway from where Pakistan must take off. URAAN Pakistan is our call to lift off—to imagine a country where a coder in Gilgit, an entrepreneur in Layyah, and a data scientist in Karachi aren't working in silos, but shaping the same digital destiny. At the 38th PSDE Conference, we are not just exploring digital tools. We are charting a bold new development story—one that begins with connectivity and ends with opportunity for all." Key highlights of PSDE 38 include keynote addresses from three globally renowned speakers—Nobel Laureates Michael Spence, Pier Paolo Saviotti, and Muhammad J. Sear—whose insights will lend international perspective to Pakistan's digital ambitions. Over three days, the event will host six high-level panel discussions featuring both national and international leaders, along with the presentation of 45 technical papers addressing critical areas of digital development, economics, and inclusive policy design. The conference is structured around three main objectives. First, accelerating digital transformation by exploring policies to digitize governance, enable smart infrastructure.—APP

## Al-Shifa Trust: A beacon of hope for those in need

These statistics are not just numbers; they represent the stories of men, women, and children in remote areas who were once shrouded in darkness and can now see the world. For many, this is nothing short of a miracle, he remarked

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a nation where millions experience preventable blindness, Al-Shifa Trust (AST) has emerged as a beacon of hope. It transforms lives through sight restoration and enables individuals to become productive members of society. Since its modest beginnings in 1991, AST has committed itself to a significant mission: to ensure that quality eye care is a right for everyone, not just a privilege for a select few, according to Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Rehmat Khan, President of AST. He added that today, the institution proudly stands among Pakistan's most impactful health-care organizations, respected and trusted globally. Speaking to the media, he stated that AST has treated 30 million people from the beginning and conducted over one million eye surgeries, with 80 percent of these procedures provided at no cost. He added that approximately one hundred thousand people visit AST OPDs monthly, and we conduct nearly 10,000 surgeries monthly. These statistics are not just numbers; they represent the stories of men, women, and children in remote areas who were once shrouded in darkness and can now see the world. For many, this is nothing short of a miracle, he remarked. AST president noted that deserving patients previously had to submit Zakat forms for free treatment. However, these conditions have long been waived to preserve the dignity and self-respect of low-income people. Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Rehmat Khan emphasized that AST has created a network of



state-of-the-art hospitals and mobile eye clinics that reach even the country's most isolated areas, driven by the goal of eradicating avoidable blindness. Whether a child in a rural village struggles to see the blackboard or an elderly farmer loses sight of cataracts, we ensure that no one is left behind, he underlined. He informed that our dedicated doctors, paramedics, and volunteers work tirelessly to provide

compassionate care, often traveling miles to deliver life-changing services to those in need. He stated that what sets AST apart is its firm commitment to accessibility and excellence. AST doesn't merely treat symptoms; it builds sustainable solutions. From advanced research initiatives to training the next generation of ophthalmologists, we invest in a future where blindness caused

by preventable diseases becomes a thing of the past, he said. "Our public awareness campaigns have also played a pivotal role in educating communities about eye health, early detection, and treatment options," he said. Maj. Gen. Rehmat Khan called upon overseas Pakistanis to get state-of-the-art eye treatment in Pakistan. AST services are as good as those provided by the leading

US or EU hospitals, and there is no difference between the free, paid, and semi-paid services at AST-run hospitals. He informed that nearly 80 percent of patients receive free treatment in all trust-run hospitals in Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Kohat, Sukkur, Muzaffarabad, and Gilgit while hospital in Lahore will start by 2027 and provide services to almost 20 million people.

## Chinese companies in Pak gone full steam ahead

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan is struggling to improve high-tech human capital development, one of key objective of Pakistan's 13th economic plan 2024-2029, China-aided skilled-based human resource programs are a silver lining equipping Pakistani youth with different expertise. Most of the Chinese companies working on CPEC and Non-CPEC projects have gone full steam ahead by producing skilful workforce through their technical and vocational institutes as well human capacity building

initiatives in the length and breadth of Pakistan. With an investment of 26 million yuan (3.6 million U.S. dollars), the Huaneng Pakistan Vocational and Technical College established by Sahiwal coal-fired power plant, a flagship project of CPEC in eastern Sahiwal district of Pakistan, has empowered over 6,000 local youth by enhancing their employment skills through collaborative training with local universities, practical workshops, significantly contributing to workforce development. Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. Among the nearly 800 Pakistani employees working at the power station, there are more than

200 engineers who received modern technical trainings in China. Currently, 26 of them have moved to the vital positions of management, production, and others. The Pak-China Technical & Vocational Institute (PCTVI) in Gwadar built with Chinese grant under CPEC framework, has also been providing technical and vocational trainings to local youth free of cost. Recently it enrolled 93 students along with 10 specialized diploma programs. Designed to meet the needs of the region's rapidly growing high-tech industries, the institute offers a diverse range of skill-based

training courses, including Maritime & Port Management, Software Technology, Tourism Management, E-Commerce, Mechatronics, Chinese and English Language, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Construction Engineering, and Overhead Crane Operation. According to PCTVI Executive Director Prof. Dr. Manzoor Syed, the institute aims to equip the local population with the skills necessary to support Gwadar's economic growth, particularly as the city continues to develop through major industrial projects such as the Gwadar Port Free Zone and Export Processing Zone.

## Pak, Japan agree to deepen IT, digital cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Akamatsu Shuetsu discussed enhancing bilateral cooperation in information technology, digital transformation, and innovation on Thursday. In a meeting held here, the minister said the government's commitment to fostering digital growth and embracing emerging technologies is in line with the Prime Minister's vision of a "Digital Pakistan." Both sides agreed to strengthen collaboration in the technology and digital economy sectors, focusing on benefiting from Japan's expertise in digital transformation. The discussion also centered on human resource development, particularly in areas like artificial intelligence (AI), education, skills training, and employment for Pakistani youth. The two parties underscored the importance of launching joint initiatives aimed at building a skilled workforce and encouraging partnerships in education, research, and advanced technologies. Shaza Fatima and Ambassador Akamatsu also explored the possibility of introducing training programs in ICT, AI, and digital governance.—APP

## COMSTECH hosts hybrid workshop

## DNA

ISLAMABAD : COMSTECH, in collaboration with the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD), hosted an international hybrid workshop titled "Drug Discovery and Development in the Modern Era" at its Secretariat in Islamabad. The event brought together leading experts in the field of drug discovery and structural biology, including Prof. Dr. Paul Denny and Prof. Dr. Ehmke Pohl from Durham University,

UK. The workshop focused on cutting-edge strategies in drug discovery for neglected tropical diseases, particularly leishmaniasis, and examined the role of structural biology and artificial intelligence (AI) in modern therapeutic development. Prof. Denny, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology and the UK Higher Education Academy, shared insights into the global burden of leishmaniasis, now endemic in over 90 countries across four continents. He discussed the limitations of current treatments and emphasized the need for cross-border, inter-

disciplinary collaboration to develop effective and affordable alternatives. Prof. Dr. Ehmke Pohl, Director of the Biophysical Sciences Institute and Co-Director of the EPSRC MoSmed CDT at Durham University, highlighted recent advancements in AI-driven protein structure prediction and their implications for drug target identification. While acknowledging the promise of AI technologies in accelerating drug discovery, he stressed the continued necessity of experimental validation and laboratory research.

## China views pursuit of common prosperity as a key principle

## MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD : At a seminar hosted by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) titled "Analyzing China's Approach to 'Peace through Development' and the 'World's Response,'" Professor Gao Jian, a Senior Expert and Secretary General of Shanghai Academy of Global Governance and Area Studies at Shanghai International Studies University, provided an in-depth analysis of China's modernization model. Exploring its historical evolution, economic impact, and influence on the global order he noted that modernization narratives have historically been West-centric, shaped by European industrialization. However, China has emerged as a major global player, challenging traditional Western

frameworks and offers an alternative modernization model rooted in economic growth, political stability, and cultural heritage. Tracing China's modernization efforts back to the 19th century, Professor Gao explained how Chinese intellectuals recognized modernization as essential for national survival, leading to various reform attempts. The turning point came in 1979, when Deng Xiaoping introduced social and economic reforms under the Open-Door Policy, setting China on its rapid trajectory of economic growth. Over the past four decades, China has become the world's second-largest economy, and has surpassed USA in certain metrics. Professor Gao attributed this success to China's strategic economic policies, continuous learning, and prioritization of

stability and prosperity, underlining that despite global discussions on economic decoupling and de-risking, China remains committed to further opening its economy to the world. Addressing the core theme of peace through development, Professor Gao emphasized that economic growth is central to modernization, while peace remains a fundamental aspiration in international relations. He argued that a successful modernization strategy, like China's, can contribute to global stability by fostering interdependence and cooperation. Professor Gao also underscored that peace and development cannot be separated. China upholds "common prosperity" as not only a domestic principle but also an international value. "For lasting peace, it is essential to consider the interests of

all countries, irrespective of their size and status. Every nation should have access to economic development, which is why Chinese modernization focuses on sharing and opening doors wider", he noted. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, in his remarks on the occasion, highlighted the need for inclusive economic growth and enhanced global engagement, emphasizing Pakistan's commitment to peaceful development and mutual prosperity. He credited China's rise as the world's largest trading nation and its success in lifting 800 million people out of poverty to policies focused on building economic cooperation. He also called for enhanced cooperation between nations for resolving international conflicts through peaceful dialogue, global governance reforms, multilateralism.

## Magsi, Huawei CEO Ray discuss avenues of coop in digital transformation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magsi, held a meeting today with Huawei's Deputy CEO, Ray Yu, to discuss avenues of cooperation in the field of digital transformation. During the meeting, Ray Yu expressed Huawei's keen interest in partnering with the Government of Pakistan to accelerate digital transformation across various sectors. The minister appreciated Huawei's contributions, stating, "Huawei and other Chinese companies have played a pivotal role in strengthening Pakistan's IT infrastructure." He further emphasized that both the public and private sectors are committed to transforming Pakistan into a regional technology hub. "The integration of modern technology will significantly enhance productivity in both agriculture and industry," the minister added. Highlighting China's expertise, the minister noted, "China's experience in developing a robust digital economy serves as a guiding light for Pakistan's own digital journey.—APP

## Today marks victory of people

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engineer Amir Muqam Thursday lauded Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) leaders for the completion of three years of the approval of the no-confidence motion. He said, "Today is the day of victory of the people, the constitution and the parliament". April 10 is the day of victory of former prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's political vision, patience and loyalty to the country and nation. It was a day when the political struggle of the leadership of PDM and parties including PML-N, the PPP, and the JUI (F) had won and in three years, the country had been saved from the darkness of default and brought back to the light of development. In the four years of PTI's rule, Economic growth turned negative while during the Nawaz Sharif era, the country was growing at a rate of more than 6 percent. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Bilawal Bhutto, Maulana Fazlur Rehman and all PDM leaders played a historic role in the country's growth, development and progress.—APP



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## US trade war against China

INSTEAD of retaliating, China should celebrate: US President Donald Trump's economic and tariff plans are making China great again. What Trump called "Liberation Day" – as he announced global import tariffs ranging from 10 per cent to as much as 34 per cent for China, 46 per cent for Vietnam and 49 per cent for Cambodia – House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries denounced as "recession day". Indeed, economists expect Trump's tariffs to accelerate inflation and dampen US economic growth, causing stagflation as prices remain painfully high. The stock market reacted sharply the day after the announcement, with trillions of dollars wiped out. Since then, the US' trade war with China has only escalated. After China raised its levies on US imports to 84 per cent in response to further tariff increases by the US, Trump raised the US tariff rate on China to 125 per cent and instituted a 90-day pause on steep "reciprocal" tariffs on non-retaliating countries such as Switzerland. The 10 per cent baseline tariff on all US imports stands. The US stock market remained volatile to the tit-for-tat tariff war between the two. This dramatic sell-off was driven by investor fears over the potential economic impact of the tariffs, which are expected to also disrupt global supply chains. As companies scramble to restructure their supply chains to mitigate the impact, American consumers rushed to buy cars and other goods before the new tariffs took effect. Dealerships reported a surge in sales, particularly for vehicles from manufacturers like Honda and Toyota. This rush highlighted the more immediate economic disruptions caused by Trump's trade policies. Since his first term, Trump has viewed the US trade relationship with China as unfair, and launched tariffs and export controls to address this perceived imbalance. Among the nations subject to the reciprocal tariffs announced on April 2, Trump singled out China as a major target. Trump also signed an executive order to eliminate the "de minimis" duty exemption for low-value parcels from China, effective from May 2. This means Chinese companies such as Shein and Temu will no longer be able to ship their low-value packages to the United States free of customs duties – the impact will be significant as Chinese companies ship over 1 million packages daily to the US. While Trump's tariffs and the elimination of the de minimis rule seem to harm China's economy, they also weaken the US position in global trade. Raising tariffs on so many countries across the globe, including US allies, only pushes them to strengthen their trade relationships. China's export-driven economy is especially sensitive to changes in international trade and Trump's tariffs are expected to strain China's economic growth. But China can leverage its membership in Brics – an alliance initially comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and recently expanded to include several other economies – and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a 15-country free-trade agreement, to boost trade with other nations. Trump may have believed that raising tariffs on Chinese imports would force China to lower its import tariffs to appease the US, but this did not happen. Instead, China has retaliated.

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## Le Pen ready to divide France

HOW to punish a corrupt politician while preventing democracy from being tarnished? And how to prevent an opportunist political party from instilling doubt in the justice system of a country, US-style? This is the test that is facing France due to the affair of its rising populist politician Marine Le Pen, who was found guilty of diverting EU funds to pay for her party's political staff, falsely claiming that they were working as assistants to its deputies in the European Parliament. Last week's court ruling in Paris led to the sentencing of Le Pen and 24 of her associates belonging to the National Rally party with a myriad of fines, prison terms and bans from campaigning, a ruling that landed like a bombshell in French political life. It was only normal for the party's leader and her allies to attack the ruling. It is in the far-right populist playbook everywhere in the democratic Western world to claim to be the victim of a political witch hunt. Some believe that Le Pen's sentence – she was barred from running for public office for five years, which means sitting on the sidelines in the 2027 French presidential election, which she stood a good chance of winning – was harsh and others believe it was appropriate. Nowhere has this divide been more visible – and likely to spell more headaches for France as a country – than in the slogans at Sunday's demonstration organized in support of Le Pen. It was normal that Le Pen, though convicted by a court of law, would evoke decades of fighting injustice and state that she plans to continue to fight like her father, Jean-Marie, did before her. But symbolism could not be discarded when thousands of her supporters gathered in central Paris, near the golden dome of Les Invalides and the tomb of Napoleon. They tried to claim her martyrdom through what was billed as a protest, but one could not dismiss that it was mainly electioneering and a campaign rally. The choice of Les Invalides for the location of the demonstration pointed to a revolution in the making, or at least to the revolutionary mood among National Rally supporters. Louis XIV ordered the building of Les Invalides in recognition of the sacrifices made by the soldiers who fought in his wars. The location reflects some foundational periods in French history. It was the place from which a mob stormed the Bastille prison, using firearms and cannon they had looted from the Hotel des Invalides, during the French Revolution. Chants heard at the protest referred to Le Pen and her supporters' defiance. They voiced opposition to the "politically motivated" verdict, adding "Marine for president" and "they won't steal 2027 from us." This was reminiscent of the populist defiance of Trumpism and was aimed squarely at the French institutions as a whole. Jordan Bardella, Le Pen's 29-year-old protege, made a speech in which he accused France's judges of trying to silence the opposition and claimed that the date of the verdict was a dark day for France. In fact, it was the day of the protest that was a dark day for France, as more poignant than the allegations were the shirts bearing the slogan "Je suis Marine" (I am Marine) or comparing Le Pen's situation to that of US President Donald Trump, who, despite being found liable for civil fraud, was able to run for election. So, if Trump could run, why not Le Pen, they asked.

# Economic recovery and government's measures

Atif Ikram Sheikh



This involves raising taxes and cutting unnecessary expenditures. Additionally, the government's actions have bolstered foreign exchange reserves by boosting exports and reducing imports. To control the prices of essential commodities, the government has provided subsidies and cracked down on hoarding. Efforts to improve the supply chain have enhanced the availability of goods, leading to lower prices. Furthermore, significant steps have been taken to promote investment, including policies to create a conducive business environment by reducing taxes, removing bureaucratic hurdles, and lowering interest rates

SINCE coming to power, the government has taken several key steps to put the country's economy back on track. These measures aim to bring economic stability, control inflation, and promote investment. The government signed a new loan program with the IMF to address the financial crisis. Under this agreement, economic reforms have been implemented, including budgetary adjustments to reduce spending and increase revenue. This involves raising taxes and cutting unnecessary expenditures. Additionally, the government's actions have bolstered foreign exchange reserves by boosting exports and reducing imports. To control the prices of essential commodities, the government has provided subsidies and cracked down on hoarding. Efforts to improve the supply chain have enhanced the availability of goods, leading to lower prices. Furthermore, significant steps have been taken to promote investment, including policies to create a conducive business environment by reducing taxes, removing bureaucratic hurdles, and lowering interest rates. To improve Pakistan's economic condition, a comprehensive and systematic strategy is required to ensure stability, growth, and public welfare. Key economic challenges include external debt, low exports, high imports, corruption, a weak tax system, and an energy crisis. The following steps are essential to addressing these issues:

1. Expanding the Tax Base: Pakistan has a low number of taxpayers. Bringing the informal economy into the formal sector is necessary to widen the tax net. Enforcing strict laws and ensuring transparency will increase public confidence and improve tax compliance.
2. Industrial Production and Exports: The industrial sector requires further promotion, with a focus on textiles, agriculture, and in-

formation technology. Producing high-quality goods that meet international standards will enhance exports. Additionally, Pakistan should explore new markets, particularly in Africa, Central Asia, and Europe, by mobilizing trade missions and implementing an incentive-based system.

3. Reducing Import Dependence: Promoting local industries will reduce reliance on imports and create employment opportunities. Strengthening domestic manufacturing can help balance trade. The government should support small and medium-sized enterprises through financial incentives, tax exemptions, and easy access to loans.
4. Reforming the Energy Sector: Addressing the energy crisis requires a focus on renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower. Reducing transmission losses and implementing a comprehensive strategy with private-sector support can help minimize energy waste and theft.
5. Managing External Debt: Long-term planning for debt repayment is crucial to reducing economic pressure. Improving debt management by replacing high-interest loans with low-interest alternatives can ease the burden. Encouraging remittances through legal channels and boosting the tourism sector can also increase foreign exchange reserves, reducing dependence on external borrowing.
6. Privatization for Economic Efficiency: The private sector is generally more efficient and profitable. Privatization of government institutions can reduce state expenditure and attract foreign investment, strengthening foreign exchange reserves. However, transparency, accountability, and public interest must be prioritized to ensure a positive impact.
7. Combating Corruption and Terrorism: Strengthening transparency and accountability systems is essential to eradicating corruption. Strict laws and their effective implementation under the rule of law are necessary for a corruption-free Pakistan. At the same time, combating terrorism is also crucial for Pakistan's economic stability and growth. Terrorism has historically disrupted key sectors like tourism, foreign investment, and trade, while also straining public resources. Efforts like the

National Action Plan, which focuses on counter-terrorism and socio-economic reforms, are steps in the right direction. However, a holistic approach involving governance, education, and community engagement is essential to ensure long-term progress.

8. Enhancing Education and Vocational Training: Economic development requires an improved education system, with a particular focus on technical and vocational training. Skill-development programs should be introduced to enhance youth employability, directly benefiting the economy. Technical education equips students with practical skills for industries, businesses, and other sectors.
9. Advancing Agricultural Development: Increasing agricultural production through modern techniques can boost exports. The agricultural sector is a key pillar of the economy, and innovation in this field can help Pakistan achieve its development goals. Expanding irrigation resources and converting uncultivated land into productive farmland are crucial steps.
10. Ensuring Political Stability: Investor confidence is closely tied to political stability. A stable political environment, adherence to the rule of law, and public awareness of rights and responsibilities are fundamental for economic progress, social justice, and national security.
11. Implementing Long-Term Economic Policies: Sustainable economic growth requires well-planned long-term policies and their consistent implementation. Along with economic reforms, poverty alleviation measures should be undertaken, including improvements in healthcare and education to enhance public welfare.

A comprehensive and integrated strategy is necessary to improve Pakistan's economic condition. Key focus areas include tax reforms, export growth, import reduction, energy sector improvements, debt management, corruption eradication, education and skill development, agricultural expansion, political stability, and public welfare measures. The successful implementation of these steps can lead Pakistan toward economic recovery and long-term development.

– **The writer is the President, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry**

# Trump's 90-day tariff pause: A strategic recalibration?

Qamar Bashir



The economic impact of tariffs also affects the dollar's value. When the U.S. imposes tariffs on imports, it increases the cost of foreign goods, often pushing the dollar higher as demand rises. Conversely, retaliatory tariffs on American exports can weaken the dollar, as foreign buyers shift away from US goods. Striking the right balance is tricky...

IN a surprising and dramatic policy reversal, President Donald Trump has announced a 90-day pause on his sweeping new tariffs for nearly every trading partner—except China. The move, announced just hours after the tariffs went into effect, sent markets soaring, calmed international anxiety, and opened a temporary window for diplomatic negotiations. But behind the scenes, this abrupt about-face reveals a complex interplay of economic realities, political pressures, and global trade dynamics that forced the president to back down from a central tenet of his economic ideology. The president's post on Truth Social—"a 90 DAY PAUSE"—marked a decisive pivot. While car, steel, and aluminum tariffs remain intact, the suspension of broader trade taxes sent the S&P 500 soaring over 9% in a single day, its best performance since the 2008 financial recovery. Tech stocks, airlines, and auto manufacturers all rallied sharply. Even companies still burdened by tariffs, like Ford and GM, saw significant gains. In justifying his reversal, Trump said he acted on "instinct" and felt that markets and citizens alike were getting "yippy" and "a little bit afraid." His folksy language barely concealed the broader truth: the markets were plummeting, and with them, investor confidence in the administration's economic management. The president's change of course was likely motivated by a convergence of several powerful factors. The bond market had shown signs of panic, signaling fears of a looming recession. Meanwhile, the dollar wobbled against global currencies, further stoking anxiety. Perhaps most compellingly, spontaneous demonstrations against the tariffs erupted across the country—from New York to San Francisco—as thousands of Americans protested what they saw as an unjustified and reckless trade war that risked jobs, raised prices, and destabilized global partnerships. Economists and business leaders had warned for weeks that a prolonged tariff war would increase production costs, especially in key industries reliant on imported raw materials and components. American companies—particularly small- and medium-sized manufacturers—began sounding the alarm, saying they could not pivot supply chains overnight. Even powerful corporate allies of Trump began voicing discontent. The president's isolation of China in this tariff pause also

underscores the deep geopolitical rivalry between the two economic superpowers. The decision to raise tariffs on all Chinese imports to 125% followed Beijing's retaliatory move of increasing levies on U.S. goods to 84%. Both sides have now entered a tit-for-tat escalation, further straining relations already tested by restrictions on technology firms, export bans, and accusations of economic espionage. China's Ministry of Commerce responded harshly, placing export controls on 12 American companies and designating six more as "unreliable entities"—effectively banning them from Chinese markets. Trump's team insists that the tariff approach is working, pointing to concessions from countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, and Ecuador, which have signaled willingness to reduce trade barriers and open markets to American products. Still, there is a growing debate over whether tariffs are the right mechanism to restore American industrial dominance. While the idea is to incentivize domestic production, there are challenges. For instance, the U.S. auto industry has struggled with quality and innovation, leading many consumers to prefer foreign-made vehicles known for their durability, fuel efficiency, and after-sales service. If the administration hopes to make tariffs a long-term policy tool, American industries will need to dramatically improve their competitiveness, not just rely on protectionism. Trade barriers alone cannot revive domestic manufacturing unless paired with major investments in innovation, training, and infrastructure. History shows that protectionism, while politically appealing, can often stifle innovation by reducing competition. In today's fast-paced global economy, the U.S. must invest in research and development, automation, and green technologies if it wants to lead again. The economic impact of tariffs also affects the dollar's value. When the U.S. imposes tariffs on imports, it increases the cost of foreign goods, often pushing the dollar higher as demand rises. Conversely, retaliatory tariffs on American exports can weaken the dollar, as foreign buyers shift away from U.S. goods. Striking the right balance is tricky, and Trump's pause might be seen as an effort to stabilize currency markets amid growing global uncertainty. Beyond economics, international reaction has played

a significant role in shaping the administration's response. Canada, a historically close ally, reacted with rare public fury. As one of the U.S.'s largest trading partners, Canada's retaliatory measures and national outrage rattled policymakers. The idea that America's most dependable neighbors were being punished indiscriminately undermined Trump's case for fair trade and weakened U.S. leadership on the world stage. The pause also raises deeper concerns about governance. During a congressional hearing on Wednesday, the president's trade representative, Jamieson Greer, was caught off guard by the announcement. Lawmakers expressed frustration, with Rep. Steven Horsford of Nevada shouting, "This is amateur hour." The last-minute decision, made without consulting key officials or allies, raises questions about how trade policy is being formulated and whether it reflects a coherent long-term strategy or moment-to-moment reactions. Meanwhile, Trump's broader policy direction continues to raise alarms. On the same day as the tariff pause, he reaffirmed plans to revive fossil fuel extraction and reopen coal mines, reversing years of environmental progress. Critics warn that such policies could trigger a global race toward dirty energy production, exacerbating climate change and harming public health. In light of these developments, it would be prudent for the administration to extend the spirit of the 90-day tariff pause to its energy agenda as well. Just as tariffs deserve reevaluation, so too does America's environmental policy. Rethinking coal and fossil fuel revival with the same urgency and pragmatism could prevent long-term damage to the planet and bolster America's standing as a responsible global leader. In the end, Trump's 90-day pause on tariffs is both a concession and an opportunity. It reflects the limits of unilateralism in a globally connected world and offers a chance to recalibrate. The U.S. can use this moment not only to renegotiate fairer trade deals but also to reinvest in its own industrial base, green technology, and diplomatic alliances. Whether this pause leads to a sustainable strategy—or merely delays another storm—remains to be seen.



## Briefs

Imposition  
of US tariffs  
can have...

FROM PAGE 01  
will rise to the occasion and restore hope in peace and justice through meaningful action. He said we believe that in the lead-up to the Conference, the ceasefire must be fully implemented; the blockade on Gaza must be lifted; humanitarian access must be guaranteed; and civilians and humanitarian personnel must be protected. The Spokesperson said any attempt to forcibly displace Palestinians or annex their land must be unequivocally rejected and effectively prevented.

Mufti  
Usmani calls  
for peaceful..

FROM PAGE 01  
Miscreants attacked a restaurant in Mirpurkhas and set it on fire lateon Tuesday night, officials said on Wednesday. In Karachi, the Gadap City police said that over 100 activists of a religious party attempted to ransack another outlet of the fast-food chain on M-9 motorway on Wednesday evening, but the police thwarted their plan. Ten activists of the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan were arrested on Tuesday evening after a mob ransacked an outlet of an international fast-food chain Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in Karachis DHA. KFC notably is not included in the boycott list of the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

SC  
questions  
lack of ...

FROM PAGE 01  
Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail said such disputes are frequently seen in Quetta Cantt. Justice Mazhar noted that shopping malls are not declared restricted zones, adding that Karachi has six to seven Cantonment areas, but major roads there are not marked as restricted. Justice Mandokhail shared a personal incident where he was denied entry into a Cantonment due to not having a permit. He questioned the broad interpretation of Defence of Pakistan, saying even the Supreme Court and parliament could fall under it. He added that although the Army Act is a valid law, since the insertion of Article 10-A in the Constitution (which ensures the right to a fair trial), earlier practices need to be reassessed.

IHC  
summons  
IGP...

FROM PAGE 01  
find a clue to their whereabouts. We can realise (the gravity of the situation) only if it happens to any of us. You evade responsibility by simply expressing ignorance of any missing persons whereabouts, a visibly perturbed judge remarked (while addressing policemen). He told the policemen present in court that when he was in Balochistan, the same excuses were thrown about and later the missing person appeared in that very province. How long this situation will persist. The kin of a missing person goes through untold ordeal. The mother of the four missing brothers comes to court every now and then.

Afghan  
refugees...

FROM PAGE 01  
It is pertinent to mention here that the government had given them a deadline to leave the country by March 31. The minister emphasised that this deadline has expired and there will be no further extension in this regard. One-document regime will be fully implemented, requiring valid visas and passports to enter Pakistan, the minister added. He said Afghan citizens who are being repatriated can visit, work, and stay in Pakistan under the one-document regime policy, provided they have valid visas and passports.



ISLAMABAD: Peshawar Zalmi, Islamabad United, Karachi Kings, Lahore Qalandars, Multan Sultans and Quetta Gladiators captains posing with Pakistan Super League-X, trophy after the press conference, at a local hotel. – DNA Photo by Shahid Qureshi

HBL PSL X begins  
today in Rawalpindi

*The winner will be awarded USD 500,000, while the runners-up team will take with them USD 200,000 after the 18 May final*

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: The HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) is all set to welcome its tenth edition – HBL PSL X, when defending champions Islamabad United take on Lahore Qalandars at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday night. A glittering opening ceremony before the start of play on Friday will mark the beginning of this historic edition. HBL PSL X is slated to run from 11 April to 18 May with night matches starting at 8pm PKT. The 34-match tournament comprises of three-double headers scheduled on 12 April, 1 and 10 May, while the remaining fixtures will be single headers taking place across Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi. The three afternoon games will begin at 4pm PKT. The six teams will also be locking horns to take away the USD 500,000 prize money set for the winners, while the runners-up team will be awarded USD 200,000. The HBL PSL X Draft, which took place on 13 January, gave the six franchises an opportunity to refurbish their squads ahead of the historic edition. The newly renovated Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore is set to play

host to 13 HBL PSL X matches including Qualifier, Eliminator and the 18 May final. The Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium will host 11 matches, while Multan Cricket Stadium and National Bank Stadium will witness five HBL PSL X matches each this season. Babar Azam, the leading run-scorer in the HBL PSL with 3,504 runs to his name, will be leading the HBL PSL 2017 winners Peshawar Zalmi. Australia's David Warner becomes the fourth overseas player to lead the 2020 champions Karachi Kings after Ravi Bopara, Kumar Sangakkara and Eoin Morgan. Mohammad Rizwan, who led Multan Sultans to glory in the 2021 edition in Abu Dhabi, will continue to reign as Sultans skipper having done so 48 times in the previous four HBL PSL editions. Quettas Saud Shakeel will take the leadership duties of the Gladiators from Rilee Rossouw. Shadab Khan, who has led Islamabad United in 55 HBL PSL matches so far, has been entrusted leadership duties for HBL PSL X as well, while Shaheen Shah Afridi, the only captain to have won consecutive HBL PSL titles will be in charge of the Lahore Qalandars. In HBL PSL 2024, Islamabad United emerged winners bagging the title for third time, while Multan Sultans ended up as

runners-up for the third consecutive time. Pre-tournament Press conference  
**Babar Azam, captain Peshawar Zalmi:** This season we are focusing on what we missed out in the last couple of editions and not to repeat the same mistakes. We have strengthened our core on both bowling and batting front so that we don't struggle at any stage of the game. We will look to field XIs according to the conditions on the four venues. I think all the six teams are strong making the HBL PSL X highly competitive. Hasan Ali, vice-captain Karachi Kings:  
Karachi Kings have changed their combination to bring firepower to their batting and in HBL PSL X we intend to play with aggression early on as powerplay is the key to increasing your chances of winning. The team environment has been great over the last few days and we will try to play entertaining cricket wherever we go.  
**Mohammad Rizwan, captain Multan Sultans:** The HBL PSL X has become a huge brand that every family in the country has supporters of different teams, while all the fans wait for this sporting spectacle whole year. Whoever wins the tournament will be a success for this country as the league has entered the 10th edition.

Saud Shakeel, captain Quetta Gladiators: The last few seasons haven't been good for Quetta and like all other teams we have tried our best to assemble a quality squad. We look forward to playing well and entertaining the fans this time around. Our squad looks well balanced and it will be exciting to lead Quetta Gladiators this season. Shadab Khan, captain Islamabad United: Islamabad United is excited to play five home games at the Rawalpindi Stadium this season and we look forward to performing well in front of our fans. You will get to see a different Islamabad United outfit this season. Being the defending champions, we will look to continue the consistent performances this season as well and expand our trophy cabinet. **Shaheen Shah Afridi, captain Lahore Qalandars:** One of the key goals for Lahore Qalandars throughout the HBL PSL has been developing and producing quality players and we will stick to that goal in the 10th edition of the league as well. I am highly excited for the young players in the Lahore Qalandars squad and hopefully they will deliver well during this season. I am enjoying the leadership duties for Lahore Qalandars and looking forward to celebrate the HBL PSL throughout the next few weeks.

BD humble Thailand  
in Womens World  
Cup Qualifier

Bangladesh replace hosts Pakistan at the top of the standings

LAHORE: Skipper Nigar Sultanas brisk century, followed by five-wicket hauls by Fahima Khatun and Jannatul Ferdus, propelled Bangladesh to a resounding 178-run victory over Thailand in the third match of the ICC Womens Cricket World Cup Qualifier here at the Lahore City Cricket Association Ground on Thursday. Thailand captain Naruamol Chaiwais decision to bowl first backfired as Bangladesh registered a massive total of 271/3 in their allotted 50 overs, courtesy of a combined effort by their batting unit. The Asian side, however, had a contrasting start to their innings as they lost their opener Ishma Tanjim (eight) in the fourth over with just 15 runs on the board. Following the early hiccup, Sharmin Akhter joined Fargana Haque in the middle and together

they launched an astounding recovery. The duo added an anchoring 104-run partnership which eventually culminated with the openers dismissal in the 28th over. Haque made 53 off 82 deliveries, laced with four boundaries. Akhter was then joined for a match-defining 152-run partnership for the third wicket with centurion Sultana, who perished on the final delivery of the innings. Akhter remained unbeaten on 94 off 126 deliveries with the help of 11 fours, while Sultana top-scored with 101 off just 80 balls, studded with 15 fours and a six. For Thailand, Phannita Maya, Thipatcha Putthawong and Onnichia Kamchomphu made one scalp apiece. Chasing a daunting 272-run target, Thailand were bowled out for a meagre 93 in 28.5 overs and thus succumbed to a gruelling 178-run defeat in their campaign opener. Openers Nattaya Boochatham and Chanida Sutthiruang gave Thailand a solid start by putting together 38 runs for the first wicket before Khatun dismissed the latter. Sutthiruang remained the top-scorer for Thailand with a 26-ball 22, comprised of four boundaries. Her dismissal sparked an astounding collapse which saw Thailand lose their remaining nine wickets for just 55 runs. Besides Sutthiruang, Boochatham (17) and skipper Chaiwai (15) were the other two batters to amass double digits, while the rest failed completely against the ruthless duo of Khatun and Ferdus. – DNA

BBL and WBBL  
drafts moved to  
mid June 2025

MELBOURNE: The BBL and WBBL drafts have been brought forward to mid-June to ensure greater clarity for both competitions while allowing the men's tournament to have the first pick of leading overseas players. Traditionally held in late August or early September, this year's drafts will take place on June 19, falling between the World Test Championship final and the start of the men's tour of the West Indies. Brisbane Heat will have the first pick in the BBL draft, determined by a weighted lottery based on last season's finishing positions, while Sydney Sixers will enjoy the same advantage in the WBBL. Defending BBL champions, Hobart Hurricanes, will pick fifth, and WBBL holders, Melbourne Renegades, will choose seventh. Draft picks can be traded. A significant challenge for the BBL is securing top overseas players who can remain for the entire tournament, especially with rival leagues like SA20 and ILT20 also taking place in January. – Agencies

## Ethiopia-Pak relations given new dimensions: Amb. Jemal

FROM PAGE 01

become Ethiopia's First Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2020. Once again, I found myself building something new, strengthening ties, and fostering collaboration between the two nations. And now, I have the immense honor of serving as the first Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan—a nation I deeply admire, respect and love. For the last two and half years, I have been striving to cultivate a strong and long lasting partnership between our two countries, working day in and day out to foster understanding and establish cooperation. You could say, I have become something of an expert at establishing new missions, forging fresh connections and pioneering innovative approaches. I really thrive on the challenge of building something meaningful and lasting. And, now I am incredibly excited to embark on this new chapter in Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkmenistan where I have presented my credentials as a non-resident Ambassador of Ethiopia in December 2024, whereas the same honor I had in the Republic of Tajikistan in January 2025.

**2: How would you describe the historical and current state of diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Pakistan?**

Historically, the FDR Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan are the two brotherly nations that share a lot of commonality. Ethiopia, the land of revered figures like Hazrat Bilal Habeshi and King Nejashei, holds a special place in Islamic history that fosters the affinity between the two countries. Bound by a deep sense of brotherhood, rooted in historical, cultural and religious connections, these two nations have developed a bond of mutual respect and understanding since establishing the formal diplomatic ties in 1958.

This connection went one step further with landmark visit of President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Ethiopia in 1972, which paved the way for enhanced collaboration and the establishment of Pakistan's Embassy in Addis Ababa a year later. Over the decades, Ethiopia and Pakistan have consistently demonstrated their commitment to mutual support on the world stage. They have stood shoulder-to-shoulder in international forums, championing shared interests and pursuing collaborative initiatives that uplift their people and contribute to

global well-being. The dawn of a new era in Ethiopian foreign policy, ushered in by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed in 2018, brought renewed focus to the relationship with Pakistan. Recognizing Pakistan's strategic significance, its unwavering support during challenging times, and its potential as a valuable partner, Ethiopia has actively sought to deepen ties. Pakistan, in turn, has long recognized Ethiopia's vital role in the Horn of Africa and African continent, a region rich in economic promise and natural resources. This recognition is embodied in Pakistan's "Look and Engage Africa Initiative," which identifies Ethiopia as a key gateway to the African continent. Today, the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Pakistan is flourishing. The opening of the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad is a manifestation of this deepening bond and has facilitated increased trade, investment, and people-to-people exchanges. The Ethiopian Airlines now connects Karachi and Addis Ababa with four weekly flights, fostering greater connectivity and facilitating business and tourism. Furthermore, high-level delegations from both countries have exchanged visits, culminating in the signing of multiple Memoranda of Understanding in diverse sectors like trade, investment, science and technology. These agreements pave the way for enhanced cooperation and shared prosperity. As the world undergoes rapid transformation, Ethiopia and Pakistan are all set to elevate their relationship to a strategic partnership. By building on their historical ties and shared values, they have the potential to bolster bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation for the mutual benefit of their people and the international community.

**3. What are the key areas where Ethiopia and Pakistan are collaborating economically? Are there untapped sectors with significant potential?**

Economic collaboration between Ethiopia and Pakistan is gradually increasing, particularly since the establishment of the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad. This has facilitated numerous trade delegations and agreements, fostering partnerships in sectors like pharmaceuticals, surgical, agriculture, agro processing and textiles.

In the past two years, high-level delegations from both sides have explored avenues for collaboration in each other countries. A prime example is the

75-member Pakistani business delegation that visited Ethiopia in 2023, representing major chambers of commerce and prominent companies from all spheres and sectors of Pakistan. This visit resulted in the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce signing a crucial agreement with its Ethiopian counterpart, laying the groundwork for enhanced bilateral trade. Furthermore, leading Pakistani corporations like Arif Habib Group and Roshan Packages have also signed MoUs with the Ethiopian Investment Commission in 2023, pledging significant investments in key sectors such as fertilizer production, construction, and packaging.

The momentum continued with a reciprocal visit by a 50-member official and business delegation from the FDR Ethiopia in May 2023 which signed multiple agreements with the different business chambers including Islamabad and Karachi.

Likewise, we have facilitated an 80-member business and investment delegation from Pakistan to Ethiopia in 2024, which included representatives from the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan and various trade associations and companies. This visit yielded further agreements, with the Faisalabad and Sialkot Chambers, along with the Sundar Trade and Industry Association, signing MoUs with the Ethiopian Investment Commission. These agreements have opened doors for collaboration in diverse fields including agriculture, pharmaceuticals, surgical equipment, sports and leather goods. Current trade between the two countries includes pharmaceuticals, surgical supplies, agricultural products, textiles, and leather goods. However, both the nations need to recognize the vast untapped potential for growth. Ethiopia, for instance, imports a substantial portion of its pharmaceutical and surgical products, presenting a significant opportunity for Pakistani exporters. Conversely, Ethiopia's fertile lands offer Pakistan access to high-quality agricultural commodities like coffee, tea, pulses, soybeans, and oilseeds.

By capitalizing on these untapped opportunities and fostering a spirit of partnership, Ethiopia and Pakistan are set to reap significant mutual benefits and drive economic growth for both nations.

**4: What measures are being taken to enhance trade volume between Ethiopia and Pakistan, and what products or industries**

**could benefit the most?**

Ethiopia and Pakistan are actively pursuing a multi-pronged approach to bolster bilateral trade. Beyond the high-profile trade delegations and agreements, a concerted effort is underway to cultivate deeper economic ties. The Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad has played a pivotal role to this end. Through targeted outreach, the embassy has engaged with chambers of commerce across Pakistan, from the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry to local chambers in key cities like Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Multan, Gujranwala, Shekupura Rawalpindi and Islamabad. These engagements have included presentations and briefings highlighting the diverse investment opportunities in Ethiopia's burgeoning economy. I personally visited all those business chambers and addressed to the queries of the business community. Likewise, in 2024, the Embassy organized multiple business forums across Pakistan, coinciding with the second Pakistani trade delegation visit to Ethiopia. These forums provided a valuable platform for businesses from both countries to connect, explore partnerships, and gain insights into specific sectors ripe for collaboration.

Formalizing this commitment, Ethiopia and Pakistan have also signed and ratified a bilateral trade agreement, providing a framework for enhanced trade and investment.

Further strengthening these ties, Ethiopian Airlines now offers direct flights to Pakistan, facilitating seamless travel for businesses and fostering people-to-people exchanges between Pakistan and Ethiopia and the rest of Africa. These combined efforts have successfully established institutional linkages between the two countries, leading to a regular exchange of delegations across various sectors. This momentum promises to unlock the immense potential for trade between Ethiopia and Pakistan. This year, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan along with Ministry of Commerce in Partnership with Ethiopian Embassy organizing the Single Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in between 15-17 May 2025 where many African countries join the forum to connect with the participants from Pakistan. In this regard, I kindly invite the interested companies to seize the availed opportunities.

**To be concluded**

PM arrives  
in Belarus  
on two-day  
visit

FROM PAGE 01

During his visit, the prime minister will hold talks with President Lukashenko to review progress in areas of mutual interest. The two sides are also expected to sign several agreements to further strengthen co-operation. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit underscores a strong and on-going partnership between Pakistan and Belarus.

PTI submits  
resolution  
against...

FROM PAGE 01

The resolution, led by Leader of the Opposition Omar Ayub Khan and signed by parliamentary leader Zartaj Gul, Ali Muhammad Khan, Mujahid Khan, and other party members, urged an immediate halt to the Cholistan canals project until constitutional provisions were fulfilled and Sindh's concerns are addressed. The document, titled "Resolution on Addressing Sindh's Reservations Regarding the Green Pakistan Initiative of Constructing Canals on the Indus River", calls on the federal government to convene an emergency meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) within 15 days.

PTI bigwigs  
at logger  
heads...

FROM PAGE 01

Supreme Court on the matter of permission to hold the meeting. Everyone has the right to meet Imran Khan, Senator Zafar added. He noted that the former prime minister has stated that he is open to speaking with anyone in the interest of the country. Speaking to media at the IHC earlier, Raja said that it had been agreed upon by all that he would provide the names of six lawyers. However, on Tuesday, only the manzoor-e-nazar were permitted to meet with the party chairman and the names of the six lawyers he provided were not given permission, the PTI Secretary General said.

Nepra nods  
Rs1.71 per...

FROM PAGE 01

Following a consensus with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif earlier this month announced a reduction in power tariffs for domestic and industrial consumers by Rs7.41 and Rs7.69 per unit, respectively. The decision has been forwarded to the federal government for formal implementation. However, Nepra confirmed that lifeline consumers will not benefit from the reduction.



## Briefs

## Rupee gains 22 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 22 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs280.55 against the previous day's closing of Rs280.77. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs280.65 and Rs282.15, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs0.40 to close at Rs309.25 against the last day's closing of Rs308.85, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paisa and closed at Rs1.91, whereas an increase of Rs2.01 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs361.12 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs359.11. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 06 pasia each to close at Rs76.38 and Rs74.73, respectively.—APP

## PSX gains 2,036 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 2,036.05 points, a positive change of 1.78 percent, closing at 116,189.21 points as compared to 114,153.16 points on the last trading day. A total of 638,089,718 shares were traded during the day as compared to 448,693,567 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs36.924 billion against Rs26.585 billion on the last trading day. As many as 451 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 347 of them recorded gains and 63 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 41 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Energico PK with 86,573,180 shares at Rs 8.52 per share, K-Electric Limited with 57,922,646 shares at Rs4.54 per share and Sui Southern Gas with 44,734,661 shares at Rs 39.13 per share. Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 158.17 per share closing at Rs 8,999.00 whereas runner-up was Hoechst Pakistan Limited with Rs 144.31 rise in its share price to close at Rs 3,200.00. Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 22.87 per share price, closing at Rs 7,183.48, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with Rs 16.83 decline in its per share price to Rs 1,756.91.—APP

## US has hit more than 100 targets in Yemen since mid-March

WASHINGTON: The United States has struck more than 100 targets in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen since beginning the latest phase of its air campaign against the Iran-backed militia last month, a US defense official said Wednesday. American forces have hammered the Houthis with near-daily air strikes since March 15 in a bid to end the threat they pose to civilian shipping and military vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. "The US has hit more than 100 targets in Houthi-controlled parts of Yemen," the defense official said in response to a question on the number of American strikes since mid-March. "We have destroyed command and control facilities, weapons manufacturing facilities, and advanced weapons storage locations," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Despite the strikes, the Houthis — who control large swathes of Yemen and have been at war with the internationally recognized government since 2015 — have continued to claim attacks against both US vessels and Israel. The militants began targeting shipping in late 2023, claiming solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, which has been devastated by a military campaign launched by Israel after a shock Hamas attack in October of that year.—APP

## Pakistan, UK discuss energy collaboration, sustainable uplift

Ali Pervaiz Malik underscored the government's commitment to bolstering energy security and efficiency, welcoming British expertise and investment in the field

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and Development Director of the British High Commission Joe Moir on Thursday discussed exploring opportunities for enhanced bilateral cooperation in Pakistan's petroleum and energy sectors. During the meeting, the discussions focused on strengthening UK-Pakistan collaboration in oil, gas, and broader energy initiatives, with both sides emphasizing sustainable development, technological exchange, and British support for Pakistan's energy infrastructure. Ali Pervaiz Malik underscored the government's commitment to bolstering energy security and efficiency, welcoming British expertise and investment in the field. "Pakistan values its longstanding relationship with the UK, and we look forward to deepening cooperation in the energy sector to ensure sustainable growth and mutual economic benefits," he said, adding the country's push to reform its liquid fuels sector in alignment with its sustainability goals. Joe Moir reaffirmed the UK's support for



Pakistan's energy transition and capacity building. "The UK is keen to collaborate with Pakistan in addressing energy challenges through innovation and investment. We are committed to supporting pro-

jects that promote economic resilience and enhance institutional capacity," he stated. The meeting also covered potential joint ventures, regulatory improvements, and policy frameworks con-

ducing to future investments. Both sides agreed to maintain close engagement and pursue further collaboration under the broader strategic partnership between Pakistan and the United King-

dom. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with a shared vision to advance energy cooperation under the broader strategic partnership between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

## UAE to develop Indonesia's new 100 MW floating solar power plant

## DNA

JAKARTA: Indonesia has signed an agreement with the UAE to develop a 100 MW floating solar power plant in West Java, its second collaboration with Emirati giant Masdar after the Cirata project — Southeast Asia's largest floating photovoltaic installation. The project was announced by Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto's office following his meeting with UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday. Masdar will help Indonesia's state utility company PLN to build a solar power infrastructure on West Java's Jatigede reservoir, more than 200 km east of the capital Jakarta. "Indonesia and the UAE, we have such close and friendly relations ... Masdar is also one of the best com-

panies in the world when it comes to renewable energy," Husin Bagis, Indonesia's ambassador to the UAE, told Arab News on Thursday. The project will be Masdar's second floating solar plant, after the 145 MW Cirata Floating Solar Photovoltaic Plant on a reservoir, also in West Java. It was inaugurated in November 2023 by then President Joko Widodo and cost \$100 million. Aside from being the biggest in Southeast Asia, the Cirata plant, which can power around 50,000 households, is the third-largest floating solar plant in the world. During Subianto's Abu Dhabi visit, Indonesia and the UAE also agreed to increase the capacity of the Cirata solar power plant. "UAE is looking for joint ventures in Indonesia ... There have been talks of more renewable energy projects in

Indonesia to help us build at least a capacity of 2 GW in the near future," Bagis said. According to PLN, the plant's maximum capacity could still be expanded, as the solar panels installed so far only occupied about 4 percent of the Cirata reservoir. Regulations permit up to 20 percent of the area to be utilized by the plant. In 2023, renewables accounted for around 13 percent of Indonesia's energy mix. The country of 270 million people has been working to increase its renewable energy sources to meet its pledge of achieving net-zero emissions by 2060. Indonesia is one of the world's largest producers and consumers of he

## Draft amendments to streamline the public offering regime

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) on Thursday issued draft amendments to the Public Offering Regulations, 2017 and Public Offering (Regulated Securities Activities Licensing) Regulations, 2017, for initiating a final round of public consultation. The regulations provide key framework governing public offer of shares, debt securities and units of REIT Schemes, said a news release. The notification of the draft amendments follows an extensive SECP driven consultation process including multiple sessions with key stakeholders, including Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), Central Depository Company (CDC), National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL), listed issuers, consultants, securities brokers, banks, DFIs, potential IPO companies, REIT Management Companies, shariah advisors, credit rating companies, Pakistan Stock Broker Association and MUFAP.—APP

## ASEAN won't retaliate to US tariffs, vows to safeguard bloc interest

KUALA LUMPUR: Economic ministers of the ASEAN regional bloc committed on Thursday "to not impose any retaliatory measures" against the United States over sweeping tariffs and said they were ready to engage in talks. ASEAN, being the fifth largest economy in the world, is deeply concerned over the recent introduction of unilateral tariffs by the U.S., including the tariffs announced on 2 April 2025 and subsequently the most recent suspension on 9 April 2025, the Association of Southeast Asian ministers said in a statement issued after a video conference meeting. Despite their concern, the ministers said they were ready "to engage in a frank and constructive dialogue with the U.S. to address trade-related concerns". "Open communication and collaboration will be crucial to ensuring a balanced and sustainable relationship. In that spirit, ASEAN commits to not impose any retaliatory measures in response to the U.S. tariffs," they said. The special meeting was chaired by Malaysia's Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry Tengku Zafrul Aziz. Malaysia holds the rotating chair of the 10-member regional bloc. Its members, which count on the United States as their main export market, were among those hit with the toughest levies by US President Donald Trump. Manufacturing powerhouse Vietnam was hit with a 46 percent tariff on exports to the United States while neighbouring Cambodia — a major producer of low-cost clothing for big Western brands — was slapped with a 49 percent duty. The other ASEAN members hit with hefty tariffs are Laos (48 percent), Myanmar (44 percent), Thailand (36 percent) and Indonesia (32 percent). Malaysia, Southeast Asia's third-largest economy, was hit with a lower tariff of 24 percent. Brunei also faces a 24 percent tariff, while the Philippines was hit with 17 percent and Singapore 10 percent.—APP

## Rebels in Indonesia's Papua kill 17 people disguised as soldiers

JAKARTA: Rebels in Indonesia's Papua region said on Thursday they have killed more than 17 people since the weekend, claiming that they were soldiers disguised as gold miners, and police said the insurgents were holding two hostages. A low-level but increasingly deadly battle for independence has simmered between security forces and rebels in resource-rich Papua ever since it was controversially brought under Indonesian control in a vote overseen by the United Nations in 1969. Seby Sambom, a Papuan rebel spokesperson, said in a statement the rebels had killed more than 17 people since April 6, including five on Wednesday, and claimed they were military members disguised as gold miners. "If the Indonesian government military wants to chase us, please come to Dekai town, we are in the town," Seby said, referring to a town in Yahukimo district, where the incident took place. Frega Wenas, a spokesperson for the country's defense ministry, told reporters that 11 illegal miners were ruthlessly killed in the area and denied they were military officers, adding this was the rebels' propaganda. Separately, police said in a statement on Thursday that 35 people in the area were evacuated to another district, while two residents were still being held hostage by the rebels. Frega said the attack was one of the deadliest in recent years. In 2018, a separatist group killed 21 road construction workers in the highland area of Nduga. Rebels in Papua have in recent years managed to acquire better weapons, taken in raids on army posts or sourced from the black market. They have also abducted foreigners, including a New Zealand pilot who was released last year after being held for 19 months.—APP

## Rahim's artistic work captivated guests a reception

DUBAI: Rahim Khetran's artistic work captivated guests at a reception held at Pakistan Embassy in UAE, says a message received here in Thursday. He is an internationally acclaimed artistic photographer and visual anthropologist. Mr. Khetran's exhibition featured a carefully curated collection of artistic photographs — portraits, landscapes, 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 "visually poetic journey across Pakistan.—APP

## Saudi Arabia records 89% growth in licensed tourism hospitality

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's tourism sector saw significant growth in 2024, with the number of licensed hospitality facilities increasing by 89 percent to 4,425 across various regions of the Kingdom. In a post on X, the Ministry of Tourism's official spokesperson Mohammed Al-Rasasimah described the surge as "remarkable," adding that it reflects efforts "to support the sector's growth and enhance its investment attractiveness." He added that the expansion comes amid a significant boom in the Kingdom's tourism sector, driven by an influx of travelers and the ministry's commitment to fostering a world-class hospitality environment. The ministry reported in March that the number of licensed hospitality facilities in Makkah reached 1,030 by the end of 2024, marking an 80 percent rise compared to the previous year. This increase positions the province as the leader in the Kingdom for the highest number of licensed facilities and rooms, underscoring the region's dedication to enhancing visitor experiences, the Saudi Press Agency reported. This move also reinforces the ministry's dedication to protecting the rights of visitors and Umrah pilgrims using hospitality services in Makkah as part of its ongoing efforts to improve service quality. "The ministry's inspection teams conduct regular monitoring and inspection visits throughout the year to ensure that all facilities comply with licensing requirements, detect violations, and impose fines under the Tourism Law and Regulations of Tourist Accommodation Facilities," SPA said. Saudi Arabia's hospitality sector is growing beyond Makkah. By the end of the third quarter of 2024, the total number of licensed hospitality facilities across the Kingdom surpassed 3,950, a 99 percent increase from the third quarter of 2023. Licensed rooms climbed to 443,000, a 107 percent jump from the 214,000 recorded a year earlier. According to CoStar, a global real estate data provider, Makkah and Madinah have 17,646 and 20,079 rooms, respectively, in various stages of development in 2025. This comes as Saudi Arabia recorded 30 million inbound tourists in 2024, up from 27.4 million in 2023, government data revealed. The Kingdom aims to attract 150 million visitors annually by 2030, with plans to raise the tourism sector's gross domestic product contribution from 6 percent to 10 percent. Saudi Arabia's aggressive expansion in hospitality and tourism underscores its ambition to position itself as a global travel hub, catering to religious and leisure visitors.—DNA

## KSA once a green oasis, study of ancient caves reveals

## DNA

RIYADH: A groundbreaking scientific study led by Saudi Arabia's Heritage Commission has revealed that the Arabian Peninsula, now largely arid desert, was a lush green oasis nearly eight million years ago. Announced at a press conference, the study, published in the prestigious journal Nature — analyzes 22 cave formations in the "Duhoor Al-Summan" sinkholes northeast of the capital. According to Dr. Ajab Alotaibi, Director General of Antiquities at the Heritage Commission, the research presents the longest continuous climate record ever documented in the

Arabian Peninsula, spanning an extraordinary eight million years. "This is one of the most significant climate records in the Arabian Peninsula," Alotaibi said, highlighting that the findings offer vital insights into the region's environmental past and its pivotal role as a corridor for the migration of humans and animals between Africa, Asia, and Europe. The study, titled "Recurrent Humid Phases in Arabia Over the Past 8 Million Years," is a central component of the Kingdom's flagship Green Arabia Project — an ambitious initiative for uncovering Saudi Arabia's natural and environmental history. The project brought together 30 scientists from 28 insti-

tutions worldwide, including the Saudi Geological Survey, King Saud University, the Max Planck Institute (Germany), Griffith University (Australia), and multiple research centers across Europe and the United States. Using advanced geochemical techniques such as oxygen and carbon isotope analysis, and precise Uranium-Thorium and Uranium-Lead dating, the team identified a series of humid climatic phases stretching from the late Miocene through the Pliocene and into the late Pleistocene. These wet periods transformed the Arabian Peninsula into fertile landscapes with rivers, lakes, and diverse ecosystems. The deposits studied, stalag-

mites and stalactites from seven sinkholes near Shawyah in Rumah Governorate, preserved rich geological data that reflect dramatic environmental shifts over millions of years. The research supports fossil evidence of once-thriving populations of water-dependent animals, including crocodiles, hippos, elephants, giraffes, and large predators, species now extinct in the region. Beyond reconstructing a vibrant prehistoric ecosystem, the study also sheds light on the role of climate in shaping patterns of human migration and biodiversity across continents. "Understanding these ancient humid phases helps us trace how early humans and animals moved between continents and

adapted to shifting environments," Alotaibi noted. The Heritage Commission hailed the study as a major milestone in Saudi Arabia's scientific and cultural journey and reaffirmed its commitment to promoting global research collaboration. Officials also emphasized the untapped potential of the Kingdom's cave systems, many of which remain unexplored and could hold further secrets about the region's ancient past. As part of ongoing efforts, the Green Arabia Project continues to lead international research aimed at documenting and preserving Saudi Arabia's natural and cultural heritage in the face of evolving climate and environmental challenges.

## Iraq, US sign deal on projects including power plants

DUBAI: Iraq and the United States signed on Wednesday a memorandum of understanding for projects in the Gulf country, including 24,000 megawatts of power plants, the Iraqi prime minister's media office said. Another MOU has been inked between Iraq's Ministry of Electricity and US company UGT Renewables to establish an integrated solar energy project with a capacity of 3,000 MW, the media office said in a statement. US President Donald Trump's administration last month rescinded a sanctions waiver that since 2018 has allowed Iraq to pay Iran for electricity as Washington presses on with its "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran. Iraq, OPEC's second-largest producer after Saudi Arabia, uses Iranian power imports to generate electricity and has been under pressure from the US to reduce its reliance on power and gas imports from Iran.—APP

## Gold price ups by Rs.7,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.7,800 and was traded at Rs.328,800 on Thursday as compared to its sale at Rs321,000 on the previous trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs.6,688 to Rs 281,893 from Rs. 275,205 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold also went up by Rs.6,131 to Rs.258,411 from Rs 252,280, respectively. The price of per tola silver witnessed an increase of Rs64 and closed at Rs3,234 and that of ten gram silver rose by Rs55 to close at Rs2,772. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$78 to \$3,118 from \$3,040, whereas silver surged by \$0.64 to close at \$30.94, the Association reported.—APP

## Egypt's annual inflation rises to 13.1% in March

RIYADH: Egypt's annual inflation rate rose to 13.1 percent in March, up from 12.5 percent in the previous month, according to the latest official data. The monthly consumer price index also increased by 1.5 percent compared to February, reaching 250.6 points, Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics reported. Higher prices in key food categories including fruits, vegetables, and meat, drove the change, with some items experiencing double-digit year-on-year surges. The data indicates continued inflationary pressures across essential sectors, affecting households nationwide. The increase comes as Egypt continues to contend with the effects of currency devaluations, subsidy reforms, and global food and fuel price shocks. The CAPMAS report revealed that the food and beverage division was the primary contributor to the March inflation increase, with year-on-year prices for fruits soaring by 76.7 percent and vegetables climbing by 6.6 percent. Meat and poultry rose by 6.2 percent, while the price of cereals and bread jumped 8.1 percent compared to March last year. Across North Africa, inflation trends remain mixed as neighboring economies contend with varying degrees of price pressures. Algeria's annual inflation rate rose to 4.7 percent in January, its highest since October, according to data platform Trading Economics. Morocco saw a sharper increase to 2.6 percent in February from 2 percent, while Tunisia's rate edged up to 5.9 percent in March from 5.7 percent, driven by higher food, clothing, and household costs. Sudan, still grappling with hyperinflation, saw a slight easing to 142.34 percent in February from 145.14 percent, though it remains among the world's highest. In Egypt, notable annual increases were recorded in the clothing and footwear segment, which rose 18.3 percent, driven by a 22.9 percent spike in shoes and a 19.4 percent rise in ready-made garments. Housing and utility costs also advanced, registering a 17.4 percent increase year on year.—APP



## Briefs

Omar denies  
infighting in  
PTI ranks

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and National Assembly Opposition Leader Omar Ayub has reiterated that the party remained united under Imran Khans leadership and dismissed interference from PML-N and PPP in PTIs internal matters.

Speaking to the media outside the district court in Islamabad, Omar Ayub thanked the court for confirming his bail, noting that he was simultaneously facing cases in multiple cities. Even if I had a flying saucer, I couldnt be in three cities at once, he said. He stressed the urgent need for reforms in Pakistans judicial and policing systems. Two days ago, we were denied a meeting with party founder Imran Khan in Adiala, and several people were arrested. Pakistan should be a hard state, but built on the foundation of the constitution and law. A state built on oppression is hollow, he remarked.

Addressing speculation about internal divisions within PTI, Omar Ayub dismissed such claims. PML-N and PPP have nothing to do with our internal affairs. PTI is not a feudal party, everyone is equal. Imran Khan listens to everyone, and the party is united under his leadership. Commenting on legislative matters, Ayub said, Passing or not passing the Minerals Bill is the domain of the provincial assembly and government. Referring to senior PTI leader Azam Swati, he added, Swati is a respected elder. I wasnt in the meeting, but what he said must be true. Imran Khan and others are political prisoners. When the government demands an apology from him, it clearly shows these are political cases.

EU pauses  
counter  
measures  
after Trump's  
reprieve

BRUSSELS: The European Union will pause its first countermeasures against US tariffs after President Donald Trump temporarily lowered the hefty duties he had just imposed on dozens of countries, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said on Thursday. The bloc was due to launch counter-tariffs on about 21 billion euros (\$23.25 billion) of US imports from next Tuesday in response to Trump's 25% tariffs on steel and aluminium. It is still assessing how to respond to US car tariffs and the broader 10% levies still in place. "We want to give negotiations a chance," von der Leyen said on X. "While finalising the adoption of the EU countermeasures that saw strong support from our Member States, we will put them on hold for 90 days." Trump's sudden decision on Wednesday to pause most of his hefty new duties brought relief to battered global markets and anxious global leaders, even as he ratcheted up a trade war with China. His turnaround, which came less than 24 hours after steep new tariffs kicked in, followed the most intense episode of financial market volatility since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. - Agencies

SC schedules  
hearings for  
May 9 cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has scheduled hearings for the May 9 cases. The appeal filed by PTI leader Omar Sarfaraz Cheema against the denial of physical remand will be heard on April 14. The bail plea of PTI Senator Ejaz Chaudhry is set for hearing on April 15, while the appeal to cancel Asad Qaisers bail will also be heard on the same day. The caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had filed the appeal against Asad Qaisers bail in 2023.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Yahya Afridi will hear the cases. The bench will also hear appeals seeking cancellation of bail for several PTI leaders and workers.

Pakistan, UNDP finalize key  
green investment portfolioFinance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb holds  
follow-Up meeting with UNDP Pakistan delegation

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a follow-up meeting today with Dr. Samuel Rizk, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan, who was accompanied by his team. During the meeting, the UNDP team presented an overview of UNDPs ongoing technical assistance to

Pakistan in the development of bankable projects aimed at attracting investment and climate financing. Dr. Rizk also provided a briefing on the upcoming 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) to be held in Spain later this year. Key discussions focused on finalizing a portfolio of bankable projects and ensuring Pakistan's proactive participation in FfD4 with a robust, investment-ready pipeline. Dr. Rizk acknowledged the Government of Pakistans policy leadership in steering in-

vestment and climate financing initiatives in collaboration with government stakeholders and development partners.

Highlighting the significance of Pakistans improving macroeconomic indicators and enhanced market ratings, Dr. Rizk noted that FfD4 presents a strategic platform for Pakistan to engage global investors and unlock international climate and development financing. In line with the Finance Ministers earlier guidance, Dr. Rizk informed that UNDP, in coordination with

the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) and the Public-Private Partnership Authority (P3A), has identified five preliminary bankable projects valued at over USD 1 billion. These projects span critical sectors, including green exports, biowaste management, road infrastructure, domestic green private sector development, and green real estate. Dr. Rizk also shared that a preparatory mission from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) will visit Islamabad next week. The mission will facilitate planning and capacity-building sessions with federal and provincial governments, key stakeholders, and private sector partners in preparation for Pakistans participation in FfD4. Minister Aurangzeb expressed appreciation for UNDPs continued support in advancing Pakistans climate and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) financing agenda. He reaffirmed the governments commitment to a whole-of-government approach, directing the Inter-Ministerial Committee—comprising senior officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Planning & Development, Climate Change, Economic Affairs Division, Finance, and P3A—to work collaboratively on a dynamic, investment-attractive portfolio aligned with Pakistans structural reform and climate resilience priorities. Concluding the meeting, the Finance Minister reaffirmed the Government of Pakistans resolve to work closely with UNDP and other development partners to drive sustainable, inclusive economic growth and enhance Pakistans role in global climate and development financing forums.

World Bank arm's \$ 300 million  
lifeline sets tone for Reko DiqPledge signals global investor confidence as Barrick-led Reko  
Diq races to lock in fresh investment for mine's revival

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank's private investment arm, International Finance Corporation (IFC), will provide \$300 million in debt financing for Pakistan's Reko Diq copper-gold mining project, according to a disclosure issued by the lender. Located in the Chagai District of Balochistan province, the mine is considered one of the world's largest underdeveloped copper-gold areas and its development is expected to have a significant impact on Pakistan's struggling economy. Barrick Gold owns a 50% stake in the Reko Diq mine, and the governments of Pakistan and Balochistan own the other 50%. The mine's Project Director, Tim Cribb, told Reuters on Tuesday that Barrick Gold's Reko Diq copper and gold project in Pakistan intended to lock in upwards of \$2 billion in financing from international lenders, with term sheets signed by early Q3. In an interview with Reuters at the

Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2025, Cribb said the mine was looking at \$650 million from the International Finance Corporation and International Development Association. Cribb further said that the funding would support the development of the mine, and hoped to generate \$70 billion in free cash flow and \$90 billion in operating cash flow. Barrick Gold and the governments of Pakistan and Balochistan own the project jointly. The financing for phase one of the project, which is expected to start production in 2028, is being discussed with multiple lenders. The Reko Diq project director added that the mine was also in talks with the US Export-Import Bank for \$500 million to \$1 billion in financing, as well as \$500 million from development finance institutions, including the Asian Development Bank, Export Development Canada, and Japan Bank for International Cooperation. He said railway financing talks were underway with the IFC and other lenders, with infrastructure costs estimated at \$500-800 million, with roughly \$350 million as the initial cost.

LHC launches integrated  
criminal justice systemLHC CJ Aalia Neelum inaugurates pilot  
project for Lahore and Rahim Yar Khan

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court took a significant step towards judicial transparency and efficiency with the launch of the Integrated Criminal Justice System (ICJS), aimed at ensuring connectivity and documentation from the First Information Report (FIR) to the final orders. The ICJS, now operational as a pilot project in Lahore and Rahim Yar Khan, was formally inaugurated by LHC Chief Justice Aalia Neelum. The system enables one-click access to complete case records, marking a milestone in the digital transformation of the provinces legal landscape. In recognition of her leadership, the Punjab Inspector General of Police, Prosecutor General Punjab Syed Farhad Ali Shah and PITB chairman paid tribute to CJ Neelum for her role in spear-

heading the initiative. The inaugural ceremony was attended by LHC Registrar Amjad Iqbal Ranjha, Director General District Judiciary, Additional Secretary Home Department Punjab, Secretary Prosecution Punjab, Advocate General Punjab, and Prosecutor General Syed Farhad Ali Shah. Speaking at the event, Chief Justice Neelum described the system as revolutionary, congratulating the Provincial Justice Committee for their efforts. She noted that the need for an integrated solution became evident when it was discovered that challans for hundreds of thousands of cases had not been submitted to courts — prompting the urgent need for reform. With the implementation of this project, delay tactics will become a thing of the past, she asserted. Additional Registrar (IT) Jamal Ahmed gave a detailed briefing on the functionalities of the new system. Farhad Ali Shah remarked that the vision of Chief Justice Neelum had significantly improved the criminal justice process, while the Punjab IGP echoed the sentiment, applauding her for her critical role in the development and deployment of the ICJS.

 Hamas urges UK government  
to overturn terror designationOfficial slams Britains unwavering support for  
Zionism, apartheid, occupation, ethnic cleansing

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Hamas has submitted a legal filing in Britain demanding it be removed from the governments list of proscribed terror groups. The organization is arguing that it is a Palestinian Islamic liberation and resistance movement whose goal is to liberate Palestine and confront the Zionist project, and not a terrorist group. The claim includes a witness statement by Mousa Abu Marzouk, Hamass head of international relations and the applicant for the filing. It was submitted to Home Secretary Yvette Cooper. Abu Marzouks statement said: The British governments decision to proscribe Hamas is an unjust one that is symptomatic of its unwavering support for Zionism, apartheid, occupation and ethnic cleansing in Palestine for over a century. Hamas does not and never has posed a threat to Britain, despite the latters ongoing complicity in the genocide of our people. The UK proscribed Hamass military wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, in 2001, and added its political wing to the list of terror organizations in 2021. At the time, the government described the distinction between the two wings as artificial and said Hamas was a complex but single terrorist organization. Support for proscribed organizations is a criminal offense in Britain. Hamass legal team at Riverway Law, which is representing

the organization pro bono because it is illegal to receive funds from proscribed groups, sent a document to Drop Site News summarizing its arguments. The team said: Hamas does not deny that its actions fall within the wide definition of terrorism under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Instead, it notes that the definition also covers all groups and organizations around the world that use violence to achieve political objectives, including the Israeli armed forces, the Ukrainian army and indeed the British armed forces. The team added: Rather than allow freedom of speech, police have embarked on a campaign of political intimidation and persecution of journalists, academics, peace activists and students over their perceived support for Hamas. People in Britain must be free to speak about Hamas and its struggle to restore to the Palestinian people the right to self-determination.

Hamas is the only effective military force resisting Israels illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories, the team said, highlighting Britains obligations under international law to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity. The proscription is also disproportionate as Hamas does not pose any threat to Britain or British citizens, the team added. Hamass presence on the list of terrorist organizations is hindering its ability to broker a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the lawyers said. Riverway Laws director, Fahad Ansari, is leading the legal challenge.

New  
Zealand  
rejects  
rights bill

AUCKLAND: A controversial bill seeking to reinterpret New Zealand's founding document, which established the rights of both Māori and non-Māori in the country, has been defeated at its second reading. The Treaty Principles Bill was voted down 112 votes to 11, days after a government committee recommended that it should not proceed. The proposed legislation sought to legally define the principles of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi - causing widespread outrage that saw more than 40,000 people taking part in a protest outside parliament last year. The bill had already been widely expected to fail, with most major political parties committed to voting it down. Members of the right-wing Act Party, which tabled it, were the only MPs to vote for it at the second reading on Thursday. Act's leader David Seymour has promised to continue campaigning on the issue. "I believe this Bill or something like it will pass one day because there are not good arguments against its contents," he wrote on social media. Tensions were high during a parliamentary debate on the bill in November. Labour MP Willie Jackson was told to leave after refusing to withdraw a comment he made calling Seymour a "liar". - Agencies

Dumper  
crushes  
motorcycle  
in Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: A high-speed dumper collided with several motorcyclists near North Karachi Power House, resulting in three individuals being injured. Following the incident, enraged protesters launched severe protests against the dumper, setting fire to five dumpers, one water tanker, and one truck at various locations, Express News reported. According to rescue sources, the injured individuals were immediately transferred to the hospital. After the accident, local residents chased the dumper driver and caught him on Manghopir Road. The public assaulted the driver, after which the police arrived at the scene and took him into custody. Despite the police's presence, the protesters continued their violent actions, pelting stones at several dumpers.