



# Islamabad POST

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**Donald Trump blames Zelensky, Biden for Ukraine-Russia war**

Detailed News On Page-08

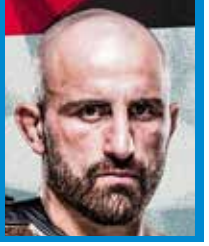
**Punjab governor bans use of Israeli products**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Volkanovski becomes two-time champ**

Detailed News On Page-06



## A treasure trove for Taliban

# Weapons left by US in Afghanistan fuel terrorism in Pakistan

“Many of the weapons wound up across the border in Pakistan, at arms bazaars and in the hands of insurgents, illustrating how the consequences of America’s failed war continue to reverberate years after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban,” newspaper wrote

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Terrorists who attacked the Jaffer Express train in Balochistan last month used weapons left behind when United States forces withdrew from Afghanistan, an investigation by an American newspaper revealed on Monday. The Jaffer Express was attacked on March 11 when Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) terrorists ambushed the Peshawar-bound train carrying 440 passengers, opening fire and taking hostages. Consequently, the security forces initiated an operation that lasted two days. Inter-Services Public Relations Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on March 12 that the Jaffer Express clearance operation launched a day after the train’s unprecedented hijacking, was complete. He added that all terrorists, 33 in total, at the site of the attack had been killed. According to newspaper, an M4A1 carbine rifle built by American manufacturer Colt was recovered from the site of the attack. The rifle’s serial number indicated that it was part of billions of dollars worth of weaponry sent to US forces in Afghanistan, who abandoned much of their equipment when withdrawing in 2021. “Many of the weapons wound up across the border in Pakistan, at arms bazaars and in the hands of insurgents, illustrating how the consequences of America’s failed war continue to reverberate years after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban,” newspaper wrote. The publication wrote that Pakistan is now trying to contain terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, where fighters are equipped with American weapons and gear. US rifles, machine guns and night-vision goggles, originally meant to help stabilise Afghanistan, are now being used by the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other groups to carry out attacks, newspaper reported citing weapons traders and government officials.

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## Pak-Afghanistan ties on the mend: Irfan Siddiqui

Another meeting on Afghanistan will soon be held

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman Irfan Siddiqui says the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are on the mend. Speaking to the media after a committee meeting, Siddiqui said Special Envoy to Afghanistan Sadiq Khan briefed the committee on the latest developments. According to Khan, high-level visits are in the pipeline, aiming to revive bilateral dialogue. He added that Pakistan had strongly raised the issue of TTP’s patronage with the Afghan administration and the Afghan side was beginning to come round to Pakistan’s point of view. Another meeting on Afghanistan will soon be held, he added. As for the recent Iran incident, Siddiqui confirmed that the Pakistanis recently killed in Iran were from Bahawalpur. The Foreign Office (FO) is working to repatriate the bodies and remain in touch with Iranian authorities, who have condemned the tragic incident.



**NAROWAL:** Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi along with a delegation of US Congressmen visited the Kartarpur Corridor to participate in the Baisakhi festival. The delegation included US Congressman Thomas Richard Souzzi, US Congressman Jonathan Jackson, Acting US Ambassador Natalie Baker and US Consul General Kristen K. Hawkins. – DNA

## Pakistan remittances reach all-time high

UAE, Saudi Arabia lead March remittance inflows to Pakistan, shows SBP data

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan’s workers’ remittances surged to a record \$4.1 billion in March 2025 – the first time monthly inflows have crossed the \$4 billion mark, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said on Monday. This historic inflow represents a 37.3% year-on-year increase from March 2024 and a 29.8% month-on-month rise compared to February 2025. It is the highest level of monthly remittances ever recorded in the country’s history. According to Mustafa Mustansir, Director of Research and Business Development at Taurus Securities Limited, the surge

Continued on Page 06

## Mineral bonding

# US congressmen call Pakistan visit ‘highly successful’

Congressman Jack Bergman calls minerals key sector in Islamabad-Washington economic partnership, among others

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a positive development for the mineral-rich nation, US congressmen have termed their visit to Pakistan “highly successful and significant for the future”. Speaking about the visit to attend the Pakistan Mineral Investment Forum 25 (PMIF25) last week, Congressman Jack Bergman said the importance of Pakistan-US relations is undeniable. He said the two countries are working in different sectors and promoting partnership. “Mineral is a key sector in this partnership.” Congressman Thomas Suozzi said: “We must build Pakistan-US relations on strong foundations.” He added that both countries would work together for economic security and promote economic activities.

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## Naqvi visits Kartarpur with US delegation

They were briefed about Gurdwara Sahib Kartarpur. They also attended the prayer ceremony at the Gurdwara Sahib and also visited the historical well

DNA

**NAROWAL:** Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi along with a delegation of US Congressmen visited the Kartarpur Corridor to participate in the Baisakhi festival. The delegation included US Congressman Thomas Richard Souzzi,

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## Briefs

### Fawad claims plot to seize PTI

Accuses legal team of working against Imran Khan

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Former Federal Minister Fawad Chaudhry has made serious allegations against the lawyers and current leadership of PTI, claiming they are attempting to take control of the party from Imran Khan. According to reports, Fawad Chaudhry accused the PTI legal team and leadership of working against the party’s founding leader, Imran Khan. He alleged that some individuals became MNAs and senators using the Imran Khan’s name, while secretly hoping for convictions against him and other senior members. He stated, “PTI lawyers and current leadership are trying to take over the party. There’s now a race to meet the founder and feed him false information.”

### NJHEP shutdown bleeds Rs42b annually

Federal Minister confirmed that the project has remained non-operational since May 2024

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The prolonged shutdown of the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project is causing a massive annual loss of Rs42 billion to the national exchequer, the National Assembly was informed on Monday. Federal Minister for Water Resources MoinWattoo, in a written reply, confirmed that the project has remained non-operational since May 2024 due to a serious defect in the head-race tunnel. According to the minister, a blockage located 9.8 kilometres from the dam site has once again forced a complete halt in operations.

## NA condemns Israeli atrocities

# No voice can be silenced by gunpowder, says Tarar

He slams international community’s silence, calling it deeply disappointing

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Law Minister Azam-Nazeer Tarar has condemned Israel’s ongoing atrocities in Gaza, saying history has never witnessed such brutalities against the mankind. He was addressing the National Assembly session on Monday. He stressed that whether it was Palestine or Indian-occupied Kashmir, no voice could be silenced by gunpowder. Tarar said Israel was committing genocide in Gaza, targeting even women and innocent children. Thousands have been martyred and millions wounded while the entire infrastructure has been reduced to rubble, he held. He slammed the international community’s silence, calling it deeply disappointing. He pointed out that hospitals and humanitarian organisations had not been spared either, a new dark chapter of brutalities was being written in Palestine. Over 65,000 people have been killed and more than 100,000 injured, including women, children and the elderly, he added.

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## Hamas will free hostages if end to Gaza war guaranteed

Senior Hamas official accuses Israel of obstructing progress toward a ceasefire

AGENCIES

CAIRO: A senior Hamas official said on Monday that the Palestinian group is prepared to release all Israeli hostages in exchange for a “serious prisoner swap” and guarantees that Israel will end the war in Gaza. Hamas is engaged in negotiations in Cairo with mediators from Egypt and Qatar – two nations working alongside the United States to broker a ceasefire in the besieged territory.

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## Aafia’s US lawyer to visit Pakistan

Mr. Clive Smith, is scheduled to arrive in Pakistan on May 4

SIYAFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday held a hearing regarding the release and repatriation of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui. The court was informed that her U.S.-based attorney, Mr. Clive Smith, is scheduled to arrive in Pakistan on May 4. Justice SardarEjazIshaq Khan presided over the case. Newly appointed Additional Attorney General Umar Aslam

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# UNHCR cuts cash support, deepening misery for Afghans amid ongoing forced evacuations from Pakistan

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: As the forced repatriation of Afghan nationals from Pakistan continues, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reduced its cash assistance to Afghan families holding Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, compounding the challenges faced by thousands of returnees. Previously, the UNHCR provided \$375 to each Afghan family with PoR documentation upon their return to Afghanistan. However, this amount has now been slashed to \$140, payable at the main entry points such as Jalalabad and Kandahar. When contacted, UNHCR Communications Officer QaisarAfridi confirmed the reduction in financial assistance, citing a sharp decrease—approximately 80 percent—in contributions from donor countries and member states. “Due to significant cuts in funding, we’ve had to adjust our financial support to returning Afghan families,” Afridi explained. Importantly, this assistance is limited only to those Afghans who possess valid PoR cards and are repatriating voluntarily. Those without proper documentation—or even those holding Afghan Citizen Cards (ACCs)—are not eligible for any financial support from UNHCR. Meanwhile, the mass evacuation of Afghans from Pakistan remains ongoing. Afridi revealed that between April 1 and April 13, 2025, over 63,616 Afghans crossed back into Afghanistan via the Torkham border. Of these, 17,055 individuals were forcibly deported after being detained by police

in various districts of Punjab. Since September 2023, an estimated 917,000 Afghan nationals have been deported from Pakistan, many after spending days in detention facilities. This has raised serious humanitarian concerns among local and international observers. Despite assurances from the Taliban-led government in Kabul about facilitating returnees with shelter, transportation, and other support, ground realities paint a different picture. Insider reports suggest that 80 percent of the returnees lack proper housing, employment, and basic resources upon their return. The Afghan government is currently offering 31,000 Afghans (approx. USD 400) per returning family to cover transportation and initial settlement costs at major crossing points such as Torkham and Chaman. In Kunar province—bordering Pakistan’s Bajaur and Mohmand districts—the local administration has started distributing house allotment letters to the homeless returnees. Additionally, the Taliban administration has established temporary camps and transit centers in Jalalabad, Laghman, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Gardez, and other regions to assist families in reaching their final destinations. However, strong resentment and condemnation continue to grow, both domestically and internationally, against Pakistan’s policy of forced deportation. A delegation led by former Afghan MP Fauzia Kofi—comprising ex-parliamentarians and civil society activists—recently visited Islamabad.

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# Radio Pak rejects censorship allegations

“Instead of supporting a national institution’s progress, certain elements are trying to weaponize misinformation for political gains,” the spokesperson added, urging media to verify facts before amplifying unsubstantiated claims

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Radio Pakistan has strongly denied recent claims that it deliberately withheld the April 4th speech of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, calling the allegations “baseless and politically motivated by a fraction of organisation’s CBA.” A spokesperson for the national broadcaster stated unequivocally: No ban—written or verbal—was ever imposed on any political leader’s speech. Official records confirm the address was broadcast live on

the most powerful transmitter of Islamabad Medium Wave Station and also on its News and Current Affairs Channel with running commentary from a seasoned journalist from Sindh. The management claims that its various stations broadcasted series of programs on the eve of death anniversary of Z.A. Bhutto and all Station Directors are able to verify their transmission. The controversy emerges as Radio Pakistan undergoes major modernization efforts, including studio upgrades, digital expansion, and global outreach under new leadership. Observers sug-

gest the timing of these allegations appears designed to undermine institutional reforms and stir unnecessary division. “Instead of supporting a national institution’s progress, certain elements are trying to weaponize misinformation for political gains,” the spokesperson added, urging media to verify facts before amplifying unsubstantiated claims. As Pakistan’s oldest and most trusted broadcaster, Radio Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to impartiality and public service dismissing attempts to politicize its operations.

## IIUI a sacred trust for all its stakeholders: Mukhtar

ISLAMABAD: The International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) organized its first Alumni Eid Milan Brunch at the H-10 new campus, aiming to strengthen institutional ties with its graduates and to apprise them of recent academic and administrative developments. The event was coordinated by the university’s Alumni Office and took place simultaneously at both the male and female campuses, following a structured program designed to engage alumni in institutional discourse. The event commenced with a plantation drive in which alumni participated. Notably, Dr. Sajida Ahmed Chaudhry, Additional District & Sessions Judge, Lahore, has contributed 300 trees to IIUI as a gesture of goodwill, supplementing the university’s plantation drive and reinforcing the alumni’s commitment to the university’s green initiatives spearheaded by its horticulture section. At the Female Campus, the inauguration ceremony was addressed by Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed. Speaking on the occasion, he emphasized that IIUI is a sacred trust (amaanat) for all its stakeholders — a space that must be protected, strengthened, and cherished by everyone associated with it. He stressed that the university is not merely an educational institution but a legacy, whose foundations must be fortified against any attempts to undermine its integrity, values, and standing. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed further noted that alumni occupy a vital role in this endeavour, serving as both ambassadors and vigilant custodians of their alma mater. He remarked that alumni act as watchdogs — able to identify gaps within the system, highlight concerns, and contribute actively to institutional reform and development. Welcoming them back to IIUI, he expressed hope that this reunion would not be a solitary event but the first of many such engagements in the future — fostering a culture of collaboration, feedback, and mutual growth. Meanwhile, President IIUI, Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed, in his welcome address described the alumni brunch as a “curtain raiser” for a renewed mission and vision of the university. He said the event signifies the beginning of a broader effort to strengthen team building and reshape the university’s direction.—DNA

## LDA seals 102 properties in crackdown

LAHORE: The Lahore Development Authority (LDA), during its on going crackdown against illegally constructed commercial buildings and properties defaulting on commercial dues, sealed another 102 properties on Monday. On the instructions of Director General LDA Tahir Farooq, the Town Planning Wing conducted operation in key localities including Gulberg.—APP

## Court Notice

In the Court of Yasir Bilal Civil Judge Family Court Rawalpindi. Suit for Recovery. Tayyaba Hassan versus Tariq Mehmood S/o Sher Afzal Shaiq Resident of House No.215 Street No. 16 Police Colony Rawat Tehsil and District Rawalpindi. Whereas respondent cannot be served in ordinary manner so you are inform to attend the Court personal through counsel or attorney on 16-04-2025 at 8 am to avoid ex-parte proceedings.

IN THE COURT OF YASIR BILAL JUDGE FAMILY COURT RAWALPINDI

Suit for dissolution of marriage AND RECOVERY ETC. Mst. Mahnoor Nadeem Akhtar etc. Versus Ahtisham Ali Notice to Ahtisham Ali Son of Javed Akhtar Resident of House No. E.68, near Mehria Malik Shop, Sector III, Khyban-e-sir Syed Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 16-04-2025 at 9 am avoid ex-parte proceeding.

## LIIBS returns with theme navigating the unknown

ISLAMABAD: The 8th Edition of Pakistan’s biggest corporate event, Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit (LIIBS), will take place on April 16 and 17, 2025, at a local hotel. Curated under the theme of Navigating the Unknown, this SUMMIT brings together a spectacular array of national and international leaders to deliberate on solutions for the challenges in the fast-changing ecosystems. LIIBS 2025 is jointly hosted by Nutshell Conferences Group and Unity Foods Limited, with strategic partnership from the Government of Pakistan and the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OICCI). K-Electric joins as the Sustainability Partner. The two-day Summit stands to bring together

more than 50 global experts and 1000+ delegates belonging to diverse industries from both the public and private sectors. The primary agenda will entail discussions and routes for possible collaborations at the individual, business, national, and global levels. Farrukh Amin, President & CEO, Unity Foods Limited, as the co-host of LIIBS 2025, will welcome guests and share insights into how agricultural dynamics can steer Pakistan’s economy into the future. With extensive experience in the food sector, Farrukh brings a valuable perspective on sustainable agricultural practices and their role in strengthening Pakistan’s economic resilience amid global challenges. Group has consistently been a keen and active supporter of transformative initiatives, maintaining a broad platform

for launching ideas that can benefit Pakistan and other countries within the context of regional and global development. The Summit’s 8th Edition will be graced by several distinguished leaders and dignitaries, including Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Federal Minister for IT & Telecom; Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce; Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives; Faisal Karim Kundi, Governor, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Muhammad Ali, Federal Minister & Advisor to the Prime Minister on Privatization; Senator Dr. Musadik Malik, Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination; Dr. Shezra Mansab Khan Kharal, Minister of State for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination.—APP

## Pak Navy inducts 4th offshore patrol vessel PNS YAMAMA

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy marked a significant milestone with the induction of its fourth Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), PNS YAMAMA, into its fleet here Monday. An induction ceremony held at Jinnah Naval Base, Ormara and Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the occasion as the chief guest, said a press release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pak Navy). PNS YAMAMA, constructed at DAMEN Shipyard, Romania, is a multipurpose platform equipped with modern



stealth features, the latest Command and Control systems, and sophisticated weapons and sensors, enabling it to operate in a multi-threat environment.

## Punjab Culture Day celebrated with traditional zeal across province

DNA

LAHORE: Under the patronage of the Punjab Culture Department (PCD), Punjab Culture Day was celebrated on Monday across Punjab, including the provincial metropolis Lahore Officials and employees in all government departments the Punjab were dressed in traditional cultural attire. All officers were wearing traditional Punjabi turbans. Punjab Culture Department sources informed APP that the main events were held at all Arts Councils of the related areas in the province where Cultural Day events were held. The Cultural Day was celebrated with

traditional zeal and enthusiasm at all the Districts of the province. Cultural Day was also celebrated with great enthusiasm and spirit in all government schools of Punjab. Meanwhile, a grand program will also be held at Alhamra, Lahore on Thursday, April 17, in connection with Culture Day, where Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz will address the gathering. In her recent statement, the Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari said that Maryam Nawaz has a deep emotional connection with Punjabi culture. She said that the Punjabi turban is a symbol of pride, honor and dignity for Punjab and Punjab’s culture holds a unique identity worldwide.

The minister emphasized that promoting Punjabi culture and passing it on to the new generation is the vision of the Punjab government. Furthermore, on Punjabi Culture Day, various events including music, bhangra, dance, exhibition, plays, film festival, food and traditional dresses in the form of stalls were organised to introduce cultural values to new generations of Punjabis. In different programmes, tribute were paid to masters in the field of Fine Arts with purpose of promoting love and courtesy on national level. Punjab Culture Day would be celebrated regarding showcase of Punjab’s customary festivities and traditional colours at Lahore’s Alhamra Arts Council on April 17.

Government of Punjab, under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has approved the celebrations of Punjab Culture Day at national level. She recently described that the purpose to observe the Punjab Culture Day is to highlight different facets of Punjab’s culture and the land of Punjab is filled with hospitality, love and affection. It is worth mentioning here that the Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday has extended warm greetings to the Sikh community across the globe on the occasion of Vaisakhi, calling it a vibrant agricultural and cultural festival that celebrates the spirit of Punjab. In her message, she said, “Vaisakhi is a beautiful celebration of Punjab’s



PESHAWAR: A large number of women gather, holding their ID cards to receive their cash during the BISP distribution in the provincial capital.

## Sindh Solar Energy Project launched in Shikarpur

SUKKUR: A significant step towards promoting renewable energy and providing relief to poor households was taken in District Shikarpur with the inauguration of the Sindh Solar Energy Project. The ceremony, held at the local venue, marked the distribution of 80 solar home systems to eligible Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) beneficiaries. The event was organized by the Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) and saw the participation of prominent figures, including MPA Intiaz Ahmed Shaikh, District Council Chairman Shikarpur Zulfiqar Ali Khan Kamario, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Shikarpur Zafar Abbas, and Rais Gul Muhammad, Environmental and Social Development Officer of the Sindh Solar Energy Project. Speaking at the event, MPA Intiaz Ahmed Shaikh highlighted the project’s objectives, stating that the Sindh Solar Energy Project aims to promote solar power generation and improve electricity access for poor households across Sindh Province. The project aligns with the Sindh Government’s goal of promoting renewable energy and reducing reliance on traditional power sources, he added. The Sindh Solar Energy Project, supported by the World Bank with \$100 million in funding, plans to provide 200,000 solar home systems to households in rural areas with low or no electricity access.—APP

## Over Rs 2.58b uplift project approved for South Waziristan

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has approved a development project worth over Rs. 2.58 billion for South Waziristan. The project, titled “Special Integrated Area Development Programme”, is aimed at accelerating development activities in the merged districts, particularly South Waziristan. Initially, the project was estimated at Rs. 2.18 billion, but under the revised PC-1, an additional Rs. 400 million was added, bringing the total to Rs. 2.58 billion. Currently, Rs. 900 million has been allocated for the project’s initial phase. The project will be implemented

with the support of various departments, including Local Government, Irrigation, Agriculture, Livestock, Industries (TEVTA), Youth Affairs, Sports, Culture, Forestry, Environment, and others. According to official documents on Monday, Rs. 493 million has been allocated for the Local Government, and Rs. 379 million for the Irrigation Department. Separate funds have also been allocated for agriculture, industry, sports, youth affairs, the social sector, forestry, and youth internship programs. The budget for the Youth Engagement Internship Pro-

gram has been increased from 4.5 million to 15 million. Additionally, over 120 million has been added to the funds allocated for the TEVTA industry. Similarly, new sectors such as Small and Medium Enterprises, Sports, Youth Affairs, and Non-Timber Forest Products have also been included. According to the Department of Development and Planning, this project will be completed over a period of three years from 2024 to 2027, and the various departments involved will take responsibility for their respective roles.—APP

## RCCI appoints Lt. Gen (R) Nigar as brand ambassador for women empowerment

RAWALPINDI: In a landmark move championing gender equality and female leadership, the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has proudly appointed Lieutenant General (R) Nigar Johar Khan as its official Brand Ambassador for Women Empowerment and Women Initiatives. This historic announcement was made during RCCI’s prestigious event, “SHE LEADS – A Tribute to Women,” held at the Chamber House on Monday. The event celebrated the resilience, strength, and trailblazing contributions of women across Pakistan — with the presence of Lt. Gen (R) Ni-


gar Johar Khan, Pakistan’s first and only female three-star general, as the Chief Guest, adding unmatched inspiration and gravitas. “Her journey is one of courage, dedication, and breaking barriers,” said RCCI President Usman Shaikat, in his welcome address. “She has redefined what’s possible for women in Pakistan and stands as a beacon of hope and ambition.” Group Leader Sohail Altaf echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the Chamber’s unwavering commitment to inclusive development: “Such events celebrate our national icons while reinforcing the message that women are vital architects of Pakistan’s progress.” In her compelling

keynote, Lt. Gen (R) Nigar Johar Khan commended RCCI’s proactive stance on gender equity: “Creating spaces for women to lead, grow, and shape the future is essential. RCCI’s vision and commitment are truly exemplary.” She also voiced support for RCCI’s upcoming Solidarity Walk with the Ambassador of Palestine, underlining the importance of unity and humanitarian solidarity. The ceremony was attended by Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Fahad Barlas, former presidents, executive committee members, Director AIC Ijaz Qamar Kayani, and a large number of women members.—APP


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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### APRIL

- April 04/Senegal National Day
- April 07/W. H. O. World Health Day
- April 12/Somalia Armed Forces Day
- April 15/DPR Korea The Day of the Sun
- April 16/Denmark National Day
- April 17/Iran Army Day
- April 17/Syria Independence Day
- April 18/Zimbabwe Independence Day
- April 24/Holy See Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate
- April 25/DPR Korea Armed Forces Day
- April 26/Tanzania National Day
- April 27/Sierra Leone Independence Day
- April 27/South Africa Freedom Day
- April 30/Sweden Birthday of His Majesty
- April 30/Netherlands Birthday of Queen



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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## Malaysia emerging as key destination for Pakistani youth

He highlighted that many Pakistanis have migrated a century ago from northern regions of Pakistan such as Buner, Hazara, and Haripur, seeking opportunities in Malaysia's growing economy.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Pakistan to Malaysia Syed Ahsan Raza Shah on Monday said Malaysia is emerging as a key destination for Pakistani youth. Speaking at the first annual Overseas Pakistanis Convention 2025 here at Jinnah Convention Centre (JCC),

he termed the convention, a landmark event that is being held with regards to overseas Pakistani diaspora. Shah emphasized the significant presence of Pakistanis in Malaysia, noting that the country hosts one of the largest Pakistani communities in Southeast Asia. He highlighted that many Pakistanis have migrated a century ago from northern regions of Paki-

stan such as Buner, Hazara, and Haripur, seeking opportunities in Malaysia's growing economy. He also mentioned the recent visit of the Malaysian Air Chief, whose father hails from Haripur, reflecting the deep-rooted connections between the two nations. Shah further said that Malaysia has become a favourite destination for our youth due to advanced economy and

brighter future. The High Commissioner acknowledged the increasing number of Pakistani students in Malaysia, with over 400 currently enrolled in various universities. About counsellor and community services in 2024, he said the Pakistani High Commission in Malaysia issued 31,983 passports, 1188 emergency travel documents, 2841 Nadra services and 9800

visas, indicating active engagement with the community. The High Commissioner expressed gratitude to the Government of Pakistan and the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) for organizing this landmark convention. He also proposed designating April 14 or any other day as "Pardesi Day" to honor the contributions of overseas Pakistanis annually.

## Danyal, US congressmen discuss trade, tariff relief

Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting highlighted the tariff suspension as a chance to strengthen bilateral trade, stating, "This opens doors to position Pakistan as a competitive partner through investments in mining, tech, and renewable energy



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, met with three senior US Congressmen at the US Embassy to discuss Pakistan's trade potential,

the recent pause in tariffs by President Trump and investment opportunities in key sectors. Barrister Danyal highlighted the tariff suspension as a chance to strengthen bilateral trade, stating, "This opens doors to position Pakistan as a com-

petitive partner through investments in mining, tech, and renewable energy." The talks emphasized Pakistan's reforms to attract foreign investment via transparent governance. The U.S. delegation acknowledged Pakistan's mineral re-

sources and their role in diversifying global supply chains. Both sides agreed to advance technical collaboration, security cooperation, and sustainable development frameworks. Plans for joint working groups to streamline sectoral partnerships were also finalized.

## Aleem expresses optimism about country's eco direction

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan met with PML-N senior leader and ex-Federal Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique to deliberate on Pakistan's political and economic conditions, with a particular focus on fostering economic stability, boosting investments, and addressing other pressing issues. During the meeting, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan expressed optimism regarding the country's current trajectory stating that Pakistan is heading in the right direction. Both the leaders agreed upon that the challenges being faced by the country which are beginning to be addressed, effectively. Abdul Aleem Khan remarked that there is a growing sense of trust and confidence among both local and international investors and expressed hope that the national economy is approaching a significant take-off phase in the coming years. Abdul Aleem Khan and Khawaja Saad Rafique lauded the Government's achievements and reaffirmed the ongoing political partnership between the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. Khawaja Saad Rafique emphasized the Federal Government's commitment to establishing peace and stability in the provinces of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The meeting was also attended by General Secretary of IPP Punjab and Member of the Punjab Assembly Shoaib Siddiqui along with senior PML-N leader and former MPA Mian Naseer Ahmed.—DNA

## 9 sheesha cafes shut, 64 held

ISLAMABAD: In a coordinated move, the district administration and police teams conducted surprise raids late Monday night, shutting down nine sheesha cafes operating illegally in Bahria Town's Civic Centre.

The operation, aimed at curbing unauthorized indoor hookah services, resulted in the arrest of 60 men and 4 women allegedly linked to the businesses. FIRs have been registered against all the arrested accused, and further investigation is in progress. According to the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration, 110 hookah devices, along with flavoured tobacco products, were confiscated during the raids. The crackdown follows growing concerns over violations of public health regulations and indoor smoking bans. Officials emphasized that the cafes were operating without permits and failed to comply with safety standards. The spokesman said that the operation began shortly after midnight, with teams entering multiple establishments suspected of offering sheesha services discreetly. Patrons and staff present during the raids were detained for questioning. District officials highlighted that the action aligns with broader efforts to enforce anti-smoking laws, particularly in indoor spaces. "These facilities posed risks to public health and ignored legal guidelines," stated a spokesman. "We will continue targeting non-compliant businesses." Health experts warn that sheesha use, often perceived as safer than cigarettes, carries significant risks, including exposure to higher levels of toxic chemicals. Authorities confirmed that further inspections are planned across the district to identify similar operations. Residents have been urged to report illegal shisha services via dedicated hotlines. The crackdown marks a renewed push to uphold public health laws, with officials vowing zero tolerance for unauthorized hookah businesses.—DNA

## Workshop held to strengthen editorial standards of research journals

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan continues its commitment to advancing the quality of research publications nationwide. As part of its sustained efforts over the past two decades, HEC has launched a series of workshops aimed at equipping editorial teams of research journals with skills aligned with international publishing standards. It resumed after being inactive for two years. Organized by the Research Journals Section, the initiative includes six in-person workshops across

major cities in Pakistan, along with one virtual session to ensure wider accessibility. The 1st Editors Orientation Capacity Building Workshop - HEC Journal Recognition was held on April 10, 2025, at NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi. Renowned Experts Dr. Imtiaz Subhani (Editors & Ambassador of DOAJ, Ambassador of Crossref, Director of FORCE11 & Professor/Director ORIC of ILMA University, Karachi) and Ms. Amber Usman (Editor & Ambassador of DOAJ, Ambassador of Crossref & Member of COPE) served

as resource persons, delivering comprehensive training on international frameworks and standards for scholarly publishing. The workshop saw an impressive turnout of around 100 participants, including faculty members, researchers, and editors from academic journals across Sindh region. Attendees engaged in interactive sessions focused on editorial policies, peer review standards, ethical publishing practices, and strategies to enhance journal visibility and ensure compliance with international directories, databases, and organizations

such as COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) and DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals). The program concluded with a closing session graced by the Acting Vice-Chancellor of NED University, who acknowledged the importance of such initiatives in uplifting the standards of academic publishing in Pakistan. This nationwide initiative underscores HEC's unwavering dedication to strengthening the country's research infrastructure and aligning academic journals with recognized international standards.—DNA

## Expats hailed for record \$28b remittances

Under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League (N) is delivering on its commitments to overseas Pakistanis, ensuring their trust and support

ISLAMABAD: Senator Nasir Butt, a prominent leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works, has commended overseas Pakistanis for their record-breaking \$28 billion in remittances this fiscal year. In a statement, Senator Butt stated that overseas Pakistanis' record \$4.1 billion remittances in March 2025 demonstrate their unwavering commitment to the nation, effectively countering negative narratives of Pakistani Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). By sending record-breaking remittances, overseas Pakistanis have shown overwhelming support for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's economic policies, demonstrating their faith in the government's policies. Overseas Pakistanis have remitted a substantial \$28 billion, showcasing their unwavering support for Pakistan's economy and disregarding the PTI founder's appeal to halt remittances. This remarkable contribution underscores the diaspora's faith in the nation's economic potential and their dedication to its progress. Under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League (N) is delivering on its commitments to overseas Pakistanis, ensuring their trust and support. This overwhelming response reflects their confidence in PML-N's policies and their unwavering patriotism.—DNA

## Karim urges high ups to prioritize food security

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Office FCCI Karim Aziz Malik has stated that food security has become a serious issue that authorities must address immediately. Pakistan's population is over 240 million, and to secure it, it is necessary to protect agricultural land. He expressed these views in a statement along with Vice President Tariq Jadon, Ashfaq Ahmed, and Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail. He said that we need to start from Punjab. The land in Sialkot, Pasur, Gujrat, and Wazirabad is very fertile for rice and wheat. Until ten years ago, these areas had agricultural land, but in the last few years, they are being converted into industrialization and housing societies, which is very worrying. Where there is no cultivation or areas are near cities, develop those instead of agricultural land, just as SIFC has started work in Cholistan, away from the city in Bahawalpur, for agriculture, for which they deserve congratulations. The government should definitely pursue industrialization, which is the backbone and a major source of employment, but it should also protect agricultural land for a secure agricultural future. The government can organize a seminar on this important issue in collaboration with the FPCCI to highlight it.—APP

## Merit-based selection of Moavineen-e-Hujjaj to be ensured

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said on Monday that the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony selects Moavineen-e-Hujjaj strictly on merit. During the National Assembly's question hour, he said the ministry follows a transparent and rigorous process to appoint staff for Hajj duties. A selection committee, led by a senior officer of Grade-20 or above, evaluates candidates based on well-defined merit-based criteria to ensure competence and fairness. He informed the House that these assistants are deployed at key locations including Makkah, Madinah, Jeddah, and Saudi airports, where they help pilgrims and support the smooth delivery of Hajj services. To further improve transparency and address past concerns, the ministry has partnered with the National Testing Service (NTS) to conduct the recruitment test for Moavineen-e-Hujjaj. The minister said that NTS, along with other testing services like ATS, is a well-established and trusted institution that regularly conducts recruitment exams for government bodies. "In previous years, there were concerns about the selection process of Hajj support staff.

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## Briefs

## CTO pays surpriss visit to F-6 Markaz

ISLAMABAD: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider paid a surprise late-night visit to F-6 Markaz to inspect traffic arrangements and issue on-the-spot directions to traffic officers on duty. A public relations officer told media that under the special direction of the CTO Zeeshan a comprehensive review of the traffic flow and management was conducted to ensure smooth vehicular movement. CTO Zeeshan directed the deployed officers to take all possible measures to maintain uninterrupted traffic flow in the area. "Ensure seamless traffic movement by taking all necessary steps," said CTO Capt (R) Zeeshan Haider. CTO instructed that strict legal action must be taken without discrimination against those violating traffic laws. He also emphasized launching intensified operations against illegal parking to eliminate obstructions to traffic. "Treat citizens with courtesy and provide every possible assistance," Zeeshan added. The CTO also advised citizens to report any complaints to the Islamabad Traffic Police helpline 1915.—APP

## SC summons reports on forest lands across country

ISLAMABAD :The Supreme Court has summoned comprehensive reports from all provincial governments and the federal government regarding the forest land case. A five-member constitutional bench headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, and comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan was conducting the proceedings. During the hearing, the apex court directed all provinces and the federal government to submit detailed reports, including data on encroached and reclaimed forest land.

Justice Jamal Mandokhail questioned the status of the forest land issue within Islamabad's jurisdiction, to which the government counsel responded that the matter had been resolved. Justice Mandokhail remarked that "We don't just want reports, we need to see the reality." Highlighting the harsh conditions in cold regions, Justice Mandokhail asked, "What should people in Ziarat do when temperatures drop to minus 17 degrees Celsius—should they stop cutting trees without any alternative? Has the government provided alternate energy sources in cold areas?" The government counsel informed the court that LPG is being supplied to Ziarat. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar then questioned whether any subsidies are being provided to the impoverished residents of mountainous regions. Justice Aminuddin Khan stated that it is the government's responsibility to provide better facilities to the people, while Justice Mazhar pointed out that reports have been submitted since 2018, but no significant progress has been observed. Justice Hasan Rizvi noted that forest land in Sindh is being eroded by the sea, and Justice Mandokhail added that it is not the Supreme Court's job to plant trees.—APP

## Ayaz reaffirms Parliament's support for overseas Pakistanis

The Speaker appreciated the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation for launching a new initiative to address the challenges faced by expatriates

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday reaffirmed Parliament's collective resolve to address the challenges faced by overseas Pakistanis, stressing that both the government and opposition remain united on the matter. Speaking at the inaugural Overseas Pakistanis Convention, he said that every member of the National Assembly, regardless of political party, fully supports the cause of the overseas community. "Our fellow Pakistanis living abroad are the true ambassadors of our country," he said. "Your support and partnership are crucial for building a

better future for everyone." He described overseas Pakistanis as the backbone of the nation, playing a key role in connecting Pakistan with the world. Your actions and words shape how the world sees our country," he added. The Speaker appreciated the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation for launching a new initiative to address the challenges faced by expatriates. He urged overseas Pakistanis to share their concerns so the government could respond with effective solutions. "Whether it's through business, education, or promoting Pakistan's image abroad, your contributions are significant," he said. Recalling his recent meetings with global dignitaries—including the Speaker of Saudi Arabia and

elect officials from the United States—he noted that many praised the achievements of Pakistanis living overseas. "When international leaders speak highly of our citizens abroad, it makes us proud. It reflects the hard work and integrity of our people," he said. "The purpose of this convention is to listen to your voices. The National Assembly belongs to you as much as it does to us," he said. "Although dual nationals are currently not allowed to contest elections, this issue needs fresh discussion in the parliament." He stressed the importance of recognizing those who send large amounts of money back home. "You send more remittances than the country earns through exports. If we

honor top exporters, why not top remitters?" he asked. He supported the idea of giving top remitters the honorary status of "roaming ambassadors." Ayaz Sadiq also emphasized the importance of using formal remittance channels and ending the use of informal systems like hundi. "Money sent through legal means strengthens the economy, increases tax collection, and brings transparency. Those using official channels should not face unnecessary scrutiny or extra taxes," he said. He acknowledged the difficulties overseas Pakistanis face at embassies, particularly in countries like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Italy. "People who send money home should be treated with the

same respect at embassies as ministers and MNAs. Why can't we offer them that dignity?" he asked. Calling for reforms, he urged the government to make it easier for returning expatriates to reintegrate into society. He suggested simplifying processes such as police verification, introducing a low-cost fee system, and offering fast-track certification. He also highlighted the serious problem of land grabbing, which affects many overseas Pakistanis. "There must be strict punishment for those who illegally seize their land—from the local patwari to police officers and even senior officials. These people invest their life savings with the dream of coming home. Losing their land is a national

shame," he said. He stressed the need to shift toward digital and paperless services, especially for documents like ID cards and embassy procedures. "If our children abroad can work remotely, why should overseas Pakistanis have to stand in lines at embassies?" he asked. He also pointed out the potential of medical tourism, saying, "Our doctors abroad are doing great. Why not encourage them to work in Pakistan, too? It would be affordable and efficient." Concluding his speech, he called for unity and action. "Let's move forward—together and with purpose—for those who support Pakistan from afar with their hearts, minds, and hard-earned money."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry meeting with Kazakhstan's Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin.

## RCB launches operation against encroachments

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Cantonment Board is conducting an operation against encroachments in Saddar, with CEO Syed Ali Irfan Rizvi directly overseeing the efforts. The board has declared key commercial areas, including Haider Road, Adamjee Road, Kashmir Road, Chota Bazaar, and Canning Road, as no-go zones for encroachments. During the operation, 17 trucks of material were confiscated from Saddar Bazaar. The CEO has instructed that any attempt

at encroachment will be met with immediate action, and no leniency will be shown. The operation aims to keep markets clean, spacious, and convenient for the public.

Traders have been advised to cooperate with the anti-encroachment teams to completely eliminate encroachments. Citizens have welcomed the initiative, praising the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board for improving traffic flow, beautifying the cantonment area, and facilitating traders and buyers. The board plans to continue this effort on permanent basis.



## Mental health unit to provide technical support

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives has established a mental health unit to provide technical support to the federal and provincial governments to implement the mental health and psychosocial support service model developed by the ministry. Mental Health Strategic Planning and Coordination Unit has been set up in collaboration with GIZ to establish an institutional framework and launch mental health as a national priority, said a press release. For this purpose, a letter of intent has been signed between the Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives and GIZ. This Unit will act as a secretariat for a national coordinating and steering mechanism to guide the formulation and implementation of policies, identify thematic areas for strategic planning, review and align all fragmented mental health initiatives to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize utilization of resources, it added. The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives recognizes the impact of ill mental health in terms of individual suffering and societal consequences.—APP

## Aun Chaudhry praises overseas Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis Aun Chaudhry Monday praised overseas Pakistanis as "Overseas Heroes of Pakistan" and outlined the government's strategy to attract investments through confidence-building measures and policy reforms at the upcoming convention. In an exclusive interview with a private news channel, Minister Aun Chaudhry told that the primary objective of the ongoing overseas convention is to instill confidence and security in the investments of overseas Pakistanis, with further reforms on the horizon. "Pakistan's interests come first," he said, clarifying that the convention is not about political or party-based benefits but rather about fostering confidence among state guests who play a vital role in Pakistan's economic growth. He said we know overseas Pakistanis' hearts are beating for Pakistan and we paid tribute to these heroes. This is the first time an Overseas Pakistanis Convention is being organized and their opinions and suggestions are being welcomed, adding that further reforms will now come in their policy. He stressed that overseas Pakistanis should invest not just in real estate but also in key sectors like IT, textiles, and mining & minerals, highlighting the potential for diversified growth and development in Pakistan. Minister Aun Chaudhry responding to a query, clarified that the Overseas Pakistanis Convention is not politically motivated but they plan to engage all political parties and stakeholders in discussions, particularly regarding voting rights for overseas Pakistanis. This convention aims to strengthen connections with the homeland, explore investment opportunities, and improve policy-making based on valuable suggestions from the diaspora community, he added.—DNA

## President extends greetings to Sikhs on Vaisakhi

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday extended greetings to the Sikh community in Pakistan and around the world on the joyous occasion of Vaisakhi. Vaisakhi is a symbol of Pakistan's beauty in its cultural and religious diversity, the president said in a message. He said the Sikh community was playing a prominent role in the development and prosperity of Pakistan. The president emphasized that the constitution of Pakistan provided complete religious freedom, equal rights, and protection to minorities. He also reiterated the government's commitment to upholding the principles of interfaith harmony, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence and prayed for the happiness, progress, and safety of the Sikh community.—APP

## Naqvi extends Baisakhi greetings to Sikh Community

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi extends greetings to the Sikh community on the occasion of the Baisakhi festival. "Baisakhi is a joyous and traditional festival of the Sikh community," said Mohsin Naqvi. "Sharing in each other's happiness promotes brotherhood and unity," he added. "We all share equally in the joy of the Sikh community on the occasion of Baisakhi," said Mohsin Naqvi. "Pakistan belongs to all of us, and together we must make it stronger and greater," he emphasized. "Pakistan is home to many sacred sites of the Sikh community," Naqvi highlighted. "Providing fundamental rights to minorities, ensuring the protection of their lives and property, and giving them equal opportunities for progress is the responsibility of the state," he said. "Under the Constitution of Pakistan, all minority communities living in the country have full rights to live and work," Mohsin Naqvi stated. "In Pakistan, followers of all religions, including the Sikh community, have complete freedom to live according to their beliefs," he said. "Special attention has been given to the maintenance, renovation, and security of Gurdwaras belonging to the Sikh community," Naqvi said. "All necessary facilities have been provided to the Sikh community for the performance of their religious rituals," he concluded.—DNA

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## Obituary: Professor Khurshid Ahmad (23 March 1932 – 13 April 2025)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Renowned statesman and thinker, political activist, economist, author, editor, and researcher Professor Khurshid Ahmad (born March 23, 1932, in Delhi) passed away peacefully on April 13, 2025, in Leicester, UK, surrounded by his family members. Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiun... Prof Khurshid Ahmad was among those distinguished Pakistani personalities recognized globally as thought leaders and advocates for Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah. He was a scholar and leader whose sincerity, intellectual depth, and patriotism were acknowledged even by those who held differing ideological and political views. He became politically active in his school days in Delhi as a member of 'Bachcha Muslim League' and took an active part in the Pakistan Movement. His family migrated to Karachi after the Partition, where his intellectual activism led him to the Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT), an Islamist student organization, and his leadership role transformed it



into one of the most vibrant student movements in Pakistan. He played a key role in the democratic struggle against President Ayub Khan's martial law as IJT's Nazim-e-Aala (president) and was imprisoned. His intellectual and political leadership was one of the main contributors to the defeat of the student organizations inspired by the Leftist ideology and their retreat from major universities and colleges of Pakistan in the 1960s and 70s and eventually from the political scene of the country. Later, he rose through the ranks

of Jama'at-Islami and became one of the closest associates of its founder, Maulana Saiyyed Abul Aala Maududi, particularly within the top intellectual leadership of the Islamic movement. He started his academic career teaching economics at the University of Karachi and wrote several treatises on Islamic ideology and economics. He also inspired and gathered a large number of international scholars around him to organize a global intellectual movement for the Islamization of contemporary knowledge, especially in the policy arena. Prof Khurshid Ahmad served as a member of the Senate of Pakistan for more than two decades, from 1985 to 2012, with a brief interruption, and in 1978, he held the position of Federal Minister for Planning and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of Pakistan. In 1979, he founded the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in Islamabad – the first non-government think tank of Pakistan – and continued to serve as its chairman until 2021. He was also a founding trustee of the International Islamic University, Islamabad; founding chairman of Islamic Foundation, Leicester, UK and president of

its Markfield Institute of Higher Education (the first academic centre of Islamic economics and finance in the Western world); founder chairman of the University of Management and Technology, Lahore; and patron and pioneering board member of several institutions and organizations across the Muslim world. Prof Khurshid Ahmad authored and edited over 130 books in Urdu and English. His books and articles have been translated and published in numerous languages, including Arabic, French, Turkish, Bengali, Japanese, German, Indonesian, Hindi, Chinese, Korean, Persian, and others. His scholarly statesmanship and publications contributed a lot in translating and transmitting the Islamic ideology, especially inspired by the works of Iqbal and Maududi into the mainstream national discourse of Pakistan. Many of his books are essential reads for higher education courses in the country and preparation of CSS exams. Doctoral dissertations on his intellectual contributions have been written at prominent universities in Malaysia, Turkey, and Germany.

## Tariff flip-flops

AS of Sunday evening US Eastern Time, when this piece was being drafted, US President Donald Trump suggested that he is indeed considering a new sectoral tariff regime on smartphones, computers and other electronics that our lives depend on. This was the latest development, not long after US Customs and Border Protection uploaded a bulletin past 10pm on Friday night, notifying anyone who might have been refreshing the agency's site at that hour that those products would be exempt from Trump "Liberation Day" tariffs. If you're heavily invested in Apple, you might have been ecstatic when you read the news about the exclusion and perhaps bought another whack of shares in the maker of mostly made-in-China iPhones. And if you did, you surely would have been miffed to learn that Apple's marquee product could still face some level of tariff that may – or may not – be unveiled this week. Keep in mind that all of this happened after investors started dumping US Treasury bonds at a time when these instruments should have been seen as a safe haven; it was during that melee that Trump announced his 90-day pause on the Liberation Day tariffs. Each of these twists and turns has been chalked up to the supposedly ruthless attempts by America's friends and foes alike, during many US administrations, to exploit the country. However, what Trump leaves out is that these decades of alleged scheming by America's trade partners have clearly failed, considering how much others have envied the US' economy and technological innovation. The United States' economic dominance has been in place for so many decades that many people alive today have only known such a reality. Washington has dictated the rules for just as long, enforcing them with the power of its currency. Trump and the hardliners in his cabinet are right to be worried that Chinese companies have managed to muscle in on America's global economic and military dominance. China's advances in the most important industries of this century – such as artificial intelligence and green technologies, and the supply chains that support them – threaten the American exceptionalism that has attracted the world's brightest and most ambitious innovators. – Former US president Joe Biden's many orders restricting advanced technology exports to China failed to keep America's lead on this front intact and might even have hastened the country's vault to the technological forefront. For anyone concerned about China's growing global market share in electric vehicles and other products that consumers want worldwide – and no one should be more concerned than Trump if he is indeed a true American patriot – more action is needed. But forget about carrots and sticks. Trump, in his inimitable form, has stepped up with a tariff bazooka aimed at allies, adversaries, investors and penguins – just about everyone except Russian President Vladimir Putin. – His shots have blown a hole in the course of world history by undermining the transatlantic alliance that kept the US and countries that were part of it safe and wealthy. Not even the sharpest analysts would have imagined the hostility that he has directed at Canada. That includes a gross mischaracterisation of the trade relationship that has served to expand the North American market, making it more attractive to investors. – The White House says that more than 75 countries are looking to negotiate new trade deals. If this is true, Trump will be able to take dozens of victory laps, but what does he think trade officials in Brussels, Ottawa and Tokyo will be doing to prepare for Trump's next onslaught? Washington won't be present in those negotiations.

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## In the home of the Oracle

TRUMP, tariffs, and trust dominated the 10th Delphi Economic Forum in Greece which concluded on Friday. Since taking office last January, US President Donald Trump has left world leaders, economists, and political analysts struggling to predict the future. After all, the case was – and very much still is – that when America sneezes, the world catches a cold. One only has to imagine how friends and foes alike are rushing to think tanks, analysts, and lobbyists to try to decipher the announcements and executive orders coming out of Washington on a daily basis. It is, therefore, perhaps fitting that a large number of the global elite gathered at a mountain town believed by ancient Greeks to be the home of the Oracle. Legend has it that Delphi was an ancient religious sanctuary dedicated to the mythical Greek figure Apollo. Developed in the eighth century B.C., the sanctuary was home to the Oracle of Delphi, known throughout the ancient world for predicting the future. Opening the Delphi Economic Forum, Greek President Konstantinos Tasoulas did not mince his words, saying that his country "supports transatlantic ties, while it contributes to efforts for its strategic autonomy, and the de-escalation of the trade war that is harmful to everyone, always advocating for a unified European policy." As he noted, "in an era in which global upheavals and radical changes are already apparent in both geopolitics and geoeconomics, with a pre-war-style imposition of intense protectionism that is disrupting and worsening the post-war global free economic system, our country is called upon to walk on familiar and tried-and-tested paths." Many questions were raised about Ukraine, whether it would be abandoned, and in the absence of the Russian narrative, most people were left wondering what comes next. Well, the answer might emerge soon from Saudi Arabia if the peace talks succeed. – In fact, Saudi Arabia was the only other topic that competed with Trump, and not just in the context of Ukraine. When it comes to stabilizing energy prices and ending the war in Gaza, all hopes are on the solutions that may come out of Riyadh. This is thanks to the Kingdom's foreign policy, which has pursued a fine balancing act, staying close to the US and the West, while at the same time strengthening its relations with China and Russia, and trying to minimize or eradicate conflicts and disputes with countries such as Iran. Let us also not forget that Riyadh enjoys an excellent relationship with Trump due to the trust and respect built during his first administration. When you combine such a web of relationships with the religious clout and economic might that the Kingdom enjoys, one can only begin to imagine the sphere of influence it has which was and is being used to help resolve regional and international conflicts. However, there is an added element, too, for Saudi-Greek bilateral ties, which have grown tremendously in the past eight years. Early this year, the relationship was strengthened by the visit of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to Saudi Arabia. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman received him in AIUla and he also visited the historic UNESCO World Heritage Site at Hegra. They discussed relations between the two countries as well as ways to increase cooperation in various fields. The crown prince and Mitsotakis also chaired the Saudi-Greek Strategic Partnership Council, which oversees areas of current and future cooperation.

## Charity and self-reliance in Pakistan

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The model set by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs teaches us that the true purpose of charity should be to make people self-sufficient rather than perpetuating their dependence. In the present era, though free meal programs operate with good intentions, they do not align with the Islamic model. Instead of merely providing daily meals, these institutions should focus on sustainable solutions. If billions of rupees are spent annually on free meals, why not invest these funds in small factories, vocational training centers, and business initiatives?

IN Pakistan, a vast network of public and private institutions provides free meals to thousands of individuals daily through community kitchens. The primary objective of these initiatives is to assist the poor and the deserving so that no one goes to bed hungry. While this act of generosity and social welfare is commendable, it also has a darker aspect—many beneficiaries are physically capable individuals who have become reliant on free meals rather than seeking employment. This raises an essential question: Are we truly helping them, or are we fostering a culture of dependence by discouraging self-reliance? According to available reports, nearly a thousand community kitchens and meal centers are currently operating across the country, run both by the government and private organizations. These initiatives provide free meals to thousands daily, with various charitable organizations playing a crucial role in distributing food in major cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar and other cities. Annually, billions of rupees are spent on these programs. While these efforts offer temporary relief, they fail to address the root causes of poverty and unemployment. A portion of these funds, if allocated to vocational training, small businesses, or industrial workshops, could yield more sustainable and long-term positive outcomes. An analysis of Pakistan's socio-economic conditions reveals that unemployment, lack of education, and inadequate vocational training opportunities are major contributors to poverty. Countries that have successfully reduced poverty have done so by investing in human resources, skill development, and economic self-sufficiency. Pakistan must adopt a similar model. Economic self-sufficiency is essential for national dignity. While global cooperation is necessary, Pakistan's policies must prioritize self-reliance rather than perpetual dependence on loans and foreign aid. The nation possesses vast potential

in agriculture, energy, and industry. If utilized effectively, these resources can reduce reliance on external financial support. Promoting local businesses, increasing exports, and reducing unnecessary imports are key measures for economic stability. Islam has always emphasized helping the poor and the hungry, but it has equally stressed the importance of self-sufficiency. The concept of social welfare was deeply rooted in Islamic society during the time of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). While the Prophet (PBUH) encouraged charity, he also underscored the significance of work. In a hadith, he stated; "It is better for a person to gather firewood and sell it than to beg from others". The system of Zakat was established to aid the needy, but alongside it, opportunities for self-sufficiency were also provided. The Islamic economic model promotes self-reliance, trade, and productivity while discouraging a dependency mindset. During the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, state resources were used to assist the poor, yet self-sufficiency was actively encouraged. Under the caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (RA), state resources were allocated for the poor, but employment opportunities were also created. Hazrat Umar (RA) introduced employment schemes, encouraged agriculture, and provided people with the means to work. Hazrat Usman (RA), known for his wealth and generosity, not only gave charity but also invested in trade and infrastructure to create job opportunities. Hazrat Ali (RA) promoted social justice and economic self-reliance, stating that "The best charity is that which enables financial independence." The model set by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs teaches us that the true purpose of charity should be to make people self-sufficient rather than perpetuating their dependence. In the present era, though free meal programs operate with good intentions, they do not align with the

Islamic model. Instead of merely providing daily meals, these institutions should focus on sustainable solutions. If billions of rupees are spent annually on free meals, why not invest these funds in small factories, vocational training centers, and business initiatives? Teaching skills such as tailoring, carpentry, electrical work, and agriculture can provide people with sustainable employment. Countries like China and Malaysia have significantly reduced poverty by focusing on skill development and job creation. Pakistan must learn from these models and shift from short-term relief to long-term self-reliance. Public-private partnerships can play a crucial role in this transformation by investing in community training centers, microfinance programs, and business incubators. Pakistan's progress and self-sufficiency depend on a national mindset that rejects dependence and embraces self-reliance. Whether it is foreign aid or domestic charity, this trend has limited the nation's true potential. Instead of becoming a dependent nation, Pakistan must foster a culture of innovation, perseverance, and self-sufficiency. This requires a shift in government policies and individual attitudes—moving away from reliance on external aid and focusing on strengthening local industries, institutions, and human resources. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision was based on economic independence and self-respect, a principle that remains as relevant today as ever. By investing in education, research, and technology, Pakistan can break the cycle of dependency and confidently shape its future. Now is the time to learn from history and implement a system that not only provides sustenance but also empowers individuals to stand on their own feet. Only then can we build a truly prosperous and self-reliant nation. By promoting a culture of self-sufficiency, Pakistan can ensure that charity serves as a means to independence rather than a source of perpetual reliance.

## The global economy is in turmoil. Now is the time to build a new order

Ben Radley

In this context, the updated 2024 programme proposes policies that can break the developmental divide between the Global North and South and deliver a "sustainable future" of "shared prosperity across the world". To achieve these goals, the programme identifies five major areas for collective action by governments in the South: climate, industry, finance, technology and governance. Within each area, several objectives are set out, followed by implementable measures for how to get there. The 31 proposed measures contain a mix ...

WE live in difficult times, and it is challenging to remain optimistic about the future. Climate change threatens human wellbeing and planetary health, and the window to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all is rapidly closing. Neo-fascism is spreading across continents. Militarism is on the rise. Genocide in Palestine continues to be livestreamed while war rages on from Sudan to Ukraine and Myanmar. Workers suffer under a worldwide assault on their political rights and freedoms. In short, we live in a world imperialist economy that continually reproduces inequality, poverty and war and is driven by the capitalist logic of ever-expanding accumulation that is pushing us towards planetary breakdown. We need alternative visions, and fast. With this in mind, the Havana Group of the Progressive International launched its Program of Action on the Construction of a New International Economic Order towards the end of 2024. The launch was timed to mark the 50th anniversary of its namesake. The Program of Action, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1974, sought to establish principles for equality between nations and peoples, but it was undone by the oil and Global South debt crises, combined with United States-led resistance to its implementation. Arguably, the 2024 Program of Action stands a better chance. Many Global South countries have significantly increased their economic and political power over the past 50 years while the North is shaken by US President Donald Trump's economic policies in pursuit of his "America first". US unilateralism may well undo the Global North's decades-long coordinated action to maintain its dominant position. In this context, the updated 2024 programme proposes policies that can break the developmental divide between the Global North and South and deliver a "sustainable future" of "shared prosperity across the world".

To achieve these goals, the programme identifies five major areas for collective action by governments in the South: climate, industry, finance, technology and governance. Within each area, several objectives are set out, followed by implementable measures for how to get there. The 31 proposed measures contain a mix of the old and the new, from long-established efforts to improve the terms of trade, to new initiatives, such as resource recycling clubs to address waste and the coordinated development of a public digital infrastructure. The most notable new addition, and of no surprise, is climate. Here, the programme is bold and uncompromising in its objectives, demanding full sovereignty over resources, clean energy abundance, the end of economic dependency, ecologically equal exchange of materials and energy, environmental justice and climate reparations. Taken together, the programme's set of 31 proposed measures can be read as a suggestive roadmap for what the late Egyptian economist Samir Amin called "delinking". For him, the essence of the anti-imperialist strategy of delinking lies in the South, breaking from the demands imposed by the North and reorienting towards the priorities, needs and interests of its peoples. Amin noted that the core elements of a delinking agenda would entail industrialisation for the mass production of domestic goods, reviving peasant agriculture and reasserting sovereign control over productive activity and economic policy. All these aspects are in Progressive International's Program of Action. Central to each of the programme's 31 proposals is the need for coordinated action across the South to establish a range of clubs, agencies, networks, frameworks and commissions. In this, the programme is calling for a revival of "unity in diversity", one of the central principles of the Bandung Conference, held in Indonesia in 1955 and attended by 29 Asian and African states to promote a common agenda against colonialism and

neocolonialism. It is easy to dismiss all this as naive optimism, given various faultlines between regions and nations of the South. Equally, it is difficult to see past its centrality to breaking the North-South divide and building a more equitable and just future. There is also the question of whether we can rely on governing political elites to lead us into this new world. The programme suggests we can. Yet the increasing capture of the state and the ruling classes by the logics and demands of capital accumulation and the development of global capitalism can pose a major challenge. Often, governing elites function as both promoters and beneficiaries of this trend. Governments in the Global South are not only – or not necessarily – mere victims of the ills of Northern capital. In many instances, they actively participate in and materially benefit from the reproduction of the existing global capitalist order. The task ahead lies not in awaiting salvation from the enlightened ruling classes but in building at home the economic and political power of what Guyanese historian and revolutionary Walter Rodney termed the "working people". Self-organised peasants and workers have historically played leading roles in anti-capitalist politics and liberation struggles against colonial and imperial subjugation. Today, six in 10 workers globally are in informal employment, increasing to nine in 10 workers in the world's poorest countries. To reflect this reality, labour organising must go beyond formal wage employment to include informal and self-employed labour as well as reproductive labour. Any collective flourishing within a new international economic order will once again depend on the determining role played by labour and popular forces, broadly understood. Without this, the excesses of global capital and the violence, impoverishment and inequality these reproduce will never be constrained.

## Briefs

UNHCR  
cuts cash  
support...

FROM PAGE 01

During their meetings with senior Pakistani officials and political leaders, they urged a reconsideration of the mass deportation policy, citing widespread fears of persecution and political retaliation under Taliban rule. Particularly vulnerable groups—including journalists, artists, poets, musicians, and members of the transgender community—are reportedly seeking avenues to avoid deportation. The transgender community, in particular, has publicly refused to leave Pakistan, fearing severe marginalization and threats to their lives upon return. As forced evacuations continue and international aid diminishes, the plight of Afghan refugees—many of whom have lived in Pakistan for decades—remains one of the region's most urgent and overlooked humanitarian crises.

Weapons  
left by US...

FROM PAGE 01

Ahmad Hussain, 35, a special forces constable who was critically injured in a nighttime attack in KP last year, told newspaper, "They have the latest American-made weapons. They could see us, but we couldn't see them," he added. The newspaper added that in May 2024, Pakistani officials gave the paper access to dozens of weapons that they said were seized from captured or dead terrorists. After months of inquiries, the US Army and the Pentagon confirmed to newspaper that 63 of the weapons that were shown to reporters had been provided by the US government to Afghan national forces. Most of the weapons were M16 rifles, alongside several more modern M4 carbines. Pakistani officials also displayed a handful of PVS14 night-vision devices, which are widely used by the US military but newspaper could not independently verify them as former US government property.

No voice  
can be...

FROM PAGE 01

The law minister said Pakistan had always stood shoulder to shoulder with the oppressed Palestine and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had taken a firm stand at every international forum. Meanwhile, The National Assembly adopted a unanimous resolution, once again strongly condemning the ongoing heinous wave of atrocities by the Zionist Israeli regime in Gaza. The resolution, moved by Law Minister Azam Nazeer-Tarar, noted that the latest Israeli offensive resumed on March 18 has resulted in the killing of 1600 innocent Palestinians bringing the total toll to over sixty five thousand deaths in Gaza. It severely rebuked the ruthless destruction of complete civil infrastructure including houses, hospitals, schools and places of worship by the barbaric Israeli bombing. The House expressed unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and sisters in their just struggle and reaffirmed their inalienable right of self-determination and to their motherland.

Aafia's US  
lawyer...

FROM PAGE 01

was not present at the hearing. During the proceedings, Advocate Imran Shafiq requested time to consult with Mr. Smith, which the court accepted. Advocate Shafiq further requested that the next hearing be scheduled after Clive Smith's arrival, suggesting May 6 as a suitable date. The court inquired from the law officer and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whether they had any objections. Upon receiving the response, the court adjourned the hearing until May 6. Earlier, during the previous hearing, the federal government rejected the proposal to exchange Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's release for the handover of Dr. Shakil Afridi, a Pakistani doctor convicted of assisting the CIA in locating Osama bin Laden.

Shabbir Iqbal lifts JA Zaman  
memorial open golf c'ship

The championship lived up to its reputation as one of Pakistan's most prestigious golfing events, bringing together over 500 golfers from across the country in a display of talent, sportsmanship, and tradition

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani golf legend Shabbir Iqbal reaffirmed his dominance on the national circuit, claiming victory in the men's professional category for a record sixth time at the 11th J.A. Zaman Memorial Open Golf Championship, concluded on Monday with a vibrant closing ceremony. The championship lived up to its reputation as one of Pakistan's most prestigious golfing events, bringing together over 500 golfers from across the country in a display of talent, sportsmanship, and tradition. In the men's professional category, Shabbir Iqbal won the title by leading the field with an impressive score of 274, for three consecutive days, Shabbir remains the most decorated golfer in Pakistan's history. It was a truly iconic moment to see the legend lift the trophy once again amidst loud applause. Following him closely Muhammad Ashfaq won 2nd place at 277 and joint 3rd place held by Mu-



hammad Minhaj and Matloob Ahmad, both at 278. The Amateurs added to the excitement, with Wazir Ali Khan claiming 1st net with a score of 141. Abdullah Farooqi finished closely behind in 2nd net, also with a score of 141, while Gulam Qadir finished 3rd net with the same score of 141. In

the gross category, Qasim Ali Khan took 1st gross with an impressive score of 143, followed by Irtaza Hussain at 145 and Hussain Hamid also at 145. The ladies competition showcased exceptional talent as well. Affia Yawar took home the 3rd net (238), while Saqiba Batool

was just ahead in 2nd net at 230. The top honors in ladies net went to Bushra Fatima, who matched the score of 230 but earned the 1st position due to a better tiebreaker. In the gross scores, Parkhajaz captured 1st gross at 234, followed by Dr. Aania Farooq Syed and Ana James Gill in 2nd

and 3rd gross with scores of 247 and 262, respectively. The Junior categories, run under the Ace Junior Golf League (AJGL), witnessed incredible performances from the future stars of Pakistan golf. In the girls categories, Hamaan Irfan won the elite category, Alia Amjad topped the albatross

category, Noor BanoCh claimed the eagle category and Noor Farid Rao won the birdie category. Among the boys, Yahya Ahsan clinched the elite title, RayyanFaraz won albatross category, BarikAyub earned eagle title and ShahzainIftikhar was the winner of the birdie category. The prize distribution ceremony was graced by the entire Zaman family, led by Hamid Zaman and his sons, celebrating the legacy of the late JA Zaman, a true golf lover and single hand-capper whose passion for the game lives on through this championship. Hamid Zaman expressed heartfelt appreciation for everyone who played a role in making the prestigious event a resounding success. He praised Convenor Golf Wajid Aziz for his exceptional planning and vision, and Club Captain TaimoorShabbir for his great support and leadership throughout the event. He also acknowledged Tournament Director Raza Said for his meticulous coordination and attention to detail that ensured every aspect of the tournament ran smoothly.

Van Dijk's late winner move  
Liverpool closer to UCL title

'The own goal was an unfortunate thing to happen,' says Van Dijk

LIVERPOOL: Virgil van Dijk scored in the 89th minute against West Ham United to secure a 2-1 victory for Liverpool, moving them 13 points clear at the top of the table in the race for their 20th league title. It was a day to remember for Mohamed Salah, who started brilliantly. Just days after receiving a standing

ovation and signing a new contract, the Egyptian star provided a superb assist for Luis Díaz, who opened the scoring in the 18th minute to set the tone for the Reds. It was Salah's 45th assist of the season – a record in the 38-game Premier League format. Liverpool held onto their lead until the 86th minute, when a defensive

mix-up led to left-back Andy Robertson scoring an unfortunate own goal, leveling the score. Pressure seemed to be mounting on Liverpool until their captain, Virgil van Dijk, responded with a fantastic header to restore the lead and secure all three points for the title contenders. "The own goal was an unfortunate thing

to happen – it was time to make it right," Van Dijk said after the match. The Dutchman's contract is set to expire in the summer, but it's expected that the Liverpool captain will sign a two-year extension in the coming days. "Everyone knows my love for the club. Let's see what happens next week," Van Dijk said. This win was crucial for Liverpool, who now sit 13 points ahead of second-placed Arsenal with six games remaining. Meanwhile, West Ham slipped to 17th after the defeat, though they still have games in hand to secure vital points. "It was difficult – like the other 33 steps we've taken this season. This is our season, the current Premier League," said the manager. "You saw yesterday: Arsenal drawing, Man City 2-0 down after 10 minutes, and today West Ham. – Agencies

CSK announce  
replacement for  
injured Gaikwad

CHENNAI: Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have named young Mumbai opener Ayush Mhatre as the replacement for skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad, who has been ruled out of the remainder of the IPL season due to an elbow fracture. The five-time IPL champions, currently struggling to find the right combination and sitting at the bottom of the points table, made the decision late on Saturday, April 13. Mhatre, who went unsold in the auction with a base price of 30 lakh, has been asked to join the squad immediately. However, he is expected to link up with the MS Dhoni-led side in a couple of days. "He will join the squad in Mumbai in a couple of days," a source close to the CSK management revealed. The team is currently in Lucknow for their seventh match, scheduled to be played at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Stadium on Monday night. So far, CSK have registered just one win and hold two points, having suffered five consecutive losses. They are set to face the Mumbai Indians on April 20 at the Wankhede Stadium. Mhatre was shortlisted after attending trials in Chennai, where he was tested alongside Urvil Patel from Gujarat and Salman Nizar from Kerala. Former India U-19 captain Prithvi Shaw, currently out of favour with IPL franchises, was also considered. However, the franchise ultimately opted for Mhatre as Gaikwad's replacement. At just 17, Mhatre has already made a mark in Mumbai's domestic circuit. In nine first-class matches, he has scored 504 runs, including two centuries and a half-century. In seven List A matches, he has accumulated 458 runs, with two centuries to his name. Having made his first-class debut in October last year, Mhatre is regarded by many in Mumbai's cricketing circles as a promising future prospect for India. – Agencies

Japan qualify for  
BJK Cup finals

TOKYO: Japan became the seventh team to book their place at the Billie Jean King Cup Finals when they came from behind to beat Canada 2-1 in Tokyo on Sunday. Victory in the doubles put them top of Group A and means they will be heading to Shenzhen in September to join hosts China, defending champions Italy and fellow qualifying group winners Ukraine, Spain, Great Britain and Kazakhstan. The one remaining place will go to either Slovakia or USA, who meet in Bratislava later on Sunday. Canada and Japan had both blanked Romania 3-0 in their opening matches, setting up the head-to-head finale which was played out in front of a noisy Tokyo crowd. The Canadians made the better start with Victoria Mbooko edging Ena Shibahara over three sets, 6-4, 6-7 (8/10), 7-5. Moyuka Uchijima then levelled the tie when she breezed through the second match against Marina Stakusic, winning 6-3, 6-3. That left everything on the doubles where Japan could call on the experienced Shuko Aoyama, now 37, and EriHozumi against Rebecca Marino and Kayla Cross. The Japanese took the first set 6-3 but the Canadians hit back strongly to lead 5-1 in the second, at which point they wobbled, losing four games in a row. They held their nerve to break again and take the set 7-5 but were immediately in trouble in the decider when Marino was broken. As pressure mounted and errors crept into the Canadians' game, the Japanese pair turned the screw to see out a 6-2 final set which qualified them for the China showpiece. – Agencies

Marko has 'great concern'  
over Verstappen future

Verstappen has a contract with Red Bull until 2028. But Marko told BBC Sport this month that it contains a performance clause that could allow him to leave the team

BRUSSELS: Red Bull motorsport adviser Helmut Marko says he has "great concern" about Max Verstappen's future with the team in the context of their current struggles. The four-time champion finished sixth in the Bahrain Grand Prix on Sunday, while Oscar Piastri scored McLaren's third win in four races so far this year. Dutchman Verstappen is third in the drivers' championship, eight points behind leader Lando Norris of McLaren. Marko told media: "The concern is great. Improvements have to come in the near future so that he has a car with which he can win again. "We have to create a basis with a car so that he can fight for the world championship." Verstappen has a contract with Red Bull until 2028. But Marko told BBC Sport this month that it contains a performance clause that could allow him to leave the team. The wording of this clause is not known publicly but it effectively says that Red Bull have to provide Verstappen with a winning car. Verstappen won the Japanese Grand Prix a week before Bahrain but that victory was founded on a pole position lap that many F1 ob-

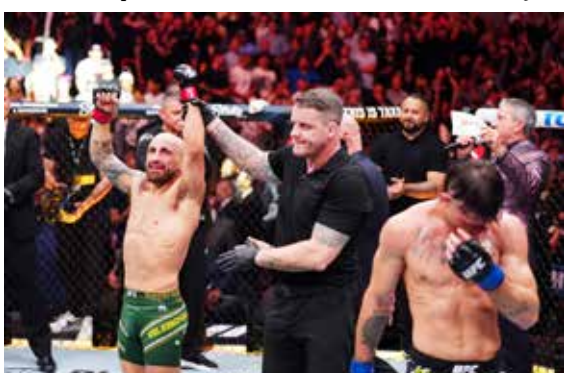
servers regarded as one of the greatest of all time. Because overtaking was next to impossible at Suzuka, Verstappen was able to hold back the McLarens of Norris and Piastri and take his first win of the year. Verstappen has qualified third, fourth and seventh for the other three races in Australia, China and Bahrain. The Red Bull is on average over all qualifying sessions this year the second fastest car but 0.214 seconds a lap slower than the McLaren. Verstappen has complained all year about balance problems with the Red Bull, which is unpredictable on corner entry and has mid-corner understeer. Red Bull team principal Christian Horner admitted after the race in Bahrain that the car's balance problems were fundamentally similar to the ones that made the second half of last year a struggle for Verstappen. He won just twice in the final 13 races of last season, but managed to win his fourth world title because of the huge lead he built up when Red Bull were in dominant form in the first five races of the season. Horner also said the team were having difficulties with correlation between their wind tunnel and on-track performance. Essentially, the car performs differently on track than the team's simulation tools say it should. Verstappen had a difficult race in Bahrain including delays at both pit stops, one with the pit-lane traffic light system and one with fitting a front wheel. – Agencies

## Volkanovski becomes two-time champ at UFC 314

## WEB DESK

DUBAI: Title fights are nothing new to Alexander Volkanovski. His featherweight bout early Sunday morning against Diego Lopes was his 10th championship fight in a row, but Volkanovski had been in a slump in which he had lost three of his past four matches. He left little doubt against Lopes at UFC 314, winning by unanimous decision. Two judges scored the fight 49-46 and the other had it 48-47. "It's good to be back," Volkanovski said. "I promised my girls I would bring the belt back to them. It doesn't matter about bringing the belt back. The message was a lot of people counted me out." Volkanovski (27-4) had successfully defended his belt four times before moving up a weight class and losing to Israel Makhachev on Feb. 11, 2023. Then after reclaiming the featherweight title five months later over Yair Rodriguez, Volkanovski lost back-to-back matches. President Donald Trump, a longtime friend of UFC President and CEO Dana White and a fan of the sport, watched from the front row. Shaquille O'Neal approached Trump and shook his hand. Cabinet officials Tulsigabbard, Marco Rubio and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. also were in attendance as was X (formerly Twitter) owner and White House adviser Elon Musk. In the co-main event, No. 12 lightweight contender Paddy Pimblett continued his UFC rise with a technical knockout of No. 7 Michael Chandler at 3:07 of

the third round. Pimblett, a 30-year-old from Liverpool, England, has won all seven of his bouts since moving to the organization, giving him a 23-3 record overall. "I want that world title," Pimblett said. "Some say I'll never be champ, I'll never get run, I'll never be in the top 10. But what now?" At nearly 39, Chandler has some decisions to making after winning just two of his most recent seven bouts. He is 23-10. Featherweight Bryce Mitchell, who fought for the first time since praising Adolf Hitler and denying the Holocaust on a podcast, was also on the card. He later backed off his comments and though White heavily criticized Mitchell, he didn't discipline him. Mitchell was little match for Jean



Silva in their featherweight fight. Silva won by submission with a guillotine choke with 1:08 left in the second round. Volkanovski, despite getting cut below his right eye in the second and being floored by an overhead right in that round, dominated the first three rounds. But Lopes' glove caught Volkanovski's other eye in the fourth round and then pounced, but failed to put him away. That set up the fifth round and, barring a knockout, Volkanovski appeared on his way to victory even though Lopes spent much of the fight verbally challenging him and inviting him to box. Theatrics to the contrary, Volkanovski was the aggressor. Volkanovski had hoped to get another shot at Ilija Topuria and avenge his loss from more than a year ago at UFC 298. But Topuria moved up to the lightweight division, leaving the featherweight class vacant. In stepped Lopes, the third-ranked challenger, to take on Volkanovski, the 36-year-old from Australia. Lopes, a 30-year-old from Brazil, was in first title bout. "Maybe I came up short on the technical piece," Lopes said through an interpreter. "I can see myself coming back. I have only two years in this organization, and I think I'm going to train better. I'm going to get better." Volkanovski was a -160 favorite at BetMGM Sportsbook to defeat Lopes (26-7), whose five-match winning streak ended. In preparing for Lopes, Volkanovski said he fully committed himself by beginning training camp earlier than usual and focusing on the workout recovery process and dieting in addition to the physical demands. He said he has never been this lean going into a bout.

 Hamas  
will free  
hostages  
if end to...

FROM PAGE 01

"We are ready to release all Israeli captives in exchange for a serious prisoner swap deal, an end to the war, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and the entry of humanitarian aid," Taher Al-Nunu, a senior Hamas official, said. However, he accused Israel of obstructing progress toward a ceasefire. "The issue is not the number of captives," Nunu said, "but rather that the occupation is renegeing on its commitments, blocking the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and continuing the war." "Hamas has therefore stressed the need for guarantees to compel the occupation (Israel) to uphold the agreement," he added. Israeli news website Ynet reported on Monday that a new proposal had been put to Hamas. Under the deal, the group would release 10 living hostages in exchange for US guarantees that Israel would enter negotiations for a second phase of the ceasefire. The first phase of the ceasefire, which began on January 19 and included multiple hostage-prisoner exchanges, lasted two months before disintegrating.

US congressmen  
call  
Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01

Another member of the delegation, comprising US dignitaries, Congressman Jonathan Jackson, said he witnessed a practical demonstration of faith, unity and discipline in Pakistan. "There is a golden opportunity to further strengthen relations with Pakistan based on shared history and mutual trust," he said, expressing the confidence that "Pakistan's future is extremely bright". A US congressional delegation, led by US House of Representatives Congressman Bergman, recently met several dignitaries in Pakistan and held discussions on a range of matters of mutual interests. The delegation on Sunday called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir and commended Pakistan's armed forces for their pivotal role in combating terrorism. The congressmen also acknowledged Pakistan's enduring contributions to the regional peace and stability.

Naqvi visits  
Kartarpur  
with US...

FROM PAGE 01

US Congressman Jonathan Jackson, Acting US Ambassador Natalie Baker and US Consul General Kristen K. Hawkins, Mohsin Naqvi and the US delegation were warmly welcomed by leading figures of the Sikh community outside the DarshanDeori. Interior Minister and the US Congressmen congratulated the Sikh community on the occasion of Baisakhi festival. Mohsin Naqvi and the US Congressmen also visited the Gurdwara Sahib, viewed tge various items related to Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji. They were briefed about Gurdwara Sahib Kartarpur. They also attended the prayer ceremony at the Gurdwara Sahib and also visited the historical well. Interior Minister and the delegation of US Congressmen were presented Saropa and Kirpan. Sikh pilgrims from India met Interior Minister and the US delegation and took pictures with them.

Pakistan  
remittances  
reach...

FROM PAGE 01

was aided by seasonal inflows during Ramadan and Eid. "Apart from that, remittances have also picked up due to the better economic health of the sending countries, amid falling domestic inflation and increase in real incomes. Also, the number of registered overseas workers may also be on the rise," he told Geo.tv. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also expressed his pleasure as foreign remittances sent by overseas Pakistanis in a month crossed the \$4 billion mark for the first time in the country's history, terming it a reflection of their trust in the government's policies.

## Briefs

## PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 1,536 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish on Monday, gaining 1,536.70 points, a positive change of 1.34 percent, closing at 116,390.04 points as compared to 114,853.33 points on the last trading day. A total of 484,547,019 shares were traded during the day as compared to 458,589,593 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs27.430 billion against Rs31.628 billion on the last trading day. As many as 455 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 247 of them recorded gains and 145 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 63 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Energycio PK with 55,091,076 shares at Rs 8.64 per share, Pak Int. Bulk with 45,232,730 shares at Rs 10.86 per share and Sui South Gas with 31,842,819 shares at Rs 41.71 per share. PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 132.95 per share closing at Rs 1,462.40 whereas runner-up was Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs 102.48 rise in its share price to close at Rs 7,173.33. Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 88.96 per share price, closing at Rs 3,233.01, whereas the runner-up Indus Motor Company Limited with Rs 19.52 decline in its per share price to Rs 1,999.51.—APP

## Rupee sheds 14 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday depreciated by 14 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs280.60 against the previous day's closing of Rs280.46. 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 79 paise to close at Rs319.75 against the last day's closing of Rs318.96, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SB). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.96, whereas an increase of Rs3.69 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs369.66 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs366.54. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 04 and 05 paise to close at Rs76.39 and Rs74.76, respectively.—APP

## Egyptian, Qatari leaders discuss Gaza, economic partnerships

LONDON: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi discussed the reconstruction plan for the Gaza Strip and economic partnerships with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. El-Sisi is on a two-day state visit to Qatar and is scheduled to visit Kuwait on Tuesday as part of a Gulf tour, the Middle East News Agency reported. Qatar and Egypt agreed to a package of direct investments worth up to \$7.5 billion, aiming to strengthen and support sustainable economic development for both countries, MENA agency added. During their meeting in Doha on Monday, El-Sisi and Sheikh Tamim discussed the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. They expressed strong support for the Palestinian people's right to establish an independent state based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. They discussed the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, which lies in ruins after a year and a half of Israeli bombardment. The two leaders said that Palestinian reconciliation is essential to achieving national unity among factions to lead state institutions, MENA agency added.—APP

## IFC reaffirms support for macroeconomic reforms

The Finance Minister welcomed the IFC delegation and acknowledged the valuable technical expertise and advisory support extended by the institution in various sectors. He noted that macroeconomic stability, which forms the foundation of economic resilience, had been largely restored in Pakistan.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Global Director for Public Private Privatization & Corporate Finance Advisory, Ms Linda Rudo Munyengerwa here on Monday expressed strong interest in supporting the country's macroeconomic reform, investment and privatization initiatives. Ms Linda, who is leading IFC delegation to Pakistan, said this during a high-level meeting with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, according to press release issued by finance ministry. She conveyed that the IFC delegation had come here with an open mind, intending to explore the market and engage with key government stakeholders to identify potential areas for investment. The IFC delegation reaffirmed their willingness to work closely with stakeholders in Pakistan, offering both advisory services and investment support aimed



at achieving long-term and inclusive economic development. IFC's extensive global experience across various sectors, including infrastructure, energy, transport, public finance, and privatization, was highlighted as a valuable asset that could be leveraged to support Pakistan's development agenda. The delegation emphasized their readi-

ness to partner with Pakistan in exploring viable opportunities for collaboration and investment. The Finance Minister welcomed the IFC delegation and acknowledged the valuable technical expertise and advisory support extended by the institution in various sectors. He noted that macroeconomic stability, which forms the foundation of econom-

ic resilience, had been largely restored in Pakistan. He further underscored the government's commitment to maintaining this stability and ensuring long-term, sustainable economic growth. Recognizing the fiscal challenges in managing public finances and meeting the country's expanding development needs, the Minister stressed the importance of uti-

lizing the expertise and financial resources of international institutions like IFC through public-private partnerships. He affirmed that such collaborations could facilitate the implementation of essential reforms and enhance efforts to develop efficient energy, transport, and infrastructure systems in response to the demands of a growing population

## Azerbaijan unveils national pavilion at Osaka Expo

xpo 2025, spanning over 155 hectares, hosts 165 countries and 7 international organizations, and is projected to attract 28 million visitors by its conclusion on October 13

BAKU: The Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, themed "Designing the Future Society for Our Lives," has officially opened in Osaka, Japan. The opening ceremony was attended by Emperor Naruhito of Japan, Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, Secretary-General of the BIE Dimitri Kerentzes, and high-level international delegates. Azerbaijan, a consistent participant in Expo exhibitions since 2000, underscored the importance of its presence at this global event. A highlight of the opening was the unveiling of the Azerbaijani national pavilion, organized by the Heydar Aliyev Center. Attendees included Anar Alakbarov, Azerbaijan's Commissioner General for Expo 2025, Director of Heydar Aliyev Center, Shimzi Izumi, Azerbaijan's Country Manager for Expo 2025, Ambassador Gursel Ismayilzade, and other dignitaries. Located within the "Connecting Lives" section, the Azerbaijani pavilion explores the theme "Seven Bridges for Sustainability." The pavilion's design draws inspiration from Nizami Ganjavi's "Seven Beauties." It showcases Azerbaijan's rich cultural heritage, technological progress, and commitment to sustainable development, while also emphasizing openness to dialogue. The facade design of the three-story pavilion is inspired by "shebeke" patterns, which reflect Azerbaijani traditions, art, and craftsmanship. Visitors begin their journey through the pavilion by exploring the diverse themes embodied by each of the legendary Seven Beauties—cultural diversity, cultural heritage, traditional arts, architectural treasures, sustainable development, natural resources, as well as sports and tourism. The pavilion also features three symbolic trees celebrating Azerbaijan and Japan: the "Azerbaijan Tree," the "Japan Tree," and the "Friendship Tree," which represents a synthesis of Azerbaijani and Japanese trees. Expo 2025, spanning over 155 hectares, hosts 165 countries and 7 international organizations, and is projected to attract 28 million visitors by its conclusion on October 13.—DNA

## Call for productive salt mining to unlock trade avenues

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Monday stressed the need for safe, sustainable, and value addition in salt mining to unlock international markets' trading opportunities. He was speaking at an inaugural session of the three-day international workshop titled "Productive Salt Mining and Value Addition of Salt Products for International Markets, jointly organized by the National Productivity Organization (NPO) and Salt Manufacturer Association of Pakistan (SMAP). Akhtar emphasized that innovation and sustainability were critical needs of the hour in the salt mining industry. He acknowledged the pivotal role being played by the NPO in the industrial development of the country. Highlighting key initiatives, he mentioned the ministry's plans to establish model factories aimed at enhancing productivity and value addition in different sectors. He particularly stressed the importance of boosting global demand for Pakistan's renowned pink salt, known not only for its unique taste but also for its health benefits, including stress relief and therapeutic uses. "Value addition will lead to increased exports and generate employment opportunities," he said, adding, "We must prioritize utility creation and aim for a strong presence in the global market." The workshop includes sessions focused on mine safety, productivity, and exploring new business opportunities in the salt sector. International experts and industry leaders are participating in discussions surrounding around exports and value-added products. Haroon Akhtar also noted the significance of the National Industrial Policy, currently being formulated, as a vital step towards enhancing the country's export potential and industrial growth. He reiterated that minerals like pink salt and gemstone factors were essential to boosting Pakistan's mineral exports.—APP

## Ahsan terms policy continuity vital for sustainable eco growth

The Planning minister said that Uraan Pakistan program is the development footprint for the entire nation and the planning ministry has started working on its implementation agenda identifying 8 areas for special focus including agriculture, industry, services, IT, mining, manpower export, blue economy and creative industries

KARACHI: The Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Monday termed the significant improvements and hard-earned stability of national economy as an opportunity for creating collaborative efforts to maintain the momentum, tap the real potential and achieve the goals of sustainable growth. The minister, while addressing the leadership of the business community and later responding to media queries during his visit to Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), highlighted the key features of Uraan Pakistan program and said that it is the vision of sustainable development and prosperity of Pakistan. Iqbal underscored that peace and harmony, political stability, continuity of the policies, and cohesive reforms and adaptability are four basic elements of a sustainable growth ecosystem. Pakistan, with its diverse national resources, has the potential to transform itself into a trillion dollar economy but we need commitment to these four elements as it is the path that leads the nation to glory, he maintained. The Planning minister said that Uraan Pakistan program is the development footprint for the entire nation and the planning ministry has started working on its implementation agenda identifying 8 areas for special focus including agriculture, industry, services, IT, mining, manpower export, blue economy and creative industries. He also sought feedback and viable proposals from trade bodies in the regard. The inflation and the policy rate have witnessed significant decline during the year while the government recently reduced the electricity tariff by around Rs 7, the minister said and hinted that further economic stability may enable more reduction in the tariff and it would further ease the production cost as well as cost of doing business. For taking ourselves out of the "Boom and Bust" cycle, he stressed, we need to embed sustainable growth with exports and build up foreign reserves, he said adding that the government and private sector have to work hand in hand to make Pakistan an exporting nation and establish the brand "Made in Pakistan". Referring to \$ 4 billion record inflows of workers' remittances, the minister said that Pakistan can enhance workers' remittances to \$ 50 billion within two or three years by imparting youth with skill and professional training as per global market requirements. We need to become a one trillion economy by 2035 and only agility could help us to utilize our potential to the fullest and achieve the status of top economies of Asia, he maintained adding that at this juncture of time we need an economic long march on emergency basis rather than a political long march. The government, establishment, judiciary and politicians have to work together for peace, stability and continuity of policy and safeguard the economic reforms while the business community is also expected to join our hands for economic revitalization, Ahsan Iqbal said. Pakistan Muslim League (N), in its each tenure presented revolutionary agendas for development and prosperity of the nation and Pakistan has achieved macro economic stability due to the untiring efforts of PM Shehbaz Sharif led PML-N government.—DNA

## Romania's pavilion opened with multi-sensory approach at expo 2025

BUCHAREST: Romania's Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka was officially inaugurated on Sunday, having the architectural concept developed by students and featuring an interactive, multi-sensory approach. The exhibition space dedicated to Romania is located in the area allocated under the sub-theme 'Saving Lives,' covering a ground area of approximately 900 square metres. It is situated near the pavilions of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Poland, according to a press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE). The pavilion was inaugurated by Secretary of State for Interinstitutional Relations Janina Sitaru, Commissioner General of the Romanian Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka Ferdinand Nagy and Romania's Ambassador to Japan Ovidiu Raetchi. 'Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, taking

place from 13 April to 13 October 2025, will bring together 158 international participants to explore the theme 'Designing Future Society for Our Lives,' which is based on the idea of international collaboration and collective involvement in identifying solutions to humanity's current challenges,' the Ministry of Foreign Affairs says. As part of the expo, Romania's economic and commercial promotion events will focus on the following areas: economy, research, education and energy, digitisation and IT&C, as well as investment opportunities - all aimed at strengthening and developing the Strategic Partnership signed between Romania and Japan on 7 March 2023. On the cultural front, five large-scale artistic events will take place on Expo stages, along with 2,000 live events within the Romanian Pavilion. Romania Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, scheduled for

26 June, will be marked by a Multi-sectoral Economic Forum attended by over 80 companies from Romania, prominent representatives of the Japanese business community, as well as high-level officials from both countries. The forum will include country and investment project presentations, along with B2B sessions tailored to participants. On Sunday, Janina Sitaru emphasised that a better future for upcoming generations can only be achieved through honest and ongoing cooperation. She mentioned that through the pavilion's theme, 'Romania, Land of Tomorrow,' the country aims to draw international attention to the diversity and richness of its natural resources, the quality of its human capital, and its cultural and technological potential. "This marks the 25th time that Romania is participating in a world or international expo - a history

that began 158 years ago. From our great inventors such as Henri Coanda and Ana Aslan, to the new generations of entrepreneurs and researchers offering future-oriented solutions, Romania continues to inspire and contribute to a sustainable and equitable future," said the secretary of state. She noted that Romania's pavilion takes 'an interactive and multi-sensory approach' and aims to present visitors with a picture of how Romanian innovations contribute to a better, more sustainable future. 'We sought to harness the intelligence, enthusiasm and creativity of younger generations in the context of our participation at Expo Osaka 2025. The architectural concept of the Romanian Pavilion was created by students and selected through a competition organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ion Mincu University of Architecture

and Urbanism,' Sitaru added. Commissioner General Ferdinand Nagy said that the Romanian Pavilion offers 'the ideal setting' for promoting Romanian cultural values, showcasing a country that is 'constantly evolving, a space that conveys hope, authenticity and a bold vision for the future.' Ambassador Ovidiu Raetchi expressed that Romania's participation with a pavilion at the world expo is a special opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations, in the context of the 'excellent' ties and strategic partnership between Romania and Japan. More information about the Romanian Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka is available on the official website romaniaexpo2025.ro and on the Facebook and Instagram pages @romaniaexpo2025. The artistic moment for the pavilion opening was performed by students from the National University of Music in Bucharest.—Agencies

## Turkiye seeks growing influence in Africa

ISTANBUL: Turkiye has long sought to extend its influence in Africa by mediating in conflicts and building military partnerships with countries on the continent. Those efforts have picked up speed in recent months with diplomatic successes in resolving local conflicts, and as traditional powers such as France and the United States pull back from the continent, according to analysts and diplomats. An annual diplomacy forum in the southern Mediterranean resort of Antalya on April 11-13 drew many African officials, including the president of Somalia, as part of Ankara's efforts to consolidate its foothold in Africa. Today African countries are looking for alternatives, and Turkiye represents one of those options, so it has resonated well in Africa," Professor Eghosa Osaghae, director general of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, who attended the forum, told AFP. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has boosted his international standing after backing rebels who overthrew Syrian ruler Bashar Assad and brokering a key Horn of Africa peace deal between Somalia and Ethiopia. Ankara, which also hosted two rounds of talks between Russia and Ukraine at the start of the war, has often said it is ready to support any initiative leading to peace between its two Black Sea neighbors.—APP

## EU announces \$1.7b in new aid for Palestinians

LUXEMBOURG: The European Union on Monday announced a new three-year financial support package for the Palestinians worth up to 1.6 billion euros (\$1.8 billion). The fresh aid pledge came just ahead of a meeting between Palestinian prime minister Mohammed Mustafa and EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg. "We are stepping up our support to the Palestinian people. EUR1.6 billion until 2027 will help stabilize the West Bank and Gaza," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas wrote on X. The EU is looking to boost the Palestinian Authority (PA) as Israel has resumed its war in Gaza after a ceasefire largely put a halt to the fighting for two months. "This will reinforce the PA's ability to meet the needs of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and prepare it to return to govern Gaza once conditions allow," Kallas said. Brussels — the biggest international donor to the Palestinians — said the package would include 620 million euros in grants for the Palestinian Authority.—APP

## Paris denounces Algiers' order to expel 12 French officials

PARIS: France's foreign minister said Monday that Algerian authorities gave 12 French state officials 48 hours to leave the country. Jean-Noel Barrot denounced the decision, saying it appeared as "a response to the arrest of three Algerian nationals suspected of serious offenses on French soil." French counterterrorism prosecutors said the Algerians were arrested Friday and handed preliminary charges of "kidnapping or arbitrary detention ... in connection with a terrorist undertaking." They are allegedly involved in the April 2024 kidnapping of an Algerian influencer, Amir Boukhors, or Amir DZ, a known critic of the Algerian government with 1.1 million followers on TikTok. An Algerian consular official is among the three arrested, according to French media. Barrot called on Algerian authorities "to abandon" measures to expel the French officials "who have no connection with the current legal proceedings," in a written statement. "If the decision to send back our officials is maintained, we will have no other choice but to respond immediately," Barrot said.—APP

Briefs

Punjab governor bans Israeli products

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has imposed a complete ban on the use of Israeli-branded, foreign beverages and products within the Governor House Lahore. In a statement, the Governor emphasised that this decision came after the ongoing atrocities against innocent Muslims in Gaza and Palestine, saying, "My heart bleeds seeing the oppression in Gaza. As long as I serve as Governor, no foreign or Israeli-linked products will be used in the Governor House." He urged the public to boycott any products that financially benefit Israel or non-Muslim entities involved in such injustices. Governor Haider Khan also lauded his Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for appointing Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as its young chairman, congratulating both the party and the people of Pakistan. The Governor held meetings with senior PPP leaders including former Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Punjab Assembly Parliamentary Leader Haider Ali Gillani, Chaudhry Manzoor, and other party members.

Iran FM to head to Moscow to discuss nuclear talks

TEHRAN: Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is set to visit Moscow this week to discuss recent nuclear negotiations with the United States held in Oman, the foreign ministry spokesman said on Monday, ahead of a new round of talks planned for Rome. On Saturday, Araghchi held talks with US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff in Muscat, the highest-level Iranian-US nuclear negotiations since the collapse of a 2015 accord. "Dr. Araghchi will travel to Moscow at the end of the week," said spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei, adding that the trip was "pre-planned" and would be "an opportunity to discuss the latest developments related to the Muscat talks." Iran and the United States separately described Saturday's discussions as "constructive." The negotiations came weeks after US President Donald Trump sent a letter to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei calling for nuclear talks while warning of possible military action if Tehran refused. Russia, a close ally of Iran, and China have held discussions with Iran in recent weeks over its nuclear program. - Agencies

Trump blames Zelensky, Biden for war

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has accused his predecessor Joe Biden and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of failing to prevent the war in Ukraine. "President Zelensky and the corrupt Joe Biden did an absolutely terrible job when they allowed this farce to begin," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. There were so many ways to prevent the outbreak of war, he continued - without explaining how the invasion of the neighboring country ordered by Kremlin chief Vladimir Putin in February 2022 could have been stopped. The war between Russia and Ukraine is Biden's war, not his, the US President explained. He had only been in office for a short time and had had no problem preventing it during his previous term of office, as Russian President Vladimir Putin respected him. He repeated in capital letters: "I had nothing to do with the war, but I am working tirelessly to stop the death and destruction." Trump is pushing for an end to the war and maintains close contact with the Kremlin via his special envoy Steve Witkoff. Trump's government envisions a "deal" for an end to the war in several areas that is in Moscow's interest. - Agencies

# European flavors brought to Islamabad, says Amb. Kionka

## EU Ambassador Riina Kionka Inaugurates EMBERS – A European Culinary Experience at Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a vibrant celebration of culture, cuisine, and collaboration, European Union Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka, officially inaugurated the launch of EMBERS, a premium European-themed restaurant at the Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad. The event marked a significant moment in the capital's evolving hospitality landscape, drawing dignitaries, business leaders, diplomats, and food connoisseurs alike. Ambassador Kionka, known for her efforts to foster EU-Pakistan ties beyond diplomacy into areas such as education, innovation, and cultural exchange, delivered the keynote address. In her remarks, she highlighted the restaurant as "a unique platform to bring European flavors to Islamabad while deepening people-to-people connections through the universal language of food." Also present at the ceremony were Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, CEO of The Centaurus Group; Sardar Rashid Ilyas Khan, President of The Centaurus Group; and Mr. Nicolas Verdun, General Manager of Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad. Each speaker shared insights into the concept and vision behind EMBERS, underlining their joint commitment to enhancing the city's hospitality standards. EMBERS is not just a restaurant—it's a gastronomic journey across Europe. With a meticulously curated menu inspired by Mediterranean, French, Italian, and Central European cuisines, the establishment seeks to elevate fine dining experiences in Pakistan. From rustic flavors of the European countryside to modern culinary techniques, the restaurant aims to blend



authenticity with innovation. Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said, "EMBERS is more than just a restaurant—it's a celebration of European culture and culinary mastery. With Islamabad evolving into a cosmopolitan city, we felt there was a growing demand for sophisticated dining options that reflect global standards." President Sardar Rashid Ilyas Khan echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the Centaurus Group's mission to continually raise the bar in hospitality and lifestyle ventures. Mr. Nicolas Verdun, GM of Mövenpick Ho-

tel Islamabad, spoke about the strategic significance of adding EMBERS to the hotel's diverse food portfolio. "At Mövenpick, we pride ourselves on delivering memorable moments to our guests. EMBERS stands as a testament to that promise, where ambiance, flavor, and service harmonize to create an unmatched dining destination." The opening of EMBERS also symbolizes the growing cultural exchange between Europe and Pakistan. With Ambassador Riina Kionka and other European ambassadors presence underscoring the EU's

support for such cross-cultural initiatives, the event reinforced the importance of soft diplomacy through culinary and artistic expressions. The evening concluded with a guided tasting session of signature dishes from the EMBERS menu, accompanied by live JAZZ music, offering guests an immersive experience into the essence of European dining. With its doors now open, EMBERS invites Islamabad to indulge in a new era of culinary exploration—where every dish tells a story, and every visit is an unforgettable experience.

### Internal rift surfaces in PTI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A political controversy has erupted within Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) over a missed meeting with a visiting US congressional delegation, after revelations that the National Assembly Speaker's Office extended invitations to PTI members—but the information was not relayed to the broader party leadership. According to insider sources, the Speaker's Secretariat had reached out to two key PTI figures—Chief Whip Aamir Dogar and party leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan—to attend the meeting with the American delegation. However, instead of informing the party or its parliamentary committee, both officials allegedly kept the invitation under wraps. The issue came to light when an emergency meeting of PTI's parliamentary committee was convened to address the diplomatic lapse. All MNAs belonging to PTI and its allied Sunni Ittehad Council were present, and the atmosphere reportedly turned tense as questions were raised over why the party had no official representation in the high-profile engagement. Sources claim that PTI lawmaker Aamir Dogar was attending the wedding of PPP leader Qamar Zaman Kaira's son at the time, while Barrister Gohar was "seeking confirmations" from different sources regarding the meeting's details. Barrister Gohar, defending himself during the parliamentary huddle, said, "I asked Rauf Hassan (PTI spokesperson) about the invitation, but we did not receive anything from the US Embassy."

### Dist admin demolishes bunkers in Kurram

PESHAWAR: In an effort to bring peace in the restive Kurram Agency, the district administration has successfully demolished the bunkers in the second phase of cleansing, giving hope to residents who saw the district tangled up in violence for months during the last year. According to reports, the district administration would now start collecting weapons from the warring parties. The groups which were at loggerheads with each other have agreed to surrender their weapons, helping foster inclusive environment in the district. - Agencies

## SC issues notice to acting IHC CJ in judges' transfer case

"Why were new judges not appointed from the same provinces instead of transferring existing ones," asks Justice Afghan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's five-member constitutional bench on Monday issued notices to Islamabad High Court judges and others on please challenging recent transfer of high court judges to the IHC and the subsequent changes in the judicial seniority. The top court's constitutional bench, headed by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and comprising Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan, Justice Salahuddin Panhwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmed — took up the plea filed by five IHC judges, the Karachi Bar Association (KBA) and the IHC Bar Association, among others. After hearing preliminary arguments, the SC

bench stated: "Points raised require consideration, let notices be issued to the respondents in all aforesaid cases. Notices also be issued in terms of Order XXVIII-A, Rule 1, of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, to the learned attorney general of Pakistan and all the advocates general of provinces as well as the advocate general of the Islamabad Capital Territory for 17.04.2025 at 11:30am." In February this year, five judges of the IHC moved the SC against the appointment of Justice Sarfraz Dogar as the acting chief justice of IHC as well as transfer of judges from three high courts to the capital's high court. Five IHC judges — Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan and Justice Saman Riffat Imtiaz — filed a petition in the top court under Article 184(3) of the Constitution. The IHC judges urged the apex court to declare that the president does not have unfettered and unbridled discretion to transfer judges from one high court to another, under Article 200(1) of the Constitution, without a manifest public interest, and in a manner that hampers the principles of independence of judiciary and separation of powers.

## IMF, SCBAP stress political stability for judicial efficiency

### IMF shares concerns over contract enforcement, property rights issues, directly affecting foreign investments

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: After holding extensive discussions on a range of issues, IMF and the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan (SCBAP) concluded the meeting with emphasis on economic and political stability, which is crucial to boost judicial efficiency. A meeting between the SCBAP President Mian Muhammad Rauf Atta and the IMF mission was held in Islamabad on Monday with an agenda to discuss issues such as judicial efficiency, contract enforcement, and property rights protection. On the occasion, the presidents of the High Court Bar Associations of Balochistan and Sindh, Mir Atta Ullah Langove and Barrister Sarfraz Metlo, respectively, were also present. The meeting, which lasted for more than an hour, covered several issues, particularly the issue of judicial efficiency, which appears to

be one of the core concerns of the mission. The mission also shared its concerns regarding contract enforcement and property rights issues, which directly affect foreign investments. In this context, the President SCBAP provided a detailed and factual response to the mission's queries. The SCBAP president, while recognising the importance of judicial efficiency, viewed that for a vibrant and independent judicial system, judicial efficiency is one of the basic prerequisites. Atta apprised the mission that two important efforts are currently being made to enhance judicial efficiency, one on the judicial side and the other on the legislative side. On the judicial side, he apprised the mission of the initiatives taken by CJP aimed at improving judicial efficiency, such as the introduction of an e-filing system replacing the orthodox filing system, revamping the case management system, expeditious disposal of pending cases, and the introduction of video link facilities in the Supreme Court.

## Pakistan hosts 8th int'l Army team spirit exercise at Pabbi

A total of 20 friendly countries including military observers are participating in the event Participating countries include Pakistan, Bahrain, Belarus, China, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and others

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The opening ceremony of 8th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit Exercise-2025 was held at National Counter Terrorism Centre

(NCTC) Pabbi. Director General Military Training opened the 60 hours long Patrolling Exercise which aims at enhancing military to military cooperation under complex international security environment. A total of 20 friendly countries including military

observers are participating in the event Participating countries include Pakistan, Bahrain, Belarus, China, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Morocco, Nepal, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Turkiye, United States of America and Uzbekistan, while Bangladesh, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, South Africa and Thailand. Pakistan Army Team Spirit is a mission specific and task oriented professional military exercise organized annually in Pakistan. The exercise calls for highest standard of physical fitness, mental agility/robustness and professional military expertise for quick decision making in varied situation during conduct of challenging missions in near real environment. The aim and objectives of this exercise revolve around perseverance acclaimed through the team spirit. The exercise would help hone basic soldierly attributes besides interoperability through sharing of innovative ideas and mutual best practices.



## Pakistan Scholar urges unity to influence US policy

ANATOLIA: Pakistan scholar and Foreign Affairs Expert Muhammad Mehdi has termed Palestine-Israel diplomacy a big flop, saying if such endeavour has fallen shorts of producing any tangible result, why it is being brainstormed repeatedly. He was speaking on global gathering of Palestine Contact Group held in Anatolia Diplomacy Forum in Turkey. Raising his question, he asked "do we have some other ways or tools to address the issue." He expressed perturbation on Syrian turmoil and added "did we mishandle it". "Did we try to unite all Muslims or play a role in disintegration. Do we carve out a situation through which Muslim countries may get unified or form an effective group in order to influence the US's Palestine policy. Regarding spate of protests being held in the US and Europe, did Muslim nations try to intervene. And are all resolutions passed in favour of Palestine so impactful to force Israel to step back," he raised question in his speech. He claimed that diplomacy efforts have already gone back to square one, so more strenuous bids are bound to get doomed. Anyhow, he applauded the gathering of Palestine Contact Group held in Anatolia Diplomacy Forum in Turkey and gave full credit to Turkey President Tayyip Erdogan for its success saying that it helped to thrash out comprehensive dialogue on Palestine issue in true letter and spirit and top of them it became a forum that made sit together leaderships of Russia and Ukraine under one roof. - DNA

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