



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, April 01, 2026

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UNRWA chief seeks probe into killing of his body staff

Detailed News On Page-08

Pakistan keenly following the ME situation

Detailed News On Page-08

Maradona's former home made kitchen

Detailed News On Page-06



Trump to world

Every country must handle its own oil

Trump made it clear that countries dependent on Gulf oil should either buy jet fuel and oil directly from the United States or arrange and secure their own shipments through the Strait of Hormuz themselves

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has delivered a strong message to the world, declaring that the United States will no longer help other countries ship oil through the Strait of Hormuz. In his latest remarks, Trump stated that every nation must take responsibility for its own oil shipments, saying the U.S. cannot and will not continue to assist each and every country navigating the vital waterway. Trump made it clear that countries dependent on Gulf oil should either buy jet fuel and oil directly from the United States or arrange and secure their own shipments through the Strait of Hormuz themselves. He emphasized that America has already delivered a heavy blow to Iran through recent military actions and suggested that the conflict could end soon as Iran's position weakens significantly. This marks a major shift in U.S. policy. Trump expressed frustration with allies who have been reluctant to send their own warships to help secure the strait, noting that many major importers like China, Europe, Japan, and South Korea rely far more heavily on the route than the United States does. With America now energy independent and able to supply its allies, Trump signaled that the era of the U.S. bearing the full security burden is over. According to the President, the U.S. has successfully damaged Iran's capabilities in the region, and negotiations appear to be moving forward, with signs that the war may conclude in the near future.

Continued on Page 06

IRGC Vows to Target US Companies Across the Region

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has issued a fresh warning that it will target facilities linked to American companies operating in the Middle East, while a senior Russian diplomat has confirmed that the country's new Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, remains in Iran but is deliberately avoiding public appearances. In a statement released via its official channels, the IRGC declared that sites associated with US companies in the region are now "legitimate targets" and urged employees and nearby residents to evacuate immediately for their safety. The warning lists several major American firms, including ExxonMobil, Boeing, Microsoft, Lockheed Martin, Amazon Web Services, and others, whose facilities in Gulf countries and across West Asia could face attacks amid the ongoing regional conflict.

Continued on Page 06

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF BANGLADESH



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Rana Tanvir Hussain Federal Minister for National Food Security, High Commissioner of People's Republic of Bangladesh Md Iqbal Hussain Khan, Ambassadors of Türkiye, Syria, Sardar Rashid Ilyas Khan and others cutting cake to celebrate the 55th Anniversary of the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh. - DNA

Gas supply halted in parts of Balochistan

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Gas supply could not be restored to various parts of Quetta and other districts of Balochistan after unknown armed men blew up a main gas pipeline in the Western Bypass area of the provincial capital. "An 18-inch diameter main gas pipeline was blown up by unknown individuals," a spokesman for the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) confirmed, adding that the incident occurred in Akhtarabad, a locality on the outskirts of Quetta. The pipeline caught fire, and the blast suspended gas supply to many areas of Quetta," a senior police officer said. A spokesman for SSGC said gas supply was affected in various areas of Quetta, including Hazara Town, Hazarganji, Khaizi, and Nohsar. "Other districts affected

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Middle East crisis

Pakistan, China call for immediate end to Iran war

China and Pakistan call on the parties to protect the security of ships and crew members stranded in the Strait of Hormuz, allow the early and safe passage of civilian and commercial ships, and restore normal passage through the Strait as soon as possible

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China H.E. Mr. Wang Yi and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met in Beijing on 31 March 2026 to review the situation in the Gulf and Middle East Region. The two sides put forward the following: 1. Immediate Cessation of Hostilities: China and Pakistan call for immediate cessation of hostilities and utmost efforts to prevent the conflict from spreading.

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FMs of Muslim nations condemn Israel's restrictions

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The foreign ministers of eight Islamic nations strongly condemned and rejected the continued restrictions imposed by Israel on the freedom of worship for Muslims and Christians in occupied Jerusalem. The foreign ministers of Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Petition against Atta Tarar dismissed

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: An election tribunal on Tuesday dismissed an election petition against Information Minister Attaullah Tarar's victory from NA-127 in the 2024 general elections as non-maintainable. The decision was announced by the tribunal, comprising retired justice Rana Zahid Mehmood, on the election petition filed by PTI-backed independent candidate Zaeer Abbas Khokhar, who had contested against Tarar. Khokhar had lost his election to Tarar with a margin of 15,980 votes as the latter bagged 98,210 votes against 82,230 of the former. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had also contested the 2024 general election from the same constituency; however, he stood third with 15,005 votes.

KP fiscal issues to be resolved

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb has assured full support to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the resolution of all legitimate issues and addressing its financial challenges. The assurance came during a meeting between Aurangzeb and KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi at the Finance Division in Islamabad on Tuesday, the Finance Ministry said in a statement. The meeting was held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere, where the chief minister briefed the finance czar on various economic and financial challenges being faced by the province.

IHC adjourns hearing of Imran, Bushra pleas

During the hearing, defence counsel Salman Safdar appeared alongside NAB Special Prosecutor Javed Ashraf and prosecutor Rafay Maqsood. The hearing was also attended by the PTI founder's sisters, Aleema Khanum, Uzma Khan and Noreen Niazi

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday adjourned the hearing of the suspension of sentence applications filed by Imran Khan and his spouse, Bushra Bibi, in the £190 million case, after the defence counsel sought time to obtain fresh instructions from his clients. A division bench headed by IHC Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar and including Justice Muhammad Asif presided over the proceedings. During the hearing, defence counsel Salman Safdar appeared alongside National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Special Prosecutor Javed Ashraf and prosecutor Rafay Maqsood. The hearing was also attended by the PTI founder's sisters, Aleema Khanum, Uzma Khan and Noreen Niazi. At the outset, the NAB prosecutor argued that two separate applications

Continued on Page 06

IHC grants interim bail to Dr. Fazila in money laundering case

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday restored the interim bail of Dr. Fazila Abbasi on surety bonds of Rs 100,000 in a multi-billion rupee money laundering case, preventing the FIA from arresting her. The court directed the petitioner to approach the trial court. Justice Muhammad Azam Khan heard Dr. Fazila Abbasi's pre-arrest bail application who appeared in the court along with her lawyer Naeem Bukhari.

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Dar, Hakan Fidan discuss regional issues

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday spoke with Türkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. During the conversation, Hakan Fidan expressed appreciation for hospitality extended during recent visit to Pakistan for the meeting of the four Foreign Ministers in Islamabad. Both reaffirmed the strength of Pakistan-Türkiye bilateral relations and agreed to remain in close contact. - APP

Pak, France reaffirm strong energy & mining cooperation

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, held a meeting with H.E. Mr. Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, to discuss the evolving regional situation, energy security, and avenues for enhanced bilateral cooperation in the energy and mining sectors.

During the meeting, the French Ambassador lauded Pakistan's effective handling of petroleum supply challenges in the region. He praised the Government of Pakistan for ensuring uninterrupted fuel availability and maintaining stability despite volatility in regional markets. Ambassador Galey noted that Pakistan had successfully managed the situation in contrast to several other South Asian coun-

tries and congratulated the Minister, remarking that there had not been "even one hour of panic" in Pakistan. Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik thanked the Ambassador for his remarks and highlighted that Pakistan's decisive, proactive, and coordinated response enabled the country to navigate the crisis successfully thus far. He emphasized that the government adopted a strategy of prioritizing supply continuity over price shock, ensuring availability of petroleum products while also protecting the liquidity of the supply chain. The Minister further shared that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had established an effective mechanism for swift inter-ministerial decision-making in response to changing supply chain dynamics. He added that the diplomatic efforts led by the Field Marshal, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Pakistan's senior leadership helped secure petroleum supplies through alternate channels at critical moments.



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KP Assembly session postponed without stated reason

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly session scheduled for Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. was abruptly postponed till Wednesday April 01, according to a notification issued by the Assembly Secretariat.

The notification confirmed the delay of the session; however, no reason was provided for the sudden postponement.

It is noteworthy that the agenda for Tuesday's sitting had already been issued and members were formally informed to ensure their attendance. The unexpected delay has sparked surprise and questions among political circles and the public. Officials said the rescheduled session, to be held on Wednesday, is expected to take up key political and development matters as per the agenda.

The Assembly Secretariat has directed members to prepare for the next sitting in accordance with the notification and keep all relevant documents and reports ready.—APP

SSC exams begin across KP

PESHAWAR: The annual examinations for 9th and 10th grade students have officially commenced across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the provincial capital, Peshawar. According to official sources on Tuesday, a total of 917,532 students are appearing in the examinations under eight educational boards across the province. To facilitate the process, authorities have established 3,396 examination centers. Security and administrative arrangements have been put in place, with 23,708 personnel deployed to ensure smooth conduct of the exams. Among the total examination centers, 1,808 are designated for male students, while 1,133 for female students. To maintain transparency and prevent cheating, CCTV cameras have been installed at examination centers. Additionally, Section 144 has been imposed outside exam halls to restrict unauthorized gatherings and ensure discipline. Meanwhile, under the Mardan Board, the examinations have also begun with hundreds of students participating. Strict security measures and effective management have been implemented at examination centers. Teachers have appreciated the introduction of the cluster system, stating that it will help enhance transparency and significantly reduce the chances of cheating. They expressed confidence that the examinations will be conducted in a fair and organized manner across the province.—APP

Better healthcare facilities top priority

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab Tuesday said that upgrading all hospitals under the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) on modern lines and providing quality healthcare facilities to citizens at their doorstep is a top priority. He expressed these views during his visit to Spencer Eye Hospital on Tuesday, where he reviewed ongoing development, repair, and upgradation work in detail and directed the relevant authorities to further expedite the pace of work. He stated that under a public-private partnership, all facilities at the hospital are being improved, and Spencer Eye Hospital will be reopened on April 6 after completion of rehabilitation and renovation work. On this occasion, Municipal Commissioner KMC Abrar Jaffer, Senior Director Medical Dr. Mahwash Muttani, Director Media Daniyal Siyal, and other officials were also present. Mayor Karachi inspected the under-construction wards, operation theater, OPD, and other facilities, stating that for the first time in KMC's history, revolutionary changes are being introduced in the health department. He emphasized that all resources are being utilized transparently to ensure the provision of the best possible facilities to the public.—APP

Sarmad Ali again elected as President of APNS

Centreline magazine again elected as Member of the Executive Committee; Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani as Senior Vice President, Shahab Zuberi as Vice President, Muhammad Athar Kazi as Secretary General, Mohsin Bilal as Joint Secretary and Naveed Kashif as Finance Secretary of the Society



DNA

KARACHI: The Annual Meeting of the APNS General Council held on March 31, 2026 at APNS House, Karachi unanimously re-elected Senator Sarmad Ali as President, Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani as Senior Vice President, Shahab Zuberi as Vice President, Muhammad Athar Kazi as Secretary General, Mohsin Bilal as Joint Secretary and Naveed Kashif as Finance Secretary of the Society. The AGM was held under the chairmanship of Senator Sarmad Ali, President of the Society. The Council unanimously approved the report of the Executive Committee for the year

2025-2026 as well as the Annual Accounts of the Society for the year 2025. The AGM in a resolution, expressed its profound concern on the state of print media due to the present geo-political and economic situation which has caused severe financial crisis for newspapers, many of them are at the verge of collapse. In this situation, the media expected support from the government to brave the financial crunch. The AGM urged upon the Federal Government to implement the decision of Mian Shahbaz Sharif approved in his last tenure to increase the government advertisement rates. The members in the AGM, requested the Federal and provincial governments to pay the long outstanding dues of news-

paper industry, increase the quantum of advertisements and allocate a separate share of print media in the advertising budget so that the newspaper industry would be able to survive in the present situation.

The Annual General Council of the APNS adopted a resolution wherein it showed its dismay over the ban on the Federal, Provincial Govt. ads to Dawn Media for last 17 months. The Annual General Council noted that the newspaper is facing existential survival issue due to denial of Government ads and opined that consistent denial of Govt. ads to Dawn Media is unjust and unfair. The AGM unanimously expressed its solidarity with Dawn Media Group in the hour

of financial stragulation. The General Council attended by 118 members from across the country, formed an Election Commission headed by Mr. Mumtaz Ahmed Phulpoto with Ali Bin Younus and Mr. Nasir Dad Baloch as members. The Election Commission conducted the election of the Executive Committee for the year 2026-27. Following dailies and magazines were elected unopposed of the Executive Committee of the APNS for the next tenure:

Daily Aghaz, Daily Business Recorder, Daily Dawn, Daily Deyanat, Daily Jasarat, Daily Jiddat, Karachi, Daily Dunya, Daily Jang, Daily Khabrain, Daily Nawa-i-Waqt, Daily Pakistan, Lahore, Daily Tijarat, Daily Ausaf, Daily

Sahafat, Daily Awam (Quetta), Daily Mashriq (Quetta), Daily Mashriq (Peshawar), Daily Wahdat, Daily Kaleem, Daily Kawish, Daily Aftab (Multan), Daily Business Report, Daily Paigham, Daily City 42, Daily Pakistan Observer, Daily Halchal, Daily Sayadat on daily seats and Monthly Dastak, Monthly Naey Ufaq, Monthly Naya Rukh, Weekly Taber, Monthly Centreline, Weekly AZM and Fortnightly Ibrat Magazine elected on periodical seats.

The new Executive Committee elected Mrs. Zahida Abbasi of Daily Nau Sij, Karachi on woman - publishers seat. The newly elected Executive Committee appreciated the performance of the Election Commission for conducting the elections.

Afghan repatriation resumes at Torkham Border

Security measures and documentation processes at the transit camp have also been strengthened to ensure that all procedures are conducted in an organized and efficient manner

DNA

PESHAWAR: The repatriation of undocumented Afghan nationals has resumed at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border crossing at Torkham on Tuesday. During the latest operation, a large number of Afghan detainees were transferred to a transit camp as part of the ongoing process. According to border officials, 11 undocumented Afghan nationals, who had been brought from different cities across the country, were shifted to the Hamza Baba

Transit Camp. After completing the required legal formalities, they were handed over to Afghan border authorities via the Torkham crossing. In addition, more than 150 Afghan prisoners have been transferred from various prisons to the Hamza Baba Transit Camp, where their documentation and legal processing are currently underway. Earlier, on March 27, a similar operation was carried out in which 11 Afghan nationals were repatriated after fulfilling legal requirements, while the transfer of detainees to the transit facility continued.

Furthermore, on March 26, around 40 Afghan nationals held in different prisons were moved to the Hamza Baba Transit Camp and later deported to Afghanistan after completing the necessary procedures. Officials stated that the phased repatriation of undocumented Afghan nationals is ongoing under a broader government campaign. Security measures and documentation processes at the transit camp have also been strengthened to ensure that all procedures are conducted in an organized and efficient manner.

'Ghazi' cops termed pride of Police

RAWALPINDI: The "Ghazi" police and personnel were described as a symbol of courage and resilience at a meeting held at the Police Lines Headquarters in line with the directions of Inspector General of Police Punjab Rao Abdul Kareem on Tuesday. During the meeting with the injured cops, senior officers observed that those who had rendered sacrifices in the line of duty were a valuable asset for the Rawalpindi Police. Senior officers, including Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations, Regional Officer, Punjab Highway Patrol, Superintendent of Police (SP) CIA, SP Security, SP Headquarters and Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Admin, attended the meeting. They said all possible measures were being taken to ensure the welfare of such personnel, terming them a source of pride for the force. A Rawalpindi Police spokesman said the initiative formed part of the ongoing "Ghazi Week" being observed across the province to acknowledge the services.—APP

Call for investment package to repatriate overseas capital

LAHORE: The government needs to introduce a comprehensive and investor-friendly package aimed at repatriating overseas investments of Pakistani business community back into the country. Pak International Business Forum (PIBF) President Dr Mushtaq Mangat and Secretary General Muhammad Ejaz Tanveer said in a joint media statement issued here Tuesday. PIBF leadership highlighted that Pakistan is currently at a critical economic juncture, where the mobilization of both domestic and expatriate capital can play a pivotal role in strengthening foreign exchange reserves,

accelerating industrial growth, and generating much-needed employment opportunities. Dr Mushtaq Mangat stressed the need for a time-bound incentive package that facilitates the seamless return of capital through simplified and transparent procedures. He underscored that such a policy framework must include tax incentives, legal protection of investments, and firm assurances against retrospective taxation to restore investor confidence and encourage long-term commitments. Muhammad Ejaz Tanveer pointed out that regional economies are actively offering competitive incentives to

attract foreign and diaspora investments. He further emphasized the importance of establishing a one-window operation to streamline processes and significantly improve the ease of doing business. The PIBF leadership also recommended meaningful consultation with key stakeholders, including chambers of commerce and overseas investors, to ensure the formulation of a practical and results-oriented policy. They concluded that timely and decisive action by the government could unlock substantial capital inflows and place the national economy on a sustainable growth trajectory.—APP



KARACHI: Representing (On behalf of) the Publisher/Owner of "Daily Islamabad Post" and "Weekly Centreline" Congratulated All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) next term elected President Mr. Sarmad Ali, by the Karachi Bureau Chief Daily Islamabad Post Nazir Siyal here on Tuesday. (DNA)

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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

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

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

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

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

- Corporation.....9209224
- Potohar Town.....9209224
- Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Romania and Pakistan sign MoU on port cooperation

The Memorandum reflects the shared objective of enhancing maritime connectivity between Karachi Port and the Port of Constanța on the Black Sea, facilitating more efficient trade flows between South Asia and Europe



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Romania and Pakistan marked a significant step in advancing their economic and maritime partnership with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on port cooperation. The agreement was concluded between the National Company "Maritime Ports Administration" S.A. Constanța and the Karachi Port Trust during an online ceremony. It was signed by Mr. Mihai Teodorescu, General Manager of the Port of Constanța Administration, and Rear Admiral Shahid Ahmed Si(M), Sbt. (Retd), Chairman of Karachi Port Trust.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Transport of both countries, alongside ambassadors Dan Stoescu and Ilyas Mehmood Nizami. Representatives of the Pakistan Romania Business Council, including Mr. Sohail Shamim Firpo and Mr. Atif Farooqi, also took

part. The Memorandum reflects the shared objective of enhancing maritime connectivity between Karachi Port and the Port of Constanța on the Black Sea, facilitating more efficient trade flows between South Asia and Europe. It supports Pakistan's efforts to develop its maritime sector and blue economy, while reinforcing Romania's role as a key logistical gateway to the European Union. The Port of Constanța, one of the largest on the Black Sea, benefits from a strategic position that ensures direct access to Central and Western Europe through the Danube corridor. From Constanța, goods can be transported efficiently via inland waterways through Hungary, Austria and Germany, reaching major hubs such as Rotterdam in the Netherlands. This multimodal route offers a cost-effective and sustainable solution for European distribution. Enhanced connectivity between Karachi and Constanța is expected to generate new opportunities for bilateral trade. Romanian exports - including

industrial equipment, machinery, chemicals and agricultural products - stand to gain improved access to Pakistan and wider regional markets, while Pakistani goods will benefit from more efficient entry points into Europe. The agreement builds on discussions initiated in 2025 in Karachi and establishes a practical framework for cooperation, including the creation of a joint working group. It promotes collaboration in training, exchange of expertise in port management and operations, and the development of new trade opportunities. Ambassador Dan Stoescu highlighted Romania's objective to expand its exports to Pakistan, thereby strengthening Romania's economic presence in Asia and contributing to more balanced trade flows. He emphasized that enhanced maritime connectivity represents a practical tool for deepening regional integration, facilitating trade and promoting shared prosperity. In a context of increasing pressure on existing infrastructure and the need for diversified supply routes, the Romania-Pakistan part-

nership provides a forward-looking framework for sustainable economic cooperation. Maritime trade plays a central role in the European Union's economy, with over 75% of the EU's external trade carried by sea, making ports and shipping essential to growth, connectivity and supply chain resilience. Within this context, the EU's Blue Economy strategy promotes sustainable use of ocean resources, innovation in maritime sectors and the development of efficient, green and digital port infrastructure. At the same time, Pakistan benefits from the European Union's GSP+ scheme, which grants preferential access to the EU market for a wide range of exports. Strengthened maritime links between Romania and Pakistan can therefore facilitate increased trade flows under this framework, supporting economic development, diversification of exports and deeper integration into global value chains for both sides.

Ayaz lauds NAB's historic recovery of Rs. 6.213t

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday hailed NAB's record Rs 6.213 trillion recovery in 2025, praising Chairman Nazir Ahmed Butt's leadership and the Bureau's reform-driven transformation into a transparent, people- and business-friendly institution. The Speaker expressed these views during a meeting with Chairman NAB at Parliament House, where Nazir Ahmed presented the Bureau's Annual Report 2025. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq commended the leadership of Chairman NAB Nazir Ahmed, under whose stewardship the Bureau achieved a record-breaking recovery of Rs. 6.213 trillion—the highest annual figure since its inception in 1999.

He further appreciated NAB's cumulative recoveries of Rs. 11.524 trillion (approximately USD 41 billion) over the past three years, noting that the 2025 recovery alone accounts for more than half of this amount and is thirteen times higher than the total recoveries recorded over the preceding 23 years. The Speaker also expressed satisfaction over NAB's 72 percent prosecution success rate, terming it a significant indicator of institutional effectiveness. He further highlighted NAB's success in reclaiming approximately 2.98 million acres of encroached or misappropriated state and forest land, valued at Rs. 5.98 trillion. While praising NAB's people-centric

approach, the Speaker noted that the Bureau has provided relief to 115,587 affected of fraudulent housing and investment schemes through the disbursement of Rs. 180 billion. He also acknowledged NAB's focus on complex financial crimes, which led to the attachment of assets worth Rs. 127 billion in 39 high-profile anti-money laundering cases. During the meeting, Chairman NAB Nazir Ahmed briefed the Speaker on major institutional reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, fairness, and inclusivity. These include the establishment of specialized Facilitation Cells for parliamentarians, civil bureaucracy, the business community, and overseas Pakistanis.—DNA

Tallal confirms arrest of dacoity murder suspects

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Interior Tallal Chaudhry said on Tuesday that all the suspects involved in the killing of a prominent businessman in Islamabad during a dacoity had been arrested. Police said on Monday that a businessman identified as Amir Awan was murdered during an alleged dacoity at his farmhouse located in Orchard Scheme. Political figures, VIPs and big-shots, including an adviser to the prime minister, own property in the neighbourhood where the incident took place. In a press conference in Islamabad on Tuesday, Chaudhry addressed the incident and said, "The suspects belong to the Mansoor Khan gang... They are from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The dangerous nature of the gang had prevented the local police from arresting them. Afghans, as well as other people, are included in the gang." He said the safe city cameras and the professional attitude of the Islamabad police contributed to arresting the suspects. He said that the Islamabad inspector general, on the directions of the interior minister, personally monitored the case. "The heart-wrenching incident shattered hearts. After the dacoity took the life of Amir Awan, the concerns of Islamabad citizens and the business community were valid," he said. During the press conference, the minister also highlighted other criminal cases that had occurred in Islamabad, saying that those had also been solved within hours. He said there was no dacoity with murder or murder case in Islamabad that had been solved. "I can say this with full belief and with figures. All cases were worked out 100 per cent, whether they be blind murder or dacoity with murder. People were arrested, some were killed in police encounters, some are on-trial prisoners, while others are serving sentences," he asserted. Citing figures, he said that there was a 63 per cent reduction in heinous crime in the capital city as compared to the last year. He said that regular crimes, including car theft, motorbike theft, robberies and other small crimes also fell by 78pc. At the outset of the presser, Chaudhry maintained that the law and order situation in Islamabad was different from other cities due to the presence of diplomats and Pakistan's institutions. He also noted that international delegations, foreigners, including ambassadors and businessmen, and people from four provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir resided in Islamabad.—DNA

37 illegal structures demolished in sector F-11

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration on Monday conducted an anti-encroachment operation in Sector F-11's Bheka Sayedan area and demolished 37 illegal structures, including rooms and boundary walls.

According to the ICT spokesman, the operation was conducted against illegal constructions and encroachments under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Shalimar Muhammad Ali.

Officials said the action was part of ongoing efforts to remove encroachments and ensure that land use followed approved plans.

Teams from the district administration, along with enforcement staff, took part in the operation. Machinery was used to remove the structures, while officials monitored the activity to avoid any disruption in the area. The administration stated that the operation was carried out after identifying illegal constructions through field inspections.

According to officials, notices had been issued earlier to the occupants, asking them to remove the structures voluntarily. When no compliance was made, the administration moved ahead with enforcement action. The aim was to clear encroachments and prevent further illegal construction in the area.

Authorities said such operations would continue in other parts of the city where violations were reported. They added that action would be taken without discrimination against any structures found in violation of rules.

The district administration has urged citizens to follow building regulations and avoid illegal construction. It also advised people to seek approval from relevant authorities before starting any building activity. Officials said monitoring would continue in Sector F-11 and nearby areas to ensure that no new encroachments took place.—APP

SC upholds death sentence of man

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has upheld the death sentence of a man convicted of murdering his wife, mother-in-law, and aunt-in-law, dismissing his appeal. The case was heard by a bench headed by Justice Hashim Khan Kakar. During the proceedings, the prosecutor argued that there was strong evidence against the accused, Sultan Ahmed, including testimonies from witnesses who sold petrol and a lighter to him and later identified him. According to the prosecution, the accused set his wife, mother-in-law, and aunt-in-law on fire in 2022 in Rahim Yar Khan over a personal dispute, resulting in their deaths. The defense counsel contended that the women were accidentally burned while cooking, but the court rejected this argument. During the hearing, Justice Kakar remarked that there was no justification for killing one's wife, noting that divorce was always an option. He expressed concern over the rising trend of such incidents in society, where individuals resort to killing their spouses.—APP

Naqvi orders action against illegal foreigners

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday visited the headquarters of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and presided over a high-level meeting. During the briefing, NADRA Chairman Lt. Gen. Muhammad Munir Afzal informed the Minister about the authority's performance, ongoing initiatives, and upcoming projects. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi appreciated NADRA's performance and its effective public service delivery. He directed NADRA to fully assist law enforcement agencies in the repatriation of illegal foreigners. He also ordered the immediate identification and removal from the national database of individuals who had illegally obtained Pakistani citizenship. Mohsin Naqvi noted that NADRA's services have significantly improved over the past two years and instructed the introduction of more modern facilities for public convenience. He directed that state-of-the-art NADRA offices in major cities should be constructed on NADRA's own land instead of rented buildings, and called for a detailed master plan in this regard. The Interior Minister assured full coordination with relevant departments and cooperation at the ministerial level. During the briefing, NADRA officials said that the authority has taken several measures to improve citizen services. They stated that support from other departments is necessary for the effective implementation of facial recognition for biometric verification. NADRA has canceled the identity cards of hundreds of thousands of deceased individuals, the briefing added. A 30-day timeframe has been set for resolving issues related to ID cards.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Canada in Pakistan, Tarik Ali Khan addressing the "Launch of Detained Abroad: Indo-Pacific Registry on Foreign Nationals at Risk of Capital Punishment and Torture" organized by Justice Project Pakistan (JPP), in collaboration with The Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR), at local hotel, in the Federal Capital.

IRSA to finalize water distribution for Kharif

ISLAMABAD: The Advisory Committee of Indus River System Authority will meet on April 7 to finalize water distribution for the provinces for Kharif season 2026. The meeting of Advisory Committee under IRSA Chairman will be attended by all the IRSA's members, representatives from WAPDA, the Federal Flood Commission, the director general of Pakistan Meteorological Department and the four provincial irrigation secretaries. The Water Accord 1991 empowered IRSA to determine water availability in the country and provincial share twice a year, once for Kharif season and the other for Rabi season. Rabi season starts from October 1 and ends on March 31, while Kharif starts from April 1 and continue till September 30. Since Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) were exempted from cuts in the share, the shortage of water would be distributed between Sindh and Punjab. Meanwhile, Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 87,800 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 93,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1448.29 feet which was 48.29 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 25,600 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1136.45 feet, which was 86.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 26,900 cusecs and 22,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 49,300, 32,700, 33,610, and 7,100 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 27,900 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 6,700 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—DNA

Briefs

Safe City supports facilitation centres

ISLAMABAD: Safe City Islamabad has taken the lead in providing technical support to police facilitation centres, enabling efficient public service delivery with more than 18,000 registrations completed during March 2026. An official told media on Tuesday that over 14,000 tenancy registrations and more than 4,000 employee registrations were carried out during the month with the help of Safe City's integrated digital systems. He said the initiative aimed at improving documentation, enhancing security monitoring, and ensuring better record management across the federal capital. He said Safe City's technical assistance had significantly streamlined the registration process at police facilitation centres, making it more accessible and user-friendly for citizens. The official added that these efforts were part of a broader strategy to strengthen surveillance, improve data integration, and support law enforcement agencies in maintaining law and order. He said the system also helped in timely verification of tenants and employees, which played a crucial role in crime prevention and identification of suspicious activities. Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police reiterated its commitment to utilizing modern technology to enhance public safety and ensure efficient service delivery to citizens.—APP

Pak-Italy trade witnesses over 19% surplus

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's goods and services trade with Italy witnessed a surplus of 19.80 percent during the first eight months of the fiscal year (2025-26) as compared to the corresponding months of last year. Trade surplus during the months under review was recorded at \$441.227 million against \$368.30 million last year, showing 19.80 percent growth. The overall exports to Italy were recorded at US \$790.848 million during July-February (2025-26) year against exports of US \$749.444 million during the same months last year, showing an increase of 5.52 percent, SBP data revealed. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, exports to Italy during February 2026 increased by 9.51 percent from US \$84.480 million to US \$92.518 million. Month-on-month exports to Italy also rose by 8.28 percent during February 2026 as compared with exports of US \$85.443 million in January 2026, the SBP data said. Overall Pakistan's exports to all countries witnessed a decrease of 5.44 percent in eight months, from US \$21.935 billion to US \$20.741 billion, the SBP data said. On the other hand, imports from Italy during the months under review were recorded at US \$349.621 million against US \$381.143 million of last year, showing a decrease of 8.27 percent in July-February (2025-26). Meanwhile, year-on-year imports from Italy during February 2026 increased by 56.07 percent from US \$31.907 million last year to US \$49.798 million. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from Italy also increased by 25.28 percent during February 2026 as compared to the import of US \$39.748 million in January 2026, SBP data said.—APP

Turkish varsities to strengthen collaboration in emerging areas

The Chairman reiterated HEC's commitment to supporting the advancement of higher education and further strengthening the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Türkiye

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Turkish universities, led by Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan rfan Neziro lu, visited the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan to discuss bilateral matters aimed at expanding cooperation in higher education. The delegation, comprising Prof. Dr. Fatih Y lmaz from Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Keleş from Ad yaman University, Prof. Dr. Fahrettin Göktaş from F rat University, and Prof. Dr. Mutlu Türkmen from Bayburt University alongside officials from the Turkish embassy, called on Chairman HEC Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar and other HEC officials, expressing keen interest in expanding bilateral academic and research engagements.

The two sides agreed to strengthen relations in the emerging fields, such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and digitisation, while promoting joint research in medicine, agriculture, physics, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, social sciences, and languages including Urdu and Turkish. They also discussed enhancing collaboration through student and faculty exchange programmes, joint research and innovation development initiatives, conferences, summer exchange programmes, visiting scholar programmes in specialised areas, joint and dual degree programmes, and online learning modules in various disciplines. In addition, the two sides proposed establishing a pool of experts from both countries who could collaborate on areas



as such as natural, biological, and social sciences, strategic studies, defence-related research, and policy papers addressing the evolving global landscape. The Chairman HEC and the Turkish Am-

bassador agreed to compile a list of experts in relevant fields who could be designated as visiting faculty to deliver physical and online courses and undertake collaborative research activities.

The Chairman reiterated HEC's commitment to supporting the advancement of higher education and further strengthening the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Türkiye.

ITP announces major diversion plan

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) issued a major traffic advisory, announcing road closures and diversion plan on Ataturk Avenue due to ongoing construction work in the federal capital. An ITP official told media on Tuesday that Ataturk Avenue from Express Chowk to Ayub Chowk (Agha Khan Road) would remain closed for traffic, and the diversion plan would be effective from March 31, 2026, till completion of the project. He said commuters traveling from Jinnah Avenue towards Marriott Hotel would be diverted through China Chowk, Press Club Road, Super Market, and Agha Khan Road. He said traffic coming from Khayaban-e-Suhrawardy and Embassy Road towards Marriott Hotel would be routed via Shaheed-e-Millat Road, China Chowk Underpass, Press Club Road, and Agha Khan Road. He said traffic from Srinagar Highway heading towards the Secretariat would use Serena Chowk, Globe Chowk, and Secretariat Chowk as alternative routes. He added that commuters from Seventh Avenue could access the Secretariat via Margalla Road and Shahr-e-Dastoor. Residents of Sector F-6 were advised to use Seventh Avenue and Margalla Road as alternate routes to avoid inconvenience. Islamabad Traffic Police urged citizens to plan their journeys accordingly and cooperate with traffic personnel to ensure smooth flow of traffic during the construction period.—APP

Virk inspects foreign office checkpoint

ISLAMABAD: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk visited the Foreign Office checkpoint to review traffic flow and security arrangements, directing officers to ensure uninterrupted movement during peak hours. An official told on Monday that the CTO Virk conducted a detailed inspection of the checkpoint and assessed the performance of traffic personnel deployed at the site. Virk instructed officers to maintain effective monitoring, ensure better traffic management, and facilitate citizens through proactive duty. The CTO Virk emphasized that all available resources should be utilized to maintain smooth and uninterrupted traffic flow, particularly during busy hours. He directed personnel to remain alert, perform their duties with professionalism, and ensure timely response to any traffic-related issues.—APP

RDA intensifies crackdown on illegal housing schemes

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has stepped up action against illegal housing schemes after the commissioner directed strict legal measures against developers and issued a public advisory to protect investors. According to an RDA spokesman, acting on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi and Director General RDA, Engr. Aamer Khattak, the authority's Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate, has intensified enforcement against unauthorised schemes operating within its controlled areas. The commissioner ordered stringent action against owners, sponsors and developers involved in illegal housing projects across the jurisdictions of the Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi, as well as the tehsil and district councils of Rawalpindi, Taxila, Gujjar Khan, Kallar Syedan and Kahuta. The spokesman said multiple violations of the Punjab Development Authorities Private Housing Schemes Rules, 2021 had been identified, including the launch of schemes without prior approval, unauthorised development and sale of plots, non-submission of mandatory documentation and major deviations from approved layout plans. He added that the violations were detected through inspections, public complaints and monitoring of advertisements across print, electronic and social media platforms. In line with the commissioner's directives, enforcement measures have been accelerated, including the issuance of notices, registration of FIRs, sealing of offices and project sites, demolition of illegal structures, bans on property transactions and referral of cases to the Federal Investigation Agency's Cyber Crime Wing and other relevant bodies. The RDA warned all sponsors and developers of illegal schemes to immediately cease unlawful activities, including development, marketing, advertisement, booking and sale of plots, or face further legal action without notice. The authority also advised the public, including overseas Pakistanis, investors and property dealers, to avoid investing in unapproved schemes and to verify project status with the RDA before making any transaction. It clarified that terms such as "file submitted", "under process", or "under scrutiny" did not constitute approval. Citizens were encouraged to consult the official RDA website for verification and further information.—DNA

Call for integrated, people-centric disaster management system

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik on Tuesday stressed the need for a comprehensive, integrated and people-centric approach to disaster management, highlighting the importance of timely response, effective early warning systems and strong coordination among all stakeholders. Addressing a ceremony here, the minister said that Pakistan, being among the most climate-vulnerable countries, was facing increasing risks from torrential floods, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and extreme weather events, particularly in northern regions. He underlined that while various initiatives had been undertaken to enhance disaster preparedness, there was a need to further strengthen the effectiveness of early warning systems to ensure timely evacuation of communities at risk. Dr Malik said that response time in case of sudden disasters such as GLOFs was often limited to 20 to 25 minutes, which required a well-connected and fully functional system linking monitoring infrastructure with district administration and local communities. He emphasised that modern technology, including satellite systems, drones and real-time data integration, could play a vital role in improving disaster response mechanisms. "With the advancement in technology, it is now possible to develop integrated solutions that can help save lives and minimise losses," he added. The minister highlighted the importance of ensur-

ing that disaster preparedness measures translate into practical benefits for affected populations, particularly vulnerable communities living in high-risk areas. He also stressed the need for improved zoning regulations and their effective enforcement to prevent construction in flood-prone zones, which could exacerbate damage during natural disasters. Referring to social challenges, Dr Malik said that communities must be protected through inclusive policies so that individuals are not forced to remain in hazardous areas due to economic or social pressures. He called for enhanced coordination between federal and provincial governments, as well as local administrations, to ensure a unified and effective response to climate-induced disasters. The minister also appreciated the support of international development partners, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and United Nations agencies, for assisting Pakistan in strengthening its climate resilience and disaster management capacity. Highlighting future initiatives, Dr Malik said the government was working to promote innovation and research in climate-related fields, including support for young entrepreneurs and startups to develop practical solutions for climate challenges. He reiterated the government's commitment to utilising modern technologies and strengthening institutional frameworks to build a resilient system capable of protecting lives, livelihoods and infrastructure from the impacts of climate change. Dr Malik said that collective efforts at all levels would be essential to address the growing challenges posed by climate change and to ensure sustainable development in the country.

Workshop highlights immunization gaps, media role

RAWALPINDI: A training workshop highlighted gaps in immunization coverage and underscored the role of media in countering misinformation and improving vaccine uptake among zero-dose and under-immunized populations. The session was held at the District Health Authority (DHA) Rawalpindi on Tuesday by the Rural Education and Economic Development Society (REEDS). Dr Haris from DHA outlined the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) and the vaccination schedule in the district, identifying weak follow-up, low awareness and poor parental prioritisation as key challenges. He also pointed to myths and propaganda surrounding vaccines, noting that vaccinators often face risks, including threats and accidents during field duties. District Health Officer (Preventive Services) Dr Jawad Zahid noted that misconceptions about vaccination were gradually declining, with encouraging results emerging. He described the measles vaccine as highly effective and indicated that the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine would soon be introduced. He further shared that around 1,000 daily wage workers were being inducted for a special anti-dengue campaign in the district. Chief Executive Officer DHA Rawalpindi Dr Ehsan Ghani stressed the need for public awareness and improved efficiency, while highlighting the role of Maryam Nawaz Health Clinics (MNHC) as front-line facilities engaging communities. He added that Community Health Inspectors (CHIs) were supporting outreach efforts. Referring to community outreach, he said CHIs would play a key role in health profiling and service delivery, adding that 300 had been recruited while more than 700 additional positions were required. District Coordinator Hanaan Wajhat, CES Nauman Younas and Ms Amna from REEDS also spoke on the occasion, emphasizing the importance of routine immunization for children. They noted that timely vaccination protects children from life-threatening diseases, adding that seven essential vaccines under the routine immunization programme cover 12 diseases.—DNA

Minister of state for education Dr. Wajiha Qamar visits NUML

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Dr. Wajiha Qamar, visited the National University of Modern Languages today, where she was warmly received by Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI (M) (Retd), along with Director General, Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan. During the visit, a comprehensive meeting was held between the Minister and the Rector, focusing on enhancing the quality of education in Pakistan and equipping academic institutions with modern facilities to foster an effective learning environment. Both exchanged views on strengthening academic standards, innovation in teaching methodologies, and

aligning education with contemporary global demands. The Minister

institutional structure. Director Academics, Dr. Nadeem Talib,

and cultural connectivity, highlighting its contributions toward bridging cultures through language education. Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani, underscored the importance of education diplomacy and emphasized the need to further strengthen academic collaboration at the international level. He highlighted NUML's vision to position Pakistan as an attractive destination for foreign students by expanding scholarship opportunities, enhancing international outreach, and introducing globally competitive academic programs. He also stressed the significance of integrating language proficiency with professional education to meet emerging market needs and promoting research-driven learning to address global challenges.



was given a detailed briefing on NUML's academic programs, ongoing initiatives, international collaborations, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), and

presented an overview of the university's achievements and future roadmap. Dr. Wajiha Qamar appreciated NUML's pivotal role in promoting linguistic diversity

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The Debate of America's World Leadership



DR. MUHAMMAD AKRAM ZAHEER

THE United States stands at a crossroads, grappling with its role in an increasingly interconnected and volatile world. Recent events and public sentiment highlight a nation unsure of its global position. Republican opposition has hindered U.S. support for Ukraine's war effort, the Biden administration is struggling to influence Israel's actions in Gaza and polls suggest that a majority of Americans favor reducing the country's leadership role in global affairs. With the 2024 presidential

election approaching, this uncertainty has significant implications for U.S. foreign policy and global stability. Essays in a recent issue of Foreign Affairs underscore the challenges and propose strategies to address the country's indecision. These perspectives emphasize that the United States must redefine its global role with clarity and purpose.

Philip Zelikow argues that one of the root causes of America's indecision lies in the decline of its policymaking expertise since the Cold War. During that era, the United States possessed a robust cadre of policymakers adept at navigating complex international challenges. This capability has waned over the decades, leaving Washington ill-prepared to address urgent global issues. From managing economic interdependence to addressing climate change and technological competition, the modern world demands sophisticated and agile policymaking. Zelikow's analysis points to an urgent need for institutional reform within the U.S. government. Revitalizing core capabilities requires investing in education, fostering expertise and encouraging collaboration across political lines. Policymakers must adapt to the realities of a multipolar world where power dynamics are constantly shifting. The United States cannot afford complacency, as the cost of inaction or miscalculation could be global instability and diminished influence. Fareed Zakaria identifies a pervasive pessimism as another critical factor shaping America's uncertain global role. Many Americans, he contends, are consumed by exaggerated fears of national decline. Economic challenges, social polarization and a growing sense of vulnerability contribute to this outlook. This pessimism fuels isolationist tendencies and undermines the country's confidence in its ability to lead. Zakaria's prescription is clear: the United States must reject narratives of decline and reaffirm its commitment to global leadership. The country remains uniquely positioned to shape the international order, thanks to its economic strength, technological innovation and military capabilities. Retreating from this role would not only harm American interests but

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also destabilize the global system. Leadership entails responsibility and Washington must embrace this role with renewed vigor and optimism.

Kori Schake's essay highlights the importance of the Republican Party's stance on foreign policy. Historically, the party has championed internationalist principles, supporting alliances and promoting democratic values abroad. However, recent years have seen a shift toward isolationism within Republican ranks, driven by populist rhetoric and skepticism of global engagement. This inward turn threatens to weaken America's ability to project power and influence. Schake argues that the Republican Party must rediscover its commitment to an internationalist foreign policy. Cooperation with allies, participation in multilateral institutions and active engagement in global challenges are essential for maintaining U.S. leadership. A retreat from these principles would create a vacuum that rival powers, such as China and Russia, are eager to fill. Bipartisan support for a proactive foreign policy is crucial to securing America's role in the world. America's indecision on its global role has far-reaching implications. For one, it emboldens adversaries and undermines the confidence of allies. As the United States wavers, other powers are asserting themselves. China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia's aggressive posture in Eastern Europe are clear examples of rival states seeking to reshape the international order. Furthermore, America's retreat risks eroding the liberal democratic values that have underpinned global stability since World War II. Domestically, the consequences of a diminished global role could exacerbate existing divisions. Isolationist policies often appeal to populist sentiments but fail to address the complex realities of an interconnected world. Economic protectionism, for instance, might provide short-term benefits but would ultimately harm American industries reliant on global markets. A robust and outward-looking foreign policy, supported by a unified national vision, is essential to navigating these challenges.

To reclaim its leadership role, the United States must adopt a multifaceted approach. First, it must strengthen its domestic foundations. Economic resilience, social cohesion and political stability are prerequisites for effective global leadership. Policymakers should prioritize investments in infrastructure, education and technological innovation to enhance the country's competitiveness. Second, Washington must rebuild trust with its allies and partners. This requires consistent and principled engagement, grounded in shared values and mutual interests. Alliances such as NATO, the Quad and AUKUS are critical to counterbalancing rival powers and addressing transnational challenges. Multilateralism, rather than unilateralism, should guide U.S. foreign policy. Third, the United States must address emerging global challenges with creativity and determination. Climate change, cyber threats and pandemics require collaborative solutions that transcend national boundaries. By leading efforts to tackle these issues, America can reaffirm its commitment to the global good and strengthen its position as a trusted partner. Finally, the United States must confront authoritarianism and defend democratic values. This entails not only opposing the actions of rivals like China and Russia but also addressing democratic backsliding within its borders. A credible and vibrant democracy at home is essential for America's moral authority abroad. The 2024 presidential election will be a pivotal moment in shaping America's global role. Voters must weigh the stakes of isolationism versus engagement and consider the broader implications of their choices. Political leaders, for their part, must articulate a coherent vision for the country's future, balancing domestic priorities with global responsibilities.

Iran on the Brink of a Ground War

Qamar Bashir



My own estimate is this: a prolonged high-intensity war without major occupation carries about a 45% probability; a limited ground incursion about 25%; negotiated de-escalation about 20%; and a broad regime-change invasion about 10%. Those figures are not certainties, only judgments based on current force posture, public rhetoric, and the historical reluctance of Washington to bear the cost of long occupation when air and naval coercion can still be intensified. But the most important warning is that even a 25% chance of limited ground action contains within it the seed of a much wider war

FRUSTRATION is now visible on all sides of the U.S.-Israel war against Iran. After weeks of bombardment, strategic signaling, and diplomatic theater, the central objectives publicly associated with Washington and Tel Aviv still appear only partially achieved. The Strait of Hormuz remains the decisive choke point, Iranian retaliatory capacity has not been extinguished, and the war has entered its second month with fresh troop deployments rather than a settled outcome. Reuters reported on March 30 that thousands of U.S. Army paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne had arrived in the Middle East, joining Marines and other forces already in theater, while officials acknowledged that these deployments increase capacity for possible incursions into Iranian territory, including operations linked to Kharg Island and Hormuz security.

That is why the current moment is so dangerous. Even if a full-scale invasion still remains unlikely, the line between a "limited mission" and an expanding war is historically thin. The United States may initially contemplate a narrow ground operation: seizure of a strategic island, raids on coastal batteries threatening shipping, or even a special operation linked to Iran's uranium stockpile. Yet history shows that once a great power commits troops and begins receiving body bags in return, its political logic changes. Retaliation produces counter-retaliation. A war presented as surgical starts demanding prestige, vengeance, and escalation. Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan all demonstrated that limited entry rarely guarantees limited exit.

The strategic motives behind such a move are not difficult to understand. Kharg Island is Iran's principal oil export hub. The Strait of Hormuz carries a huge share of the world's seaborne oil trade. Control of both would give Washington leverage over global energy flows while denying Tehran its most potent geoeconomic weapon. At the same time, Iran's expanding stockpile of highly enriched uranium remains a central concern. Reuters, citing the IAEA, reported earlier this month that Iran held about 440.9 kilograms of uranium enriched up to 60%, material that in theory could be further enriched for roughly 10 nuclear weapons. That figure alone explains why any U.S. operational planning would include not only maritime control and coercive strikes, but also thoughts of raids tied to nuclear assets.

But Iran is not waiting passively for such a contingency. Its parliament speaker has warned that Tehran sees public talk of negotiations as a cover for secret planning for a land assault, and Iranian leaders have vowed to burn any invading force and punish regional partners. Whether or not every Iranian threat is executable, the central point stands: Iran

has prepared for attritional resistance, dispersal, underground storage, missile retaliation, drones, and proxy expansion. That means even a limited U.S. ground assault would not occur in a vacuum. It would likely trigger attacks on American bases, shipping lanes, partner infrastructure, and perhaps multiple secondary fronts beyond Iran itself.

This is why the destruction of civilian infrastructure now being threatened is so morally revealing. If ports, roads, bridges, refineries, and power systems are systematically targeted, the principal victims will not be the bunker-protected leadership or deeply buried military networks. The true burden will fall upon ordinary Iranians who never built shelters, never planned for prolonged blackout, and never volunteered to become the human cushion of a geopolitical struggle. Iranian missiles have already damaged Israel's Haifa refinery complex and widening regional attacks affecting energy installations and bases. Such escalation shows that the war is moving beyond military targets into the economic bloodstream of entire societies.

The illusion that negotiations will easily stop this spiral is also fading. Pakistan has emerged as the most active intermediary, hosting regional discussions and preparing to facilitate U.S.-Iran talks in the coming days. Yet the diplomatic gap remains profound. Washington has promoted a 15-point framework; Iran has publicly rejected it and insists on sovereignty, security, and an end to attacks. Reuters noted on March 30 that Islamabad is preparing to host these efforts, but there was still no confirmation that any direct, substantive breakthrough had been achieved. In other words, the parties remain boxed inside terms that each side fears would amount to capitulation.

Meanwhile, the battlefield itself is expanding horizontally. Israel has widened pressure in Lebanon, the Houthis are threatening to reopen a Red Sea front, and the Saudi dimension has already become more exposed after Iran-linked strikes wounded U.S. personnel at Prince Sultan Air Base. Once Hormuz and the Red Sea are both destabilized, the consequences no longer belong only to Tehran, Tel Aviv, or Washington. They belong to Europe, Asia, Australia, South America, and every economy dependent on fuel, shipping insurance, manufacturing inputs, and stable freight routes. Reuters reported that the war's energy shock is already dimming the outlook for many economies, according to the IMF.

In this background, four scenarios emerge. The first, and in my judgment the most likely, is a prolonged air-maritime war without a deep occupation of Iran. In this scenario, Washington and Israel continue heavy strikes while avoiding the political and

military cost of trying to march into Iran's interior. The second is a limited U.S. ground raid or seizure of a strategic site such as Kharg Island or coastal launch areas near Hormuz. The third is a negotiated de-escalation through Pakistani and regional mediation. The fourth, least likely but most catastrophic, is a broader regime-change campaign with sustained U.S. ground presence inside Iran.

My own estimate is this: a prolonged high-intensity war without major occupation carries about a 45% probability; a limited ground incursion about 25%; negotiated de-escalation about 20%; and a broad regime-change invasion about 10%. Those figures are not certainties, only judgments based on current force posture, public rhetoric, and the historical reluctance of Washington to bear the cost of long occupation when air and naval coercion can still be intensified. But the most important warning is that even a 25% chance of limited ground action contains within it the seed of a much wider war. Once U.S. boots hit Iranian soil and resistance produces American casualties, domestic pressure in Washington may drive escalation far beyond the original mission.

If the United States "wins," it may reopen shipping, damage Iran's missile and naval capacity, and perhaps enforce a new nuclear arrangement. But such a win would still leave behind an unstable region, a humiliated but not necessarily pacified society, and a new cycle of insurgent or proxy retaliation. If Iran holds the line and turns even limited ground operations into a grinding trap, the defeat would be historic, not merely military but psychological, undermining U.S.-Israeli coercive credibility across the region. If negotiations somehow succeed, the outcome will not be friendship. It will be an ugly compromise designed to stop the bleeding.

That is why the world stands at a catastrophic juncture. The danger is not only that a ground assault may occur. The greater danger is that once it begins, no one may be able to keep it limited. The war planners may speak the language of optionality, precision, and controlled force. History speaks a different language. It says that powerful states often enter wars believing they can calibrate violence, only to discover that resistance, pride, and fear rapidly seize control. Let us hope that this time the diplomats win before the generals do, because once the ground war begins, peace may become far more expensive than anyone now imagines.

- Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)

Former Press Minister,

Embassy of Pakistan to France

Former Press Attaché to Malaysia

Former MD, SRBC

Macomb, Michigan

The Decline of a Sacred Profession

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Yet, with the passage of time, a disquieting transformation appears to have taken root. Instead of progressing along the path of excellence, certain segments within the profession seem to be receding into a state of ethical erosion. The demeanor once synonymous with civility and compassion is, in some quarters, being supplanted by indifference, impatience, and, at times...

MEDICINE has long been regarded as a messianic vocation, a sacred covenant between the healer and the afflicted, wherein the physician serves not merely as a practitioner of science but as an instrument of Divine mercy. The restoration of health, in this noble understanding, is not solely the outcome of pharmacological intervention or surgical dexterity, but a manifestation of the will of Allah, bestowed through those endowed with knowledge, compassion, and fortitude. Across civilizations, the medical profession has commanded reverence, for it demands both intellectual rigor and moral excellence, a rare confluence that elevates its adherents to a station of profound trust.

In Pakistan, this trust was once embodied with distinction. Doctors trained in our institutions earned acclaim not only for their clinical acumen but also for their refined ethical sensibilities. Their education extended beyond anatomy and therapeutics into the delicate art of human engagement, where empathy, patience, and decorum were cultivated alongside diagnostic skill. The physician's presence itself was often therapeutic; a gentle word, a reassuring glance, or a measured tone could alleviate the patient's anxiety even before any prescription was written. The Hippocratic ethos was not a mere abstraction but a lived reality, shaping the doctor-patient relationship into one of mutual respect and confidence. Yet, with the passage of time, a disquieting transformation appears to have taken root. Instead of progressing along the path of excellence, certain segments within the profession seem to be receding into a state of ethical erosion. The demeanor once synonymous with civility and compassion is, in some quarters, being supplanted by indifference, impatience, and, at times, outright hostility. Reports from various public hospitals paint a troubling picture, where young doctors, entrusted with the sanctity of human life, exhibit conduct that is at variance with the very essence of medical professionalism. Instances of altercations within hospital premises, reminiscent more of street brawls than of scholarly discourse, have become alarmingly frequent. Even more distressing is the apparent disregard for senior counsel,

as advice offered by experienced practitioners is met with defiance rather than deference.

The erosion of this professional decorum has grave implications, for the edifice of medicine rests upon an intangible yet indispensable foundation; trust. The patient, often in a state of vulnerability, entrusts his or her most intimate concerns to the physician, believing in the sanctity of confidentiality and the sincerity of care. This fiduciary relationship, once robust, now shows signs of fragility. When compassion is replaced by callousness, and when ethical restraint gives way to recklessness, the patient's faith is inevitably shaken.

A recent incident in a prominent hospital in Lahore has brought this crisis into stark relief. Within the confines of an operation theatre in a gynecology ward—an environment that ought to epitomize precision, dignity, and solemn responsibility—a spectacle unfolded that defies both medical ethics and human decency. Two cases of childbirth reportedly became the subject of a grotesque competition among attending doctors, with the proceedings being recorded on a mobile device and subsequently disseminated. The gravity of this act cannot be overstated. In that moment, the operating theatre, meant to safeguard the lives of mother and child, was reduced to a stage for trivial amusement. The presence of male staff further compounded the violation of privacy and propriety, stripping the situation of any semblance of professional decorum.

One is compelled to ask; how did we arrive at such a nadir? How did those entrusted with the sanctity of life come to trivialize it so profoundly? It is particularly unsettling to consider that these patients—someone's daughter, sister, or wife—were subjected to such indignity at a moment of utmost vulnerability. The risks inherent in obstetric procedures, including haemorrhage, fetal distress, and other complications, necessitate the highest degree of vigilance and care. To compromise this responsibility for the sake of frivolity is not merely negligence; it is a moral transgression of the gravest order.

The intervention of the concerned authorities, including the health minister, is a necessary step, yet it addresses only the immediate manifestation of a deeper malaise.

Disciplinary action, including the revocation of licenses and the imposition of legal penalties, may serve as a deterrent, but the root cause lies in a systemic failure to inculcate ethical consciousness during medical training. The curriculum, while comprehensive in its scientific scope, must place equal emphasis on medical ethics, professionalism, and the psychological dimensions of patient care. The formation of a competent physician is not achieved through textbooks alone; it requires the cultivation of character.

Equally troubling are reports of coercive practices in clinical decision-making, particularly in obstetrics, where families are pressured into consenting to surgical interventions under the specter of imminent danger. The suggestion that a case is "not normal" and requires immediate operative management, often delivered in an atmosphere of urgency, leaves relatives with little choice but to acquiesce. While caesarean sections are, in many instances, medically indicated, their unnecessary proliferation raises concerns about both ethical integrity and patient welfare. Surgical intervention carries its own risks, including infection, thromboembolic events, and long-term reproductive complications. In many advanced healthcare systems, a conservative approach is adopted, allowing natural processes to proceed to the fullest extent before resorting to operative measures. If such trends persist, the consequences will extend beyond individual cases to erode public confidence in the healthcare system as a whole. The question then arises with poignant urgency; who will entrust their loved ones to institutions where dignity and safety are no longer assured? The sanctity of the medical profession must be restored, not merely through punitive measures but through a comprehensive reorientation towards its original principles—compassion, integrity, and accountability. The physician must once again become a custodian of hope, a figure whose presence reassures rather than intimidates, whose conduct reflects the highest ideals of humanity. Only then can the noble legacy of this sacred profession be preserved, and the trust that has been so gravely shaken be painstakingly rebuilt.

Briefs

Every country must handle its own oil

FROM PAGE 01
Trump urged affected nations to either purchase American energy supplies or handle the risky passage independently. This "America First" stance has sent ripples through global energy markets as countries reassess their reliance on the Strait of Hormuz amid ongoing tensions with Iran.

IRGC Vows to Target US Companies...

FROM PAGE 01
The IRGC statement comes as tensions remain high following weeks of exchanges between Iran, the United States, and Israel. Iranian media and affiliated outlets have circulated graphics identifying specific companies and locations, framing the threats as retaliation for strikes on Iranian infrastructure. Separately, Russia's ambassador to Iran told the RTVI news outlet that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei is present in the country but is refraining from public appearances "for understandable reasons." Mojtaba Khamenei, 56, was appointed as Iran's new Supreme Leader in early March following the death of his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in the early stages of the current conflict.

Pak, France reaffirm strong...

FROM PAGE 01
Minister Malik noted that while Pakistan has shouldered the burden of maintaining supply stability, the government ensured that this burden remains properly funded, avoiding the accumulation of circular debt. He added that the government is now working on measures to provide targeted subsidies to protect vulnerable segments of society. Ambassador Nicolas Galey reaffirmed that Pakistan and France enjoy strong bilateral relations and that energy cooperation between the two countries has expanded in recent years. He also noted that French companies have expressed growing interest in Pakistan's mining sector and expressed optimism that French firms would actively participate in the upcoming Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum (PMIF), now scheduled for November.

Pakistan, China...

FROM PAGE 01
Humanitarian assistance must be allowed to all war-affected areas. II. Start of peace talks as soon as possible. Sovereignty, territorial integrity, national independence and security of Iran and the Gulf states should be safeguarded. Dialogue and diplomacy is the only viable option to resolve conflicts. China and Pakistan support the relevant parties in initiating talks, with all parties committing to peaceful resolution of disputes, and refraining from the use or the threat of use of force during peace talks. III. Security of nonmilitary targets. The principle of protecting civilians in military conflict should be observed. China and Pakistan call on parties to the conflict to immediately stop attacks on civilians and nonmilitary targets, and fully adhere to IHL, and stop attacking important infrastructure, including energy, desalination and power facilities, and peaceful nuclear infrastructure, such as nuclear power plants.

IHC grants interim...

FROM PAGE 01
Advocate Naeem Bukhari said that Dr. Fazila Abbasi appeared before the court three times. She could appear once and submitted a medical certificate for three days, after which the bail was withdrawn. The court restored the interim bail in exchange for surety bonds of Rs 100,000 and directed her to approach the trial court.

Fakhar Zaman suspended for two matches of PSL

The PCB said that the incident had occurred during the ending moments of the match when the on-field umpires penalised Lahore Qalandars for five runs and the ball was changed before the start of the last over of Karachi Kings' batting innings

DNA

LAHORE: Lahore Qalandars batter Fakhar Zaman has been suspended for two Pakistan Super League (PSL) matches after he was found guilty of breaching the code of conduct, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Tuesday. The incident occurred in the final over of Sunday's match between Karachi Kings and Lahore Qalandars, with the former needing 14 runs to win. Fakhar, Lahore captain Shaheen Afridi and fast bowler Haris Rauf were involved in a brief discussion, during which Fakhar and Rauf passed the ball between them.

The umpire then approached Rauf and asked to see the ball. Following consultations with the square-leg umpire, the officials awarded five penalty runs to Karachi and ordered the ball to be changed. The penalty proved costly as Karachi went on to chase down a target of 129 with three balls to spare, Abbas Afridi hitting a four and a six to seal a four-wicket victory. On Monday, the PCB had officially charged Fakhar with ball-tampering. In a press release issued on Tuesday, the PCB said, "Fakhar Zaman has been suspended for two HBL PSL matches after he was found guilty of a level 3

offence for breaching Article 2.14 of the applicable code of conduct for players and player support personnel during the Lahore Qalandars vs Karachi Kings match on Sunday, March 29 at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore." The PCB said that the incident had occurred during the ending moments of the match when the on-field umpires penalised Lahore Qalandars for five runs and the ball was changed before the start of the last over of Karachi Kings' batting innings. It said that on-field Umpires Shahid Saikat, Faisal Khan Aafreedi, TV Umpire Asif Yaqoob, and fourth Umpire Tariq Rasheed levelled the charge, it said.

According to the board, Fakhar denied the offence and contested the charge at a full disciplinary hearing in accordance with the code of conduct. "Match Referee Roshan Mahanama conducted the disciplinary hearing and made the determination after reviewing all evidence and providing an opportunity of personal hearing to Fakhar. Lahore Qalandars Captain Shaheen Shah Afridi, Team Director Sameen Rana and Team Manager Farooq Anwar were also present during the hearing," the PCB said. According to the PCB, the commission of a level 3 offence for the first time carries a minimum penalty of a one-match ban and a maximum penalty of a two-match ban.

UN chief warns food waste threatens climate, food security

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Monday called on the international community to build zero-waste food systems that "we need to nourish both people and planet." "The world wastes far too much food," the UN chief said in his message on the International Day of Zero Waste, observed annually on March 30. At an earlier commemoration, Pakistan's UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad welcomed the focus on food waste as a challenge linked directly to climate action, food security and sustainable development. In this regard, the Pakistan envoy commended Turkey's leadership on zero waste initiatives, including the pioneering work of the country's First Lady Emine Erdogan. Last week's commemoration was organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat. In his message released on Monday, the UN sec-

retary-general said that every day, people across the globe throw away food enough to prepare 1 billion meals while letting 9 percent of humanity go hungry, putting the climate, ecosystems and health at risk, and threatening the ability to feed ourselves in the future. Guterres urged consumers to make a big impact with small changes in their shopping and cooking habits, retailers to optimize their operations and redistribute surplus food, cities to scale organic waste separation and strengthen procurement for schools and hospitals, and national governments to drive systemic change by addressing food waste in their climate action and biodiversity plans and forging public-private partnerships. Through initiatives like the Food Waste Breakthrough and No Organic Waste, the international community can halve food waste by 2030, cut the methane emissions by up

to 7 percent, and build circular, resilient food systems, he said. These efforts, beyond protecting our planet, will create green jobs, reduce food insecurity and climate impacts, and prevent up to 1 trillion U.S. dollars in economic losses each year, the secretary-general said. "We cannot take food for granted," he stressed. Every year, humanity generates between 2.1 billion and 2.3 billion tonnes of municipal solid waste, and some 2.7 billion people lack access to waste collection, according to figures released by the UN Human Settlements Programme. Waste pollution significantly threatens well-being, economic prosperity, and accelerates the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution. Without urgent action, annual municipal solid waste generation will hit 3.8 billion tonnes by 2050, according to the agency. - APP

Maradona's former home is transformed into a soup kitchen

BUENOS AIRES: Every week, hundreds of people line up to fill a plastic container with food in an unlikely place: the humble home where Argentine soccer legend Diego Armando Maradona was born. The house in Villa Fiorito, a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, no longer belongs to the family of Maradona, who died in 2020 after a heart attack, but for the last month, its current owner has lent its dirt yard to a group of volunteers who light a grill and cook for neighbors. Last Thursday, Maria Torres stirred a stew in two large pots while several others peeled potatoes and chopped pieces of chicken. A mural painted on the house's facade depicts the soccer player next to the words, "The house of god." Poverty has been trending downward in Argentina, with official statistics showing it dropping to 31.6 percent in the first half of 2025 from 52.9 percent in the first half of 2024. - APP

Lahore Qalandars fine Shaheen Afridi Rs1m over security breach

Action against pacer taken in spirit of accountability and discipline, reads official statement

DNA

LAHORE: Lahore Qalandars have fined captain Shaheen Shah Afridi Rs1 million over a security breach "involving unauthorised entry into the players' room", officials said on Monday. In a statement, the franchise said that the matter was investigated internally and was not a deliberate violation but a misunderstanding. The franchise added that it had formally informed the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) of its decision after completing a full internal inquiry. It maintained that the incident had been exaggerated and presented contrary to facts in some reports. The action against Shaheen has been taken in the spirit of accountability and discipline, the statement said, reiterating that the franchise respects all security protocols. Officials said that the Qalandars' captain had taken guests of teammate Sikandar Raza into the players' room at the team hotel despite security staff refusing permission. The Shaheen-led side is currently second on the points table in the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11, with two points from two matches. They won their campaign opener against the Hyderabad Kingsmen on March 26; however, the side suffered a four-wicket defeat at the hands of Karachi Kings on Sunday. During the Karachi game, the franchise was slapped with a five-run penalty over charges of changing the ball's condition. Qalandars batter Fakhar Zaman was also charged with a Level 3 offence under Article 2.14 of the Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel for allegedly breaching Article 41.3 of the playing conditions, which prohibits any action that alters the condition of the ball.

FMs of Muslim nations condemn...

FROM PAGE 01
Qatar, in a joint statement, condemned the prevention of Muslim worshippers from accessing Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the prevention of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Custos of the Holy Land from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to celebrate the Palm Sunday Mass. They renewed their condemnation and rejection of any Israeli attempts to alter the legal and historical status quo at Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. "These continued Israeli measures constitute a flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, as well as of the legal and historical status quo, and represent an infringement on the unrestricted right of access to places of worship," they viewed.

Gas supply halted in parts of...

FROM PAGE 01
due to the blast include Pishin, Ziarat, Kalat, Mastung, and Kuchlak," he added, noting that gas supply from the main distribution system was cut off. "A large portion of the gas pipeline was destroyed in the blast," SSGC officials said, adding that engineers and concerned staff reached the site to inspect the damage. The damaged pipeline will be replaced, with repair work to commence after security clearance. A heavy contingent of security forces has been deployed at gas installations in Quetta following the incident. The SSGC Balochistan general manager said that the damaged pipeline could not be repaired immediately. He said that the repair work is scheduled to begin today (Tuesday) after receiving security clearance, adding that replacement pipes will need to be transported from Karachi.

IHC adjourns hearing...

FROM PAGE 01
for suspension of sentence had already been filed, stressing that such pleas could not be heard without issuance of notice in the main appeals, particularly after recent amendments to the NAB law. He urged the court to proceed with arguments on the appeals if the defence was ready. Responding to this, Barrister Safdar contended that his clients were convicted on Jan 17, 2025, and despite the passage of over a year, the prosecution had repeatedly sought adjournments. He maintained that the defence had remained present throughout and pressed for suspension of sentence and release on bail, also citing medical grounds. The bench, however, questioned whether the defence could proceed with arguments on the main appeals against the conviction, even suggesting allocation of two hearing days per week. Safdar replied that he had not been able to meet or obtain instructions from Imran and Bushra Bibi for the past five months, making it difficult to proceed on the appeals at this stage.

China-Italy exhibition fosters cultural dialogue beyond display

"These items are not merely vessels. Their patterns and motifs tell stories of ancient customs, earthly harvests and the relationships between peoples," Tempesta said after extensive discussions with her Chinese counterparts

YINCHUAN: For Anna Lucia Tempesta, an Italian museum curator, an exhibition is never merely a display of ancient objects, but rather serves as an open invitation to an intercultural dialogue. This philosophy is currently coming to life in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, northwest China, where an ongoing showcase of ancient Mediterranean pottery has evolved into a profound exchange between European and Chinese heritage professionals. The catalyst for this exchange is the "Myth on Pottery" exhibition, which opened last week at the Ningxia Museum. Featuring 115 precious ceramics, sculptures and glassware from Italy's Puglia region, the event uses the myths of ancient Greek deities to illustrate Mediterranean culture and history. However, as the exhibition settles into its three-month run, the spotlight has shifted beyond the artifacts to the deep, collaborative ties being forged behind the scenes. Tempesta, the Italian chief curator of the exhibition and a promotion officer of Puglia's Department of Tourism and Culture, noted that the true triumph of the event lies in mutual discovery. "These items are not merely vessels. Their patterns and motifs tell stories of ancient customs, earthly harvests and the relationships between peoples," Tempesta said after extensive discussions with her Chinese counterparts. "These images are meaningful to us, and they hold meaning for you. If we converse, we explain and you listen, you interpret and we understand - this is true exchange. We are both enriched by it," she added. This shared understanding is vividly captured in the exhibition hall itself. Chinese and Italian curators deliberately placed a 400 B.C. Greek krater from Puglia alongside a Chinese national treasure, namely a gilt silver ewer unearthed from

a local tomb dating back to the Northern Zhou Dynasty (557-581). Made in the ancient Bactria region, which is in present-day northern Afghanistan, the ewer features Persian and Roman decorative elements. Remarkably, both artifacts depict scenes from the Trojan War. Placed adjacent to each other, they create a vivid, cross-continental resonance spanning thousands of miles, underscoring Ningxia's historical role as a vital crossroads on the ancient Silk Road. The cultural synergy has extended well beyond display cabinets. During their stay in Yinchuan, capital city of Ningxia, the Italian delegation toured the Ningxia Museum's cultural relic conservation center to observe Chinese preservation practices. The European experts engaged in in-depth discussions with Chinese specialists regarding restoration materials and preservation techniques. According to Hong Quan, the exhibition's Chinese curator, the Italian team expressed high admiration for the museum's advanced digital exhibition technologies and the meticulous dedication of its staff, laying a solid foundation for future academic collaboration. The Italian team's immersion into Chinese heritage also included a visit to the Xixia Imperial Tombs, which were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List last year. By comparing ancient Xixia ceramics and porcelain kiln sites with Italian archaeological finds, the experts marveled at the distinctiveness and historical value of China's regional heritage, noting how different environments shape unique artistic expressions. Wang Xiaojun, curator of the Ningxia Museum, highlighted that launching this exhibition during the spring tourism season was a strategic move to enrich public cultural life and foster deeper cultural cooperation between China and Italy. Noting the striking similarities between Italy's rich rock art and the ancient petroglyphs found in Ningxia's Helan Mountain, Tempesta revealed an ambitious vision of the future. "We hope to eventually bring the Helan Mountain rock art to Europe for exhibition," Tempesta said, adding that she looks forward to establishing a long-term, pragmatic partnership in relic conservation, joint exhibitions and academic research. - APP

Pakistan Exit AFC Qualifiers After Fighting Loss to Myanmar

Myanmar doubled their lead around the hour mark, breaking the offside trap before Than Paing calmly finished a low cross from the right

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan concluded their 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifying campaign on a disappointing yet spirited note, going down 2-1 to Myanmar at the Jinnah Stadium on Tuesday. Despite the defeat, Pakistan delivered a determined and energetic performance, particularly in the first half, but costly defensive lapses after the break denied them a positive result. The team finished with just two points from six matches in Group E. Under head coach Nolberto Solano, Pakistan started brightly and created early chances. Captain Alamgir Ghazi came close midway through the first half with a powerful long-range effort that forced a fine save from goalkeeper Zin Nyi Aung. Soon after, Ali Uzair set up a promising opportunity at the far post, but Shayek Dost failed to connect properly, allowing Myanmar to escape unscathed. Pakistan ended the first half on top but



were undone just a minute into the second half when goalkeeper Saqib Hanif failed to deal with a back pass, gifting Myanmar the opening goal. Myanmar doubled their lead around the hour mark, breaking the offside trap before Than Paing calmly finished a low cross from the right. To their credit, Pakistan continued to push forward and were rewarded in the 90th minute when Shayek Dost headed home a precise cross from Tufail Shinwari, marking Pakistan's first goal of the qualifying campaign since Etaz Hussain's strike against Afghanistan. The late goal injected fresh energy into the hosts, but their comeback hopes were dented when Junaid Shah was forced off injured after all substitutions had been used, leaving Pakistan to finish the match with 10 men. Myanmar held firm to secure the win, finishing second in Group E with 12 points behind Syria, while Pakistan exited the campaign with valuable lessons despite a fighting display.

Briefs

POL import bill declines by 6.35 %

The total imports of the petroleum group during July-February (2025-26) stood at \$10,029.633 million against the imports of \$10,709.961 million during the same months of last year. Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 6.23 percent, from \$ 3,959.173 million last year to \$ 3,712.433 million during the period under review year. Likewise, the imports of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) decreased by 26.13 percent from \$2,456.205 million last year to \$ 1,814.319 million while the import of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) went down by 3.94 per cent in the first eight months and stood at \$ 696.516 million as compared to \$ 725.078 in the corresponding period in 2024-25. On the other hand, the import of petroleum crude increased by 6.64 percent from \$ 3,569.237 million last year to \$ 3,806.138 million. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed a decrease of 21.25 percent and declined to \$ 982.850 million during the month of February 2026 as compared to imports of \$ 1,248.037 million in February 2025.—APP

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.15 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 279.16.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279.45 and Rs 280.1, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.73 to close at Rs 320.13 from the previous day's close of Rs 320.86, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.74, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 0.89 and closed at Rs 368.74 compared to the previous day's Rs 369.63.—APP

Gold price surges further by Rs 2,800

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a significant increase on Tuesday with the price of 24 karat gold per tola rising by Rs 2,800 to reach Rs 478,762 as compared to Rs 475,962 on the previous day. According to the association, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 2,401 to Rs 410,461 from Rs 408,060, whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs 2,201 to Rs 376,269 from Rs 374,068. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association on Tuesday. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$28 to \$4,560 from \$4,532, the association reported. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs 260 to Rs 7,784 from Rs 7,524, while that of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs 223 to Rs 6,673 from Rs 6,450. The price of silver in the international market also increased by \$2.60 to \$73.00 from \$70.40.—APP

Workshop promotes tax compliance culture

RAWALPINDI: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has organized a training session at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) to promote tax awareness and encourage a culture of compliance among the business community. Participants engaged in detailed discussions on proper documentation, transparency in financial matters, and the important role of taxation in strengthening Pakistan's economy. The session emphasized the need for greater documentation and formalization of business activities to build a more prosperous and transparent economic future.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Old passenger shade in front of PIMS hospital being demolished for construct the new shade for electric buses stop, in the Federal Capital.

CPEC- II focuses on industrial uplift, people-to-people connectivity: Ahsan

The minister further said that discussions had been held on the China-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor aimed at ensuring access to quality higher education for the younger generation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase-II would focus on innovation, industrial development, and people-to-people connectivity. Growth corridors, innovation corridors, livelihood corridors, and regional development initiatives would form part of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase-II, he said. The Minister said this while addressing annual award ceremony for outstanding Pakistani and Chinese staff working on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects here in ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives auditorium. Addressing the ceremony,

the minister paid rich tribute to Pakistani and Chinese professionals, particularly engineers, terming them the true architects of CPEC projects who worked tirelessly to bring these initiatives to fruition. The Minister said annual award ceremony for outstanding Pakistani and Chinese staff working on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects was not merely a distribution of awards but recognition of their spirit of service and dedication. He also emphasized upon the importance of solar energy systems and advanced meteorological systems for Pakistan's future. Stressing upon human resource development, he said Pakistani students studying in China should return home and contribute to national progress under development initiatives. The minister further said that discussions had been held on the Chi-

na-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor aimed at ensuring access to quality higher education for the younger generation. He reiterated that Pakistan attached great importance to its all-weather strategic cooperative partnership with China. The Minister recalled that at the launch of CPEC, Pakistan was facing up to 18 hours of load shedding, adding that it was China which invested in Pakistan's energy sector and helped overcome the crisis. He noted that over the past decade, CPEC has played a pivotal role in Pakistan's economic development. "Friends are those who stand by you in times of need," he remarked, adding that without CPEC, Pakistan might still have been struggling with severe power shortages. The minister said the agreements signed at the event would give new impetus to ongoing development projects and further strengthen Paki-

stan-China partnership. He highlighted that the geo-political importance of Gwadar had increased significantly due to CPEC. Meanwhile, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong said that this year marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. He noted that recent high-level visits resulted in agreements on CPEC projects and broader bilateral cooperation. He informed that Deputy Prime Minister, Ishaq Dar is currently visiting China and is scheduled to meet Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss important regional and bilateral matters. The ambassador appreciated the steps taken by Pakistani leadership in the current situation and reaffirmed China's commitment to further strengthening bilateral ties for the benefit of both nations.

Sri Lanka rushes to solar batteries as energy crisis bites

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka announced plans on Tuesday to urgently set up battery storage for solar energy and use it during the nighttime peak demand currently met by coal and diesel powered generators. Government spokesman Nalinda Jayatissa said a 50-megawatt battery energy storage system (BESS) would be launched immediately as part of a 300-megawatt solar power system. "The Cabinet of Ministers approved a proposal to set up batteries which will store solar power for 40 hours," Media minister Jayatissa told reporters in Colombo. Faced with an energy shortage due to supply disruptions caused by the Middle East conflict, Sri Lanka has raised fuel and electricity prices by as much as 40 percent. Since the United States and Israel began bombing Iran, triggering retaliatory attacks that disrupted global energy supplies, Sri Lanka has rationed fuel. Sri Lanka is also observing a four-day working week, while ordering streetlights and advertising illuminations to be turned off. Public servants have been asked to switch to table fans instead of air conditioners, despite the country facing its hottest period, when daytime temperatures reach 38C. The Cabinet of Ministers, which met on Monday, also decided to seek international funding for a proposed \$800 million, 600-megawatt hydroelectricity project that could become the island's first pumped-storage power station. The Maha Oya project is expected to pump water back to the reservoir during periods of low electricity demand and draw from it when demand is high. It is expected to be online by 2031. Much of Sri Lanka's electricity at night is currently generated by a 900-megawatt coal power station and another 1,000 megawatts from diesel generation.—APP

In Beirut's largest stadium, displaced PWDs face 'ordeal'

BEIRUT: In the stands of Beirut's largest stadium, it is the shouts of children displaced by war that echo, not the songs of fans. Beneath the concrete steps, more than a thousand people fleeing Israeli bombs on Lebanon sleep in tents, including around 50 wheelchair users and people with other mobility challenges. The vast sports complex, which opened its doors to displaced people during the previous war in 2024, is one of the few shelters able to take in people with disabilities, despite being poorly adapted to their needs. "If there's a strike, the people around me could run away and leave me behind; I can't get up and move if no one helps me," says 62-year-old Fatima Nazli, who uses a wheelchair. The state has not put in place any strategy to evacuate people with disabilities, said Sylvana Lakkis, head of the Lebanese Union for People with Physical Disabilities. "We submitted a policy and proposal" to the government, but "they never listened," she told AFP. "Every time there is a crisis, we, people with disabilities pay the price." Nazli and her husband had to leave their apartment in Beirut's southern suburbs, shelled by Israel since Lebanon was pulled into the Middle East war on March 2. They are living in a tent in a section of the stadium where she is forced to ask Red Cross volunteers for help to get down the flight of steps leading to the only bathrooms she can access. He couple expects to move to another section of the stadium, where two access ramps and four accessible toilets were recently installed. In the meantime, Nazli and her husband, Abu Ali, who did not wish to give his full name, go back to their apartment from time to time to take a shower and pick up clean clothes, gripped by fear because the neighborhood "could be bombed at any moment" by the Israeli air force. The Camille Chamoun Sports City, on the edge of Beirut's southern suburbs, has witnessed the twists and turns of Lebanon's troubled history. Destroyed by bombing during the Israeli invasion in 1982 and rebuilt after the end of the civil war in 1990, it has fallen into disrepair due to a lack of funds for its upkeep. Football legend Pele once trod its turf, and international sporting competitions have been held there. But the stadium has also served as a warehouse for food supplies, and Hezbollah held the lavish funeral for its leader Hassan Nasrallah, killed by Israel, there in September 2024. "This place was not built to be lived in," says stadium director Naji Hammoud, who opened its doors "the next day" after the first evacuation warnings issued by the Israeli army in the southern suburbs in early March. More than a million people have been displaced and Israeli strikes have killed more than 1,200 people, including 124 children, Lebanese authorities say. Many displaced people are sleeping on the streets of the capital or in their cars, and Hammoud wants the facility to take in "as many as possible." Around the tents, workers are busy renovating the unsanitary restrooms, installing showers and connecting them to the water supply, and hooking up electricity. "I can't wash myself on my own, I need help," explains Khodr Salem, a shopkeeper from the south of the country, who has difficulty walking and uses a crutch because of an infection in his leg. "We lived like kings in our homes. Our life has become an ordeal," the old man says through tears, sitting on a mattress in his tent. For Lakkis, Lebanon doesn't have enough accessible shelters: the few schools able to receive people with disabilities fill up quickly.—DNA

Netanyahu's move to expand military service deepens rift within Israel

DUBAI: Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hinted at plans to extend mandatory military service as the army grapples with a deepening personnel shortage amid the war in Iran and invasion of Lebanon. According to Israeli public broadcaster KAN, Netanyahu said plans were in place to revise conscription laws following the Jewish Passover holiday in response to Army Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir, warning that the army could "collapse" if the personnel crisis is not addressed. Under current law, Israeli men serve 32 months of mandatory military service, while women serve 24 months, with proposals under discussion to extend the term to 36 months. Conscription laws have previously exempted Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Haredi Yeshiva students; however, this exemption has come under mass scrutiny as Israel has found itself engaged in an increasing number of wars since October 2023. In June 2024, the High Court of Justice unanimously ruled that the state must conscript Haredi Yeshiva students and stop funding yeshivas for those who do not serve, prompting mass protests, defec-

tions and arrests. According to Israeli analyst Ori Goldberg, Netanyahu's attempts to expand military service are likely to reignite the contentious political issue within Israel. "The issue of mandatory military service or military conscription is seemingly important for the IDF's operational strength, but in reality, that's not really the case," Goldberg told Arab News. "It doesn't really matter if the IDF has 5,000 more troops or 10,000 more troops, or 12,000 more troops. It's a political issue. It's a political issue that is perhaps the only real leverage that any potential opposition to Netanyahu has on him." Haredi political parties are a key part of the government coalition. They are demanding a new law to secure a blanket exemption and have boycotted parliamentary votes over the proposed law. According to Goldberg, Netanyahu's ability to "rein them in" is one of the most difficult internal political battles facing the government — with opponents keen to capitalize on the fracture. "There's going to be real civic upheaval. I mean, they're going to go into ultra-orthodox neighborhoods and arrest

defectors, and they're going to run into some real opposition," he said. "The ultra-orthodox are the closest thing to actual resistance anyone in Jewish Israel will offer the authorities." Goldberg said he remained pessimistic that any substantial change would occur, believing the mass conscription of Haredi students to still be a "far-fetched fantasy" commonly deployed as a political distraction by parties looking to differentiate themselves in an otherwise homogeneous landscape. "This isn't about the actual soldiers, and it's not about the actual conscription. It's about the principle of the matter, and it's the only issue that allows Netanyahu's opposition to look like an enlightened secular opposition to fanatics who want nothing more than to turn the whole country into a biblical theocracy," Goldberg said. "That's not the case. I mean, all of this is in many ways being undertaken to camouflage the fact that the great majority of Jewish Israelis from whatever political side of the spectrum you'd like to examine support what Netanyahu is doing. They support what Israel is doing. They supported the Gaza genocide. They support the ethnic cleansing in the territories.—DNA

King Charles III to make state visit to US

LONDON: King Charles III will visit the United States in late April, Buckingham Palace said Tuesday, despite some calls for the trip to be canceled or delayed amid the Iran war. Confirmation of the monarch's first state visit to the US comes at a rocky time for the so-called USUK "special relationship," with US President Donald Trump repeatedly criticizing Prime Minister Keir Starmer's reticence over the US-Israel war against Tehran. The trip by the king and Queen Camilla would "celebrate the historic connections and the modern bilateral relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States," Buckingham Palace said in the statement. It would be followed by an official visit to Bermuda which is a British Overseas Territory. Washington's envoy to Britain, Warren Stephens, warned last week it would be a "big mistake" for the visit to be canceled. The US leader has repeatedly railed against Starmer since the start of the war, accusing him of not doing enough to support the US. "This is not Winston Churchill that we're dealing with," Trump said earlier this month, after Starmer initially declined to let US warplanes fly from UK bases to strike Iran.—APP

More than 200,000 fled Lebanon for Syria

GENEVA: More than 200,000 people have fled Lebanon for Syria since fighting resumed a month ago between Israeli forces and Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, the United Nations' refugee agency said on Tuesday. Lebanon was pulled into the Middle East conflict in early March when Israeli-US strikes killed Iran's supreme leader and Tehran-backed Hezbollah responded by firing rockets at Israel. Since then, Israel has struck targets across Lebanon and sent ground troops into its neighbor's territory. Lebanese authorities say more than 1,200 people have been killed. "Nearly a month after hostilities intensified in Lebanon, Syria has seen a sharp rise in people crossing the border from Lebanon," Aseer Al-Mada'ien, UNHCR's interim representative in Syria, told a press conference by video link from Damascus. Between March 2 and 27, "more than 200,000 people entered Syria through the three official crossing points," she said. "The vast majority — nearly 180,000 — are Syrians, including Syrian refugees who had fled Syria seeking safety in the past in Lebanon and (are) now forced to flee again," she added. "More than 28,000 Lebanese have also crossed into Syria," she told reporters in Geneva. The figures were provided by the Syrian authorities and confirmed by UNCHR officials on the ground, she said.—APP

Expo to underline Chinese market's enduring appeal

BEIJING: The sixth China International Consumer Products Expo (CICPE) is set to reaffirm the lasting appeal of the Chinese market, with robust international participation underscoring global businesses' continued confidence in the world's second-largest economy. Scheduled to take place in south China's Hainan Province from April 13 to 18, this expo will see the participation of more than 3,400 brands from over 60 countries and regions, Vice Commerce Minister Sheng Qiuping said at a press conference. International exhibits will account for 65 percent of the total, up 20 percentage points from last year. Since its launch in 2021, the expo has become an important platform for multinationals to stay abreast of consumer trends in China's gigantic market, with over 3,800 enterprises and more than 12,000 brands from 92 countries and regions participating over the past five editions. Sheng noted that the expo has become a "bridgehead" for high-level opening up, with over 230,000 domestic and overseas buyers participating across the five expos to date. "It has opened a fast-track channel for high-quality consumer goods from around the world to enter the Chinese market, and injected continuous new momentum into upgrading consumption and unlocking the potential of China's vast market," he said. Canada, this year's guest of honor, will bring nearly 40 companies to showcase cosmetics, agricultural products, pet food and more.—APP

Briefs

China seen as 'key guarantor' in Iran-US talks

Experts suggest Islamabad exploring Beijing's role in facilitating possible negotiations framework

DNA

BEIJING: China is being viewed as a potential guarantor in any future talks between Iran and the United States, as diplomatic efforts intensify with Pakistan playing an active role in exploring possible frameworks. According to Washington-based scholar Vali Nasr, Iran has sought guarantees in any potential agreement with the US, with indications that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar was travelling to China to explore Beijing's role as a guarantor. He noted that such an idea would likely not be pursued without being floated with both Washington and Beijing, though there was no certainty that China would accept the role. He added that Beijing was increasingly emerging as a frontline player in ongoing diplomatic efforts. The remarks come as Dar was visiting China at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, as Pakistan steps up diplomatic engagement amid the ongoing war involving Iran, the United States and Israel. Pakistan has emerged as a key facilitator between Iran and the United States, serving as an intermediary for messages between the two sides as the war continues. On Sunday, DPM Dar said a quadrilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Egypt had called for an immediate and permanent end to the ongoing war in the Middle East.

FC man martyred in Orakzai

PESHAWAR: A Federal Constabulary (FC) soldier was martyred in a terrorist attack on a security check post in Central Orakzai district on Tuesday. Official sources said the attack targeted Kundi Mushti check post, where militants opened fire on security personnel. During the assault, a sniper shot resulted in the martyrdom of Sepoy Zeeshan, who was serving in the Orakzai Scouts, 231 Wing. Security officials stated that the forces responded promptly and effectively, forcing the attackers to flee under the cover of darkness. Following the incident, a joint search and clearance operation has been launched in the area by police and security forces to track down the perpetrators. - APP

UNRWA chief seeks probe into killing of staff

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The outgoing head of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) supporting Palestinian refugees said on Tuesday he wanted an investigation into the killing of nearly 400 UNRWA staff during the conflict in Gaza. "I believe that we need to have a panel... a high-level panel of experts to look into the killing of our staff," Philippe Lazzarini told reporters in Geneva. Speaking at a press conference on the last day on the job as UNRWA commissioner general, the 62-year-old Swiss national condemned the fact that "more than 390" of the agency's staff had been killed since the start of Israel's war on Gaza in October 2023. "Many others have sustained life-changing injuries or have been arbitrarily detained and tortured," he said. He said an investigation was needed not just into the killing of UNRWA employees but also of other UN staff, stressing: "There have been other UN colleagues who have been also killed. And we have to look also at the extraordinary, large-scale destruction of the agency, of UN premises in Gaza," said Lazzarini.

Ambassador Rizwan says

Pakistan facilitating "complicated" US-Iran talks

He said that Pakistan was actively working to facilitate dialogue between the United States and Iran amid ongoing regional tensions, including the closure of the Strait of Hormuz

DNA

WASHINGTON: Ambassador of Pakistan to Washington Rizwan Saeed Sheikh on Tuesday highlighting Pakistan's active role in facilitating dialogue between the United States and Iran, acknowledged that that process was complicated with too many moving pieces and noting that a ceasefire would be a good starting point if conflicting parties reach an understanding. "We are mindful that it is not an easy process. It is a very complicated matter with too many moving pieces - economic, political and security-related... I think in any negotiation process that (ceasefire) would be a good thing to start with, but it is of course upon the conflicting parties to reach an understanding there," the ambassador said in an interview with a US news broadcaster. He said that Pakistan was actively working to facilitate dialogue between the United States and Iran amid ongoing regional tensions, including the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. He expressed gratitude for the confidence placed in Pakistan by both sides and regional countries to help mediate the conflict. Highlighting Pakistan's diplomatic tradition, the ambassador recalled Islamabad's historic role in brokering the rapprochement between China and the United States in the past. He said recent high-level engagements, including the visit of three foreign ministers to Pakistan and telephone calls



by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with global leaders, were aimed at creating a conducive environment for dialogue. Asked about the parties involved in the negotiations, Ambassador Sheikh said that multiple channels of communication were active at different levels, with the prime

minister and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar personally engaged. He pointed to the recent movement of ships through the Strait of Hormuz - first a few and another 20 in the second instance - as a "proof of concept" that demonstrated confidence-building measures. Regarding the US President Donald Trump's public deadlines, the ambassador noted that Iran was a war-torn country with disrupted communication channels, making swift responses difficult. As the previous deadlines had been extended, Pakistan was working within the current timeframe, he added. "Diplomacy is a gradual process. It takes a lot of patient politics that has to morph into deft diplomacy. But we should get things moving in the interest of the broader region faster, we hope, and we are optimistic." On the tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the ambassador said that Islamabad had exercised maximum restraint for over four years and that despite sharing information on terrorist hideouts repeatedly, no action was taken from the Afghan side. "Pakistan is now the largest victim country of terrorism in the world, with an average of almost three incidents per day," he said. "We could not sit back and wait for the next terrorist attack... The dialogue and diplomacy have been afforded more than four years. And now we are only targeting those areas for which coordinates were repeatedly shared." He also reiterated that India was sponsoring terrorism against Pakistan, as "clear fingerprints" of such involvement were available.

United States Congressmen praise Pakistan's role

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior US Congressmen on Tuesday praised Pakistan's active role in facilitating peace talks in the Middle East, particularly its contribution to delivering President Donald Trump's 15-point plan aimed at ending the ongoing conflict with Iran. Rep. Jack Bergman, Co-Chair of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus, commended Pakistan's leadership for advancing President Trump's vision for regional peace. "Strong partnerships and decisive action are key to lasting stability," he wrote on his X timeline. Rep. Ryan Zinke, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, lauded Pakistan's initiative in hosting peace talks and delivering the US proposal. "I applaud Pakistan's leadership and initiative in hosting peace talks and delivering President Trump's 15-point plan for peace in the Middle East. Bravo Zulu," he also wrote on X. Last week, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar announced that the indirect talks between the United States and Iran were taking place through the messages being relayed by Pakistan. "In reality, US-Iran indirect talks are taking place through messages being relayed by Pakistan," he revealed on his X timeline. He said that the United States had shared 15 points, being deliberated upon by Iran. On March 29, DPM Dar also hosted here the quadrilateral talks attended by the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Egypt, wherein they discussed the possible ways to bring an early and permanent end to the war in the region, besides advocating dialogue and diplomacy as the only viable pathway to prevent conflicts. The ministers reaffirmed their unity to contain the situation, reduce the risk of military escalations, and create conditions for structured negotiations between relevant parties. Foreign Minister Dar also told the visiting ministers that Pakistan was very happy that both Iran and the US had expressed their confidence in Pakistan to facilitate the talks.

Oil down 1% after report says Trump open to ending war

Brent crude futures for May down \$1.22, or 1.08%, to \$111.56 per barrel

DNA

LONDON: Oil prices reversed course in Asian trading on Tuesday, paring earlier gains, following a report that US President Donald Trump told aides he is willing to end the Iran war without reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Brent crude futures for May were down \$1.22, or 1.08%, to \$111.56 per barrel at 0210 GMT after rising 2% earlier in the session. The May contract expires on Tuesday and the more active June contract was at \$105.76. US West Texas Intermediate futures for May fell 98 cents, or 0.95%, to \$101.90 a barrel after hitting their highest point since March 9 in early trading. Analysts said the fall in prices is a temporary reaction to the idea of the war's end, but any meaningful change in prices would not materialise until flows through the Strait of Hormuz are completely reinstated. Trump told aides he is willing to end the military campaign against Iran even if the Strait of Hormuz remains largely closed and leave its reopening for a later date, The Wall Street Journal reported on Monday, citing administration officials.

At least 70 killed in Haiti massacre

UN says its office in Haiti, BINUH, was closely monitoring events and that estimates range from 10 to 80 people killed

NEWS DESK

LONDON: At least 70 people were killed and 30 injured in an attack near Petite-Rivi re in Haiti's breadbasket Artibonite region, a human rights group said Monday, far higher than official estimates, which put the death toll at around 16. Residents and officials told local media the attack began in the early hours of Sunday in rural communities around Jean-Denis, and continued into the early hours of Monday, with gang members storming the area and setting homes on fire. The Defensoirs Plus rights group said it estimated the violence had displaced 6,000 people. The UN estimated that more than 2,000 people left their homes in the days following raids by armed gangs nearby. Police initially reported 16 dead and 10 injured, while a preliminary report from civil protection authorities said 17 had died and 19 were wounded, mostly men. A spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General told a press briefing that the organisation's office in Haiti, BINUH, was closely monitoring the events and that estimates ranged from 10 to 80 people killed. He called for a thorough investigation. "The lack of a security response and the abandonment of Artibonite to armed groups demonstrate a complete abdication of responsibility by the authorities," Defensoirs Plus said in a joint statement with the Collective to Save the Artibonite. An audio message circulated on social media was attributed to Gran Grif leader Luckson Elan. In the message, Elan appears to say the attack was retaliation for attacks on their base in Savien by a rival armed group.

PDMA issues GLOFs alert

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Tuesday issued an alert to the administrations of five sensitive districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa amid fears of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) due to changing weather conditions. According to the PDMA, rising temperatures and ongoing heavy rainfall may accelerate glacier melting in the districts of Upper Chitral, Lower Chitral, Upper Dir, Swat and Upper Kohistan. This increases the risk of glacial lakes bursting, which could trigger flash floods and landslides in vulnerable areas. A PDMA spokesperson stated that district administrations have been instructed to take emergency measures and ensure advance preparedness. Authorities have also been directed to closely monitor sensitive glacial sites and keep early warning systems fully operational at all times. Furthermore, local administrations and relevant departments have been advised to conduct evacuation drills in high-risk areas. They have also been instructed to ensure that designated evacuation centers are fully functional and equipped with necessary facilities to accommodate affected populations. - APP

Smart lockdown opposed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A proposal to impose a nationwide smart lockdown was opposed after provinces disagreed with the move during a high-level meeting of the national leadership chaired by President Asif Ali Zardari in Islamabad, sources told Geo News on Tuesday. According to sources, the meeting reviewed the option of enforcing smart lockdowns across the country, but provincial governments disagreed with the proposal and resisted its implementation at a national level. The government deliberated on austerity measures as it grappled with the difficult task of safeguarding livelihoods while managing the economic fallout of rising oil prices triggered by the ongoing Middle East crisis. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to further tighten austerity measures and ensure full implementation of steps aimed at energy and fuel conservation, the sources said.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on the supply chain of Petroleum Products and Austerity Measures in wake of current regional situation. - DNA

Lahore court orders Meesha Shafi to pay Rs5m to Ali in defamation case

Sessions court Judge Asif Hayat delivers reserved verdict in defamation case filed by Ali Zafar in 2018



DNA

LAHORE: A sessions court in Lahore on Tuesday announced its verdict in a defamation case filed by singer Ali Zafar against Meesha Shafi, ordering the latter to pay Rs5 million in damages. Additional Sessions Judge Asif Hayat delivered the reserved judgement, bringing to a close the high-profile case. Ali Zafar had filed a defamation suit seeking Rs1 billion in damages after Meesha Shafi accused him

of sexual harassment - allegations he consistently denied. During the court proceedings, statements of 20 witnesses were recorded during the trial. The case spanned 284 hearings and saw the transfer of nine judges over the course of litigation. Zafar had filed the defamation suit in 2018 against Shafi, who had accused him of sexual harassment. Advocate Umar Tariq Gill, on behalf of Zafar, had argued that Shafi had levelled false allegations, causing serious damage to his reputation. He maintained that no one other than Shafi had ever accused Zafar of such conduct. He urged the court to allow the defamation suit and order the defendant to pay damages of Rs1bn to the plaintiff. Advocate Saqib Jilani, who was representing Shafi, asked the court to dismiss the defamation suit with costs. In his final arguments, he contended that no concrete evidence had been produced in support of the defamation claim by the plaintiff. He stated that Shafi had reported multiple incidents of alleged harassment, and she remained consistent in her statements, despite an extensive cross-examination by Zafar's legal team. The counsel said Shafi cannot be punished for speaking about her own grievance through a defamation suit filed by the plaintiff.

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