



Islamabad POST

Saturday, April 04, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Japanese ambassador opens spring craft exhibition in Lahore

Detailed News On Page-02

Gilani lauds Romanian Embassy role

Detailed News On Page-03



Ishaq Dar holds talks with Saudi FM

Detailed News On Page-01



Briefs

Women, child among five martyred

Attack was carried out by Fitna al-Khawarij militants, say security sources

DNA

BANNU: A suicide car bombing targeting Domel Police Station in Domel area here on Friday claimed the lives of at least five civilians and injured 13 others, including a police official. The explosion caused extensive destruction to the police facility and nearby houses, district police said. According to police the attacker drove an explosives-packed vehicle into the rear section of the police station, setting off a powerful blast that was heard across a wide area. The explosion was followed by intermittent firing, creating panic in the locality. Among those killed were four members of a single family including husband, wife, and their two children.

District Emergency Officer (DEO) Bakhtullah Wazir confirmed the casualties, stating that five people had died while 13 injured individuals were transported to hospitals. He added that some of the wounded were in serious condition. Rescue 1122 teams rushed to the scene and began shifting the injured, though ongoing rainfall slowed down relief operations. Rescuer officials also launched a comprehensive operation to clear debris and search for survivors. Meanwhile, security forces sealed off the area and initiated a clearance operation.

Increase in toll tax withdrawn

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways Authority (NHA) withdrew the notification of a quarterly increase in toll taxes on Friday, following directives from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, amid the current economic situation and rising petroleum prices. The move, aimed at providing relief to the public amid prevailing economic challenges, was announced by Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan, saying that the NHA would withdraw its notification issued on April 1 and halt the increase that was scheduled to be effective from April 5, according to a press release issued on Friday. Aleem Khan said that given the current economic situation and the rising prices of petrol and diesel.

Dar talks to Saudi FM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar today spoke with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan and discussed the Pak-China Five-Point Initiative for peace in the Gulf and Middle East. The two leaders also exchanged views on the latest developments in the regional situation, emphasizing the urgent need for de-escalation and dialogue. Both leaders reaffirmed the strong, fraternal Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relationship and agreed to remain in close contact.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.
- Editor

Middle East war

UAE asks Pakistan to return loan

The input also notes that Saudi Arabia and China have reportedly asked Pakistan to repay their loans as well. This aligns with Pakistan's heavy reliance on rollovers from "friendly countries"

SAFIULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has decided to repay a \$2 billion deposit to the UAE by the end of April 2026, according to sources, amid shifting dynamics in its bilateral financial relations and broader regional tensions. Islamabad plans to return the \$2 billion—held as a safe deposit with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)—to Abu Dhabi by the end of this month. Pakistan has been paying around 6% interest on the facility (recent short-term rollovers were at approximately 6.5%). The UAE had previously rolled over the deposit on an annual basis, but shifted to short-term extensions in late 2025 and early 2026: first a one-month rollover, then a two-month extension until April 17, 2026, following outreach by Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar. This \$2 billion forms part of a larger \$3 billion placement by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development in three \$1 billion tranches. Two tranches matured in January 2026 and received brief rollovers; the third is due in July 2026. Pakistan had sought a longer-term rollover (up to two years at a lower rate), but received only short-term relief ahead of key IMF reviews under the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility.

The input also notes that Saudi Arabia and

China have reportedly asked Pakistan to repay their loans as well. This aligns with Pakistan's heavy reliance on rollovers from "friendly countries." For the current fiscal year, Islamabad is seeking to roll over approximately \$12 billion in external deposits, including: \$5 billion from Saudi Arabia, \$4 billion from China \$3 billion from the UAE (of which \$2 billion is now under repayment pressure) These facilities have been critical for bolstering SBP reserves and meeting IMF conditions, but they are often renewed annually or short-term rather than converted to longer-term, lower-cost arrangements despite Pakistani requests (e.g., converting Saudi deposits to a 10-year facility or expanding deferred oil payments). Pakistan's external debt management remains fragile, with significant maturing obligations. While SBP officials have previously stated there is "no demand" for immediate full repayment of the UAE facility and that talks continue, the latest sources indicate a decision to repay the \$2 billion tranche soon. A third \$1 billion UAE tranche remains due in July. This development highlights Pakistan's ongoing dependence on bilateral support from Gulf and Chinese partners to stabilize reserves, especially amid global and regional shocks.

Continued on Page 06

Regional tensions

China says peace talks advance between Pakistan, Afghanistan

"Both Pakistan and Afghanistan attach importance to, and welcome, China's mediation, and are willing to sit down for talks again, which is a positive development," foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a daily press conference

DNA

BEIJING: Negotiations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are advancing steadily, China said on Friday following reports that the South Asian neighbors were meeting there to try to end their worst conflict since the Taliban returned to power in 2021.

China, which shares a western border with both nations, has been trying to mediate between the allies turned foes, holding telephone calls with their foreign ministers and sending a special envoy on visits in March. "Both Pakistan and Afghanistan attach importance to, and welcome, China's mediation, and are willing to sit down for talks again, which is a positive development," foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a daily press conference.

Continued on Page 06

China calls for respect for Palestine rights

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China called on Friday for Palestinians' rights to be protected after Israel approved a bill to allow the execution of Palestinians convicted on terror charges for deadly attacks. Under the new law, passed by Israel's parliament on Monday, Palestinians in the occupied West Bank convicted by military courts of carrying out deadly attacks classified as "terrorism"

Continued on Page 06

PM Shehbaz defends govt measures

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has addressed the nation and strongly defended the government's steps to support the poor and middle class amid economic challenges and regional tensions. He said, Government is making every possible effort to provide more relief to weaker sections of society... "In this difficult time, we will not leave the economically weaker segments alone".

PM Shehbaz Sharif said that current hardships are temporary. This phase is for the time being and people will soon start getting relief... Austerity measures enforced from within the government - non-essential expenditures slashed, development budget cut, and 60% of official vehicles grounded to generate savings for public welfare.

Continued on Page 06

26 people die in rains incidents

The deceased include 18 children, three men, and five women

APP

PESHAWAR: At least 26 people died and 77 others sustained injuries during rains related incidents since March 25 in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to a report issued by PDMA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regarding human and financial losses in various districts of the province due to rains since March 25, a total of 26 people have died and 77 have been injured as a result of roofs and walls of houses collapsing due to torrential rains. The deceased include 18 children, three men, and five women, while the injured include 33 men,

Continued on Page 06

Islamabad jolted by earthquake

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad was jolted by noticeable earthquake tremors on Friday, April 3, 2026, with strong shaking reported across the federal capital and the twin city of Rawalpindi, sending residents rushing out of homes and offices in panic. The tremors were also widely felt in Lahore and several other districts of Punjab province, causing momentary fear among people in densely populated urban areas. According to initial reports from residents and local authorities, the shaking lasted for a noticeable duration

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong called on JUI chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman. - DNA

Middle East crisis

Kuwait reports Iranian strike on power and desalination plant

Trump has indicated the conflict could wind down in 2-3 weeks but tied any pause or ceasefire to Iran reopening the strait for commercial shipping

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Kuwaiti authorities stated that an Iranian attack early on April 3 damaged a power generation and water desalination plant, causing material damage to parts of the facility. Emergency and technical teams responded immediately under contingency plans, with officials emphasizing that electricity and water networks remain stable overall. This follows an earlier Iranian strike (around March 30) on another Kuwaiti power and desalination site, which killed one Indian worker and damaged a service building. Kuwait described it as part of "Iranian aggression." Desalination plants are critical in the Gulf, where most drinking water comes from such facilities. Iran has denied responsibility for some strikes or blamed Israel in related incidents. These attacks highlight the broadening of the conflict to Gulf infrastructure, raising concerns over energy and water

Continued on Page 06

US fighter jet shot down over Iran

DNA

TEHRAN: A US fighter jet was shot down over Iran and a search and rescue operation was underway for any survivors, a US official told Reuters on Friday, in the first such known incident since the US launched its war with Iran on February 28. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, did not offer further details. The prospect of US pilots being alive and on the run inside Iran during an ongoing conflict greatly raises the stakes for the United States in the conflict. Iranian officials called on

Continued on Page 06

Toshakhana-I conviction Imran Khan, Bushra approach IHC for fixing appeals

These appeals challenged the judgment delivered on January 31, 2024, by the Accountability Court No. 1, Islamabad, which convicted the couple in the Toshakhana I case and sentenced them to 14 years in Adiala Jail

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, on Friday approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking the urgent fixation of their appeals to set aside the conviction in the Toshakhana I case and to suspend the sentence in the £190 million corruption case, citing "inordinate delays" and "dilatatory tactics" by the prosecution. On March 31, the IHC adjourned the hearing of the suspension of sentence applications filed by Imran and Bushra in the £190 million Al-Qadir Trust case after the defence counsel sought time to obtain fresh instructions from his clients.

In a series of petitions filed under Section 561-A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), the couple has also requested that the court direct the jail authorities to facilitate unhindered meetings with their legal team for necessary consultations. The petitioners, in their appeal filed today, sought the early fixation of appeals of the couple against conviction for final adjudication. These appeals challenged

Continued on Page 06

PTI to convene APC of 'like-minded parties'

PM's aide Rana Sanaullah defends price hike, saying "few elements trying to mislead public"

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has announced plans to convene an All Parties Conference (APC) of "like-minded" parties in response to the massive hike in petroleum product prices. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan made the announcement during a press conference in Islamabad on Friday, slamming the PML-N-led government for the sharp increase in fuel prices. While acknowledging




Continued on Page 06



SERENA HOTELS

Destination Weddings

Hunza Serena Hotel | Sost Serena Hotel

For more Information, please contact: 0355 4899913

Kundi addresses Friday congregation at Badshahi Masjid

LAHORE: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi here on Friday visited the historic Badshahi Mosque where he addressed congregants before Friday prayers. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that it was a great honor for him to visit the historic mosque, recalling that prominent Muslim leaders, participants of the Islamic Summit Conference, and his martyred leader Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had also offered prayers there. He said that law and order situation and governance challenges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were at a peak, adding that security forces were playing a vital role in restoring peace. He paid tribute to the armed forces leadership for their efforts in maintaining stability. The Governor further said that Pakistan was playing an effective role on the diplomatic front amid evolving global circumstances. He credited President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for strengthening the country's diplomatic standing.—APP

Wildlife Deptt takes action against illegal hunting

RAWALPINDI, Apr 03 (APP):The Wildlife Department Punjab carried out enforcement operations in Tehsil Jand, District Attock, taking action against illegal hunting and wildlife trade, officials said on Friday. During the field activity, one challan was issued for illegal quail netting and a compensation of Rs. 35,000.0 was imposed, while the net was confiscated and disposed of. In a separate action, two challans were issued for illegal dealing of partridges through social media. A total compensation of Rs. 160,000.0 was recovered, while two grey partridges were confiscated and shifted to Lohi Bher Zoo. Another challan was issued for partridge netting, with a compensation of Rs. 40,000.0. One partridge was confiscated and later released back into its natural habitat. Officials said a total of four challans were issued during the operations, with overall compensation amounting to Rs. 235,000. They reiterated that strict action would continue against illegal hunting and wildlife trade to protect biodiversity.—APP

Japan envoy opens 'Spring reverie: Crafts of Pakistan'

Ambassador AKAMATSU, while speaking at the inaugural ceremony, expressed his appreciation to The Lahore Floritage Sogetsu Study Group for holding an impressive spring exhibition on the 100th anniversary of Sogetsu Ikebana

DNA

LAHORE: The Sogetsu Ikebana Annual Spring Exhibition, titled "Spring Reverie: Crafts of Pakistan," opened at The Residency Hotel Lahore on Friday, April 3rd, in celebration of 100 years of Sogetsu Ikebana. Organized by The Lahore Floritage Sogetsu Study Group under the leadership of Ms. Neveen Syed, Director of the Group, and held in collaboration with Blue Pine Residences, the exhibition highlights the works of Sogetsu Ikebana artists inspired by Pakistan's rich and diverse craft traditions. The exhibition will open for public viewing today from 6pm till 10pm and on Saturday, April 4, from 10 am to 5 pm. The chief guest Akamatsu Shuichi, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, inaugurated the exhibition along with Mr. Aamir Shirazi, Honorary Consul General of Japan in Lahore, Mrs. Ghazala Irfan, President of the Pakistan-Japan Cultural Association (PJCA) Lahore and Mr. Ibrar Mumtaz, President of the Horticultural Society of Pakistan. This year's exhibition drew inspiration from the rich and diverse craft traditions of Pakistan, celebrating the country's cultural heritage through the innovative medium of Sogetsu Ikebana. Participating artists researched and interpreted a wide range of traditional crafts, including Multani pottery, Hala ceramics, and Ajrak textiles. Ambassador AKAMATSU, while speaking at the inaugural ceremony, expressed his appreciation to The Lahore Floritage Sogetsu Study Group for holding an impressive spring exhibition on the 100th anniversary of Sogetsu Ikebana. While congratulating the Sogetsu on achieving the remarkable milestone of hundred years, the Ambassador said this exhibition not only embodies the spirit of cultural exchange but also offers an opportunity to rediscover tradition of Ikebana through the refined and creative expressions of Sogetsu Ikebana by blending the freshness of spring with the rich crafts of Pakistan. "Born in Japan, Sogetsu Ikebana finds fresh expression in Pakistan, harmonizing with local craftsmanship", remarked Ambassador Akamatsu.



CM Punjab sets deadline for stroke care network

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has set a target to make 24 additional primary stroke centers functional across the province by June 30 under the CM Stroke Program, aiming to significantly improve emergency response and treatment for stroke patients. Chairing a special meeting on Friday, the chief minister also approved the formation of a 12-member advisory committee for the program. The committee will be headed by Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique, while Professor Qasim Bashir has been appointed as its convener. During the briefing, it was informed that 15 primary stroke centers were already operational, where around 700 stroke patients had received life-saving

injections, helping prevent lifelong disabilities. Stroke management centers are currently functional at major hospitals in Lahore, including Services Hospital, Mayo Hospital, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, and Punjab Institute of Neurosciences. Similar facilities are also working in cities such as Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Multan, Narowal, Rahim Yar Khan, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Bhakkar, and Layyah. Under Phase-I of the expansion plan, new primary stroke centers will be established in cities including Gujrat, Sargodha, Sahiwal, Vehari, Jhelum, Kasur, Mandi Bahaudin, Sheikhupura, Toba Tek Singh, and Khanewal. Phase-II will further extend services to 17 more

cities, including Chakwal, Pakpattan, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Mianwali, Bahawalnagar, Hafizabad, Chinot, Lodhran, Khushab, Okara, Attock, Nankana Sahib, Wazirabad, Murree, Kot Addu, and Talagang. The chief minister also approved the establishment of four additional mechanical thrombectomy centers to provide advanced stroke treatment. Comprehensive stroke centers are already operational at Punjab Institute of Neurosciences Lahore and Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, with plans to expand such facilities to more cities. New stroke centers will also be set up at Holy Family Hospital, Allied Hospital, Nishtar Hospital, and Bahawal Victoria Hospital.—DNA

Progress on Pak-Oman Ferry Service reviewed

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi and the Consul General of Oman and Dean of the Consular Corps Engr. Sami Abdullah Salim Al Khanjari reviewed progress on the proposed Pakistan-Oman Ferry Service and other matters of mutual interests. During a meeting of the Consul General of Oman and Dean of the Consular Corps Engr. Sami Abdullah Salim Al Khanjari with Sindh Governor Nehal Hashmi at Governor House here Thursday, they discussed in detail "substantial and encouraging progress" toward launching the long-awaited maritime link, which is expected to open new economic corridors and strengthen regional connectivity. Both dignitaries expressed firm resolve to accelerate practical steps for its early operationalization. In a forward-looking development, the meeting reached a principled decision to es-

tablish a dedicated special cell at the Governor House to aggressively pursue trade promotion and oversee exchange programs. The move reflects a strategic shift toward institutional coordination and sustained engagement. The two sides also agreed to intensify co-operation across key sectors, including trade, education, exports and professional exchange initiatives, with an emphasis on delivering measurable outcomes. Enhanced coordination between the Governor House and the Dean of Consular Corps office was described as "critical" to ensuring momentum. According to an official statement, the Omani Consul General apprised the Governor of plans to hold a Pakistan-Oman B2B exhibition in Oman, aimed at unlocking untapped commercial potential. He pointedly highlighted the rising demand in Oman for Pakistani

nurses and pharmaceutical products, calling for targeted and more effective policy interventions to capitalize on these opportunities. Both parties stressed the urgent need to scale up bilateral trade ties and expand exchange programs in a structured and impactful manner. They also called for the formulation of a joint strategy to significantly increase educational and professional avenues for youth, terming human capital development as central to long-term partnership. Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi asserted that coordinated and result-oriented initiatives would lead to a marked surge in investment, exports, and overall trade activity, reaffirming the government's commitment to proactive economic diplomacy. The meeting concluded with a strong and unequivocal pledge from both sides to further consolidate.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong called on JUI chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

The Smooth Moving Connection

freeline MOVERS

PACKING, SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING

Hulya calls for stronger Pak-Turk business ties

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUJRAT: Chairperson of Turkey's well-known trade organization TAP ADS Association, Ms. Hulya, has warmly welcomed trade and business relations with Pakistan, stating that she has always felt pleased working with the country. While speaking to the media, she said that she has visited Pakistan multiple times, where she had the opportunity to meet business professionals and explore joint opportunities across various sectors. She added that the Pakistani business community is highly professional, sincere, and cooperative, which creates strong potential for the growth of bilateral trade. Ms. Hulya further stated that through her association's platform, she has been consistently strengthening ties with Pakistan, and this process has continued successfully to this day. She described Pakistan as a talented and resource-rich country with countless opportunities for investment and business. She also noted that Pakistan has established a strong identity at the global level, and certain individuals have played a significant role in this regard. She mentioned that Syed Asim Munir is one such personality who has contributed notably to promoting Pakistan's positive image worldwide. Ms. Hulya expressed her desire to meet Syed Asim Munir, describing him as a strong leader who has played an important role in securing a dignified position for Pakistan. She emphasized that such leaders are vital to a country's development and global prestige. She concluded by expressing her commitment to further strengthening trade, economic, and mutual cooperation between Turkey and Pakistan in the future, so that both countries

can continue progressing together and take their business partnerships to new heights.



Our Services

- Packing
- Shipping
- Freight Forwarding
- Land, Sea & Air Freight
- Custom Clearance
- Relocations
- Office Removals
- Fine Art Handling
- Project Management
- Pet Relocation
- Warehousing
- Storage



Head Office
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel: (+92 51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822111, 2874289 - Fax: (+92 51) 2825132, 2274227.
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Branch Offices

Karachi Floor No. 14/15, 3rd Floor, Kalkhahin Mall, Main Tariq Road, 172-Block 2, P.E.C.H.S. Karachi. Tel: (+92 21) 3432028, 3432079 Fax: (+92 21) 3432142 E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com	Lahore F-4, Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore Tel: (+92 42) 3575981, 3575982 Fax: (+92 42) 3575142 E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com	Peshawar Office No. C-6, 3rd Floor, Zohreh Plaza, Lafiq Road, Ring Road, Peshawar Tel: (+92 91) 2502779 Fax: (+92 91) 2502681 E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com	Kabul House #4, Street #4, Chahar Afsar Road, Shah-e-Rau, Kabul - Afghanistan Tel: (+92 76021) 773, 93 79395 808, 93 77948 203 E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com
---	---	---	---

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

Emergency



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

Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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



Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Romanian envoy presents choral arrangement of Pak's national anthem Senate Chairman

Ambassador Stoenescu expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and appreciation shown by Chairman Gilani, noting that the gesture highlights the power of culture to bring nations closer together

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant gesture of cultural diplomacy and friendship, Romania has gifted Pakistan the world's first professional choral arrangement and official score of the national anthem, Qaumi Tarana. Romanian Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Dan Stoenescu, personally presented the official album and the written choral score to Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, in a special ceremony. The unique artistic project was realized by Romania's renowned National Chamber Choir "Madrigal - Marin Constantin", with the support of the Embassy of Romania in Islamabad. The arrangement transforms the original orchestral composition of Qaumi Tarana into a refined polyphonic choral work for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices. According to Ambassador Stoenescu, the new version preserves the solemnity and spirit of Pakistan's national anthem while adding a fresh musical dimension that beautifully bridges Eastern melodic richness with Western harmonic depth. "This unique artistic project symbolizes more than a musical achievement - it reflects a deep respect for Pakistan's national identity and a shared commitment to cultural dialogue," the Ambassador stated. The initiative is part of the choir's international programme "Diplomacy - The Anthems of the World," and was launched to mark Pakistan Day (23 March). The album and score are being presented to Pakistan's



highest leadership as a token of friendship between the two nations. During the meeting, Ambassador Stoenescu and Senate Chairman Gilani also held substantive discussions on strengthening bilateral relations, with a special focus on enhancing parliamentary

cooperation and expanding economic ties. They exchanged views on regional and international issues, including the situation in the Middle East, and emphasized the need for dialogue and stability. Chairman Gilani extended an invitation to his Romanian counter-

part, Mircea Abrudean, to visit Pakistan. Ambassador Stoenescu expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and appreciation shown by Chairman Gilani, noting that the gesture highlights the power of culture to bring nations closer together

Pak's honey export reaches \$15m annually

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's honey exports have reached around \$15 million annually, fuelled by improved beekeeping practices and high-value varieties. Speaking to Wealth Pakistan, Dr Muhammad Khalid Rafiq, Senior Scientific Officer at the Honey Bee Research Institute (HBRI), said: "We have laid a strong foundation for a competitive honey industry through sustained research, colony multiplication, improved queen breeding, pest management, and quality assurance systems." Today, Pakistan maintains around 1.5 million colonies of Apis mellifera, a high-yielding western honeybee species, producing between 25,000 and 30,000 metric tonnes of honey annually. Of this, 8,000 to 10,000 metric tonnes are exported, generating nearly \$15 million each year, mainly to Gulf markets such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, with premium Sidr (berry) honey leading exports. Pakistan's journey towards a thriving honey industry began in 1979, when organized beekeeping was initiated at the National Agricultural

Research Centre under the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council. At the time, the country relied on imports due to low productivity from indigenous bee species. The introduction of Apis mellifera, along with structured colony multiplication and training programmes, set the stage for rapid growth. "Since then, HBRI has spearheaded modern hive management, queen breeding systems, honey testing facilities, and migratory beekeeping models, while training thousands of beekeepers across the country," said Dr Khalid. Despite this progress, the sector faces growing environmental challenges. Deforestation, erratic weather patterns, and climate change are shortening flowering cycles and reducing nectar availability. Traditional floral sources such as Sheesham, Malta, Bekhar, Pulai, and Granda are blooming for shorter durations, directly affecting honey yields. Rising temperatures and frequent floods are further forcing beekeepers to adopt costly migratory practices, shifting colonies to cooler

regions such as Gilgit during peak summers. This increases operational costs, production risks, and colony losses, putting additional financial and operational pressure on the sector. To enhance earnings, efforts are underway to promote branded, single-flower varieties such as Sidr, Acacia, and Mustard honey, which command premium prices in domestic and international markets. Dr Khalid said HBRI has also proposed policy measures to integrate bee-friendly flora into housing schemes, urban landscaping, and plantation drives. Coordinated efforts are promoting Sidr and Acacia plantations across ecological zones to restore forage availability and stabilize production cycles. He said capacity building remains central to HBRI's mandate, with nationwide training programmes supporting both new and experienced beekeepers. Women and young entrepreneurs are also being encouraged to enter the sector, making it more inclusive and economically viable, he added.—DNA

NA Secretariat deposits Rs472.1m

Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has directed further steps to speed up reductions in unnecessary spending, reaffirming parliament's commitment to financial discipline, transparency

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Secretariat has deposited Rs472.1 million into the national treasury as part of the government's cost-cutting measures, launched under the direction of Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. The move followed a detailed review of the current fiscal year's budget and spending. As part of the austerity drive, the Secretariat also reduced salaries of members of the National Assembly of Pakistan by Rs21 million, which has been contributed to the Prime Minister's Austerity Fund 2026. Further steps are being taken to improve financial discipline and reduce expenses. A plan has been prepared to save up to Rs2 billion by managing resources more efficiently during the remaining fiscal year. To cut costs, several official vehicles have been withdrawn to save fuel, while electricity needs are being met through the Green Parliament Solar System to reduce power bills. In addition, only around 200 employees are working on-site, with others operating on a rotation system to lower operational costs while maintaining efficiency. All non-essential spending has been restricted, with strict controls on purchases and services to ensure efficient use of resources without affecting parliamentary work. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has directed further steps to speed up reductions in unnecessary spending, reaffirming parliament's commitment to financial discipline, transparency, and responsible use of public funds.—APP

IRSA releases 66,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 66,200 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 108,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1452.77 feet which was 52.77 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 37,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1140.15 feet, which was 90.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 32,100 cusecs and 17,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 56,200, 44,900, 38,500, and 14,300 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 24,900 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 8,100 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Secretary Tourism KP reviews facilities

NATHIAGALI: Secretary of Tourism, Culture & Archaeology for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Saadat Hassan Friday has conducted a detailed visit of Galiyat to review tourist facilities and the ongoing plantation drive in the region. The visit followed his stop at the Galiyat Development Authority (GDA) office in Abbottabad, where he was welcomed and briefed by Director General GDA, Muhammad Fawad. Accompanied by the DG GDA, directors of the authority, and officers from the district administration, the Secretary carried out a comprehensive inspection of road conditions, tourist facilities, GDA Control Rooms, and Tourist Facilitation Centers (TFCs). He reviewed their performance in ensuring effective facilitation for tourists across Galiyat. As part of GDA's ongoing plantation drive aimed at preserving the region's natural beauty and promoting a greener environment, the Secretary, along with the DG GDA, directors, and officers from both GDA and the Abbottabad district administration, planted trees in Galiyat. During his visit, the Secretary also inspected GDA machinery to assess its condition.—APP

Ethiopia showcases tourism, culture at travel expo



ISLAMABAD: The Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad, in collaboration with Ethiopian Airlines, opened the "Ethiopian Enclave" at the Pakistan Travel Mart 2026 which kicked off here on Friday in Karachi Expo Center. The Ethiopian Enclave has been designed to showcase the nation's ancient heritage, diverse tourism landscapes, and vibrant cultural identity. The Enclave received a high-profile reception, welcoming senior officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan including H.E. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan and H.E. Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation. Visitors experienced traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony while discussing bilateral opportunities in hospitality and travel sectors. The exhibit drew a massive response from Karachi residents, media representatives, and travel agencies, successfully positioning Ethiopia as a premier destination for Pakistani travelers. The Ethiopian Enclave will remain open at the PTM 2026 upto April 5 (Sunday).—DNA

Briefs

Ashraf Zubair Siddiqui takes charge

ISLAMABAD: Additional Inspector General Ashraf Zubair Siddiqui on Friday assumed charge as Regional Commander (North Region) of the National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP), directing strict action against overloading in public service and heavy transport vehicles. Upon assuming charge, he was briefed on operational and administrative matters, including ongoing initiatives and awareness campaigns being carried out by the force, said a press release. Emphasizing professionalism and public service, Ashraf Zubair Siddiqui instructed officers to maintain high standards of discipline and ensure effective service delivery to road users. The Regional Commander also ordered strict enforcement against overloading in public service vehicles (PSVs) and heavy transport vehicles. A PSP officer, Ashraf Zubair Siddiqui has previously served in key roles in different Police setups including National Highways and Motorway Police as Deputy Inspector General (N-5 North Zone). Upon arrival, he was received by senior NHMP officers.—APP

Munaza raises concerns over journalists' layoffs

ISLAMABAD: MNA Munaza Hassan on Friday raised concerns in the National Assembly over the problems faced by media workers, after journalists staged a walkout a day earlier to protest layoffs and unpaid salaries. During the session, it was noted that on the instructions of the Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sasiq, Shazia Marri and Barrister Aqeel Malik were sent to talk to the protesting journalists following the boycott Referring to the meeting, Munaza Hassan said the journalists presented what she called genuine demands. She said media workers complained that they were being removed from jobs without prior notice. They also said salaries had not been paid for up to three months. She added that journalists had also lost concessionary railway travel facilities, which had earlier helped them perform their duties. Munaza Hassan said it is very difficult to survive even a single day without a salary in the current economic situation. She also pointed out that some journalists are being paid less than the minimum wage. She also stressed that the information minister should engage with both journalists.—APP

Strict action ordered against overloading in PSVs

Additional Inspector General Ashraf Zubair Siddiqui takes charge as Regional Commander, North Region



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Additional Inspector General Ashraf Zubair Siddiqui has assumed charge as Regional Commander (North

Region) of the National Highways & Motorway Police (NHMP). He was briefed on operational and administrative matters, including on-going initiatives and campaigns. Emphasizing professionalism and public service, he directed officers

to maintain high standards and ensure effective service delivery. The Regional Commander also ordered strict enforcement against overloading in public service vehicles (PSVs) and heavy transport vehicles. A PSP officer, Ashraf Zubair

Siddiqui has previously served in key roles in different Police setups including National Highways and Motorway Police as Deputy Inspector General (N-5 North Zone). Upon arrival, he was received by senior NHMP officers.

ANF seizes over 74 kg of drugs, arrests 8 in crackdown

RAWALPIND: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has arrested eight suspects and seized more than 74 kilograms of narcotics worth over Rs17 million in five operations conducted across the country, an ANF spokesman said on Friday. He said the operations were carried out in multiple cities as part of an ongoing crackdown against drug trafficking networks. In Balochistan's Pishin district, authorities recovered 24 kg of hashish from a vehicle in Yaro and arrested one suspect. In a separate operation at the same location, another 18 kg of hashish was seized from a vehicle and a suspect taken into custody. In Islamabad, ANF officials intercepted two motorcyclists near Model Town, recovering 16.3 kg of hashish along with a 30 bore pistol. Both suspects were arrested. In another operation near Mandi Mor, authorities seized 4.8 kg of hashish and 1.2 kg of methamphetamine (ice) from a vehicle and apprehended the accused. Separately, in an inter-provincial operation near the Kala Shah Kaku toll plaza, three suspects riding a motorcycle were arrested with 10 kg of heroin. The spokesman said cases had been registered against all suspects under the Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997, and further investigations were underway.—APP

ITP issues rain advisory

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Friday issued a traffic advisory as heavy rain continued in the federal capital, urging commuters to adopt precautionary measures for safe travel. An ITP official told APP that motorists should use fog lights during heavy rain and keep their speed low to avoid accidents on slippery roads. He said drivers and motorcyclists must strictly follow lane discipline while traveling on city roads. The official advised commuters to ensure proper use of side mirrors and indicators during travel to maintain safe driving practices. He said motorcyclists should use the extreme left lane and ride at a slow speed to minimize risks during rainy conditions. He added that Islamabad Traffic Police officers were present on roads to facilitate and guide citizens during the ongoing rain. The official said citizens could contact the traffic helpline 1915 or dial 15 for assistance and guidance. Islamabad Traffic Police reiterated its commitment to ensuring safe and smooth traffic flow across the federal capital.—APP

Govt's surplus power package spurs growth

ISLAMABAD: The government's Surplus Power Package has significantly boosted electricity consumption in the industrial and agricultural sectors, with an additional 2,164 gigawatt-hours (GWh) consumed during the first three months of its launch, resulting in financial savings of over Rs20 billion Under the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif special initiative to provide relief and support to the country's industry and agriculture sector the surplus electricity package was introduced with lowest rate of Rs.22.98 per unit on incremental usage. This accounts for 23% of all units sold to these sectors during this period, proving that the package has successfully triggered a strong growth in energy demand, said a press release. Industries alone have saved a total of PKR 19.6 billion, while agricultural consumers saved PKR 1.14 billion, bringing cumulative financial relief to PKR 20.83 billion. Among industrial categories, B3 consumers saved the most at PKR 8.76 billion, followed by B2 at PKR 5.34 billion, B4 at PKR 4.02 billion, and B1 at PKR 1.48 billion. Consumers taking benefit from the package has been impressive, with 67% of B4 large industries (83 out of 123), 52% of B3 (1,812 out of 3,470), 48% of B2 (33,449 out of 69,124), and 43% of B1 industries (98,718 out of 229,282) availing the package, along with 34% of agricultural consumers (82,334 out of 242,451). In terms of energy consumption share under the package, B1 industries led at 27%, followed by B4 at 25%, B2 at 24%, B3 at 22%, and agriculture at 21%. The most exciting signs of success came in January 2026 with 12% year-on-year growth and February 2026 with 11% growth, clearly showing that the package has increased electricity demand and encouraged industries to rely more on cost-effective grid power instead of expensive self-generation. This rising demand is a strong and positive indicator for the country's economic recovery and energy sector stability. The Surplus Power Package was launched in December 2025 by the Power Division as a targeted initiative to boost electricity consumption, optimize available generation capacity, and provide financial relief to industrial and agricultural consumers for a longer period.—DNA

COMSTech chief visits University of Lahore

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator General of COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary visited the University of Lahore and held a series of high-level meetings with senior officials to discuss strategies for strengthening interdisciplinary research. During the visit, Prof. Dr. Choudhary met with Chairman Board of Governors Mr. Awas Raof, CEO Qasim Ali Shah Foundation Mr. Qasim Ali Shah, Rector Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Dean Faculty of Sciences Prof. Dr. Ahmad Bilal Waqar, Director ORIC Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, and Dr. Umer Younis, Coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre.—APP

No tolerance for unrest over PTI protest call, Wali warns

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Information for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Affairs, Ikhtiar Wali Khan, on Friday warned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) against staging a protest on April 9, emphasizing that any law and order situation will be handled firmly. While speaking to a local news channel, Ikhtiar Wali Khan, criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for calling a protest on April 9, adding, such moves were irresponsible amid a sensitive law and order situation and emphasized that the government would take all necessary steps to maintain peace and stability. He warned that any attempt to disrupt public order would be met with strict action, adding, indicated that authorities were prepared to take additional measures, including the possible relocation of Imran Khan to another jail, if the situation escalated. Khan urged PTI to act responsibly and prioritize national stability over partisan interests. He stressed that the government would not allow any group to exploit the situation for political gains, reaffirming its commitment to safeguarding law and order in the province. "If PTI attempts any protest on April 9, we have the option to shift Imran Khan to another jail," he said. "They are creating a spectacle every day, unable to gather people and prefer state instability over their own interests."—DNA

CAF's 4th steering committee meeting

ISLAMABAD: Climate Action Forum (CAF) has convened its fourth high-level Steering Committee meeting, reaffirming its commitment to strengthening collective engagement and charting the Forum's next phase of collaboration for climate action across Pakistan. The meeting brought together a diverse coalition of national and international organisations dedicated to climate resilience, sustainable development, policy engagement, and institutional capacity building, said a press release on Friday. Participating members included CEOs of member Organizations i.e. Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance (AIM), the Institute of Rural Management (IRM), Rural Sup-

port Programmes Network (RSPN), Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP), Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Thar-eep Rural Development Programme (TRDP), Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Secours Islamique France (SIF), The Asia Foundation (TAF), Human Resource Development Network (HRDN), and Trust for Voluntary Organisations (TVO). Discussions focused on advancing CAF's collaborative agenda, including the initiation of a CAF-led research component aimed at generating robust evidence to inform policy and practice. Participants also explored opportunities for joint project development among member institutions and emphasized the need to strengthen institutional and technical capacities within the network to enhance collective impact. The meeting underscored the importance of shared learning, cross-sector partnerships, and coordinated action as key drivers of climate resilience and sustainable development in Pakistan. A key highlight of the session was an engagement with Climate Policy Expert at Oxford Policy Management, who shared insights on emerging climate policy priorities and global perspectives on climate governance and adaptation planning. The discussion opened promising avenues for future collaboration in research, policy engagement, and programmatic initiatives. The Steering Committee reaffirmed CAF's commitment to fostering inclusive partnerships, promoting innovation, and aligning collective efforts with national and global climate goals.—APP

Pakistan, UAE for strengthen trade coop in virtual meeting

The meeting reflected a shared determination to strengthen economic collaboration, enhance trade facilitation, and deepen the partnership between Pakistan and the UAE

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, held a productive virtual meeting with Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of foreign trade of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), to discuss ongoing trade cooperation and regional economic collaboration. The meeting was also attended by Rana Ihsaan Afzal, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Secretary Commerce Jawad Paul, and senior officials of the Ministry of Commerce, said a release issued here on Friday. Dur-

ing the meeting, both sides emphasized the long-standing friendship and strategic partnership between Pakistan and the UAE, highlighting the importance of smooth trade facilitation, logistical coordination, and enhanced market access. The discussion covered key sectors including petroleum products, food, and other high-demand commodities, with both sides agreeing to streamline processes for exporters and traders. Minister Jam Kamal Khan expressed Pakistan's gratitude for the support and

collaboration of UAE authorities, including assistance from missions in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, as well as private sector partners such as DP World. The Minister noted that despite operational challenges and ongoing austerity measures in Pakistan, both countries remain committed to maintaining strong trade ties and finding practical solutions to facilitate business. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to Pakistan, noting the progress made in engagements over the past

years and emphasizing the importance of coordination and sequencing to ensure mutual benefits. Both sides agreed to maintain regular engagement, with their respective teams meeting next week to discuss remaining operational and logistical points, and to explore further opportunities for bilateral trade growth. The meeting reflected a shared determination to strengthen economic collaboration, enhance trade facilitation, and deepen the partnership between Pakistan and the UAE.—DNA

MOST EXPERIENCED MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS OF MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS IN PAKISTAN

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JUTSU
TAEKWONDO
UNIFORMS AND COLOURED BELTS

Ashraf

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD
127 C, Industrial Estate
Sialkot-51340, Pakistan
Phones: +92-52-3256000 / 3255768
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

How Veto Politics is Eroding the Soul of the United Nations

THE idea that "power corrupts" is not new. The historian Lord Acton famously warned that absolute power corrupts absolutely. The veto power may not be absolute in theory, but in practice, it often behaves like it is. There is no higher authority within the UN to override it. No appeal. No accountability. And that is precisely where the danger lies.

When the United Nations (UN) was founded in 1945, it carried the moral weight of a war-exhausted world that had seen the worst of human brutality. It was not meant to be perfect - it was meant to be better. Yet today, many people across the globe no longer see the UN as a guardian of justice, but as a stage where powerful nations protect their own interests. At the center of this growing disillusionment lies one controversial tool: the veto power held by the five permanent members—the United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, and France.

The problem is not merely structural - it is deeply human. Power changes behavior. It shapes priorities, and, more often than not, it shields those who hold it from accountability. Take a moment to consider what the veto actually does. It allows a single country to stop the entire world from acting - even when there is overwhelming agreement. Imagine a courtroom where one judge can overrule all others, not because they are right, but because they are powerful. Would we call that justice? This is precisely the dilemma the UN faces today.

One of the most painful and widely cited examples among dozens of others, is the Syrian Civil War. For years, images of bombed cities, displaced families, and suffering children dominated global media. The world watched in horror. Yet inside the UN Security Council, repeated attempts to take decisive action were blocked - primarily by vetoes from Russia. These vetoes were not abstract diplomatic maneuvers; they had real consequences. Each blocked resolution meant delayed aid, limited accountability, and prolonged suffering. Now consider another example. The United States has consistently used its veto to block resolutions critical of Israel, even in situations involving humanitarian concerns in the Palestinian territories. Whether one agrees with these positions or not, the pattern is clear: the veto is often used not to uphold universal principles, but to protect allies. The message this sends to the rest of the world is troubling - justice appears selective, not universal.

This is where the argument becomes unavoidable: the veto power does not just slow down decision-making; it actively distorts it. It transforms the UN from a moral institution into a political battleground. And when morality becomes negotiable, institutions lose their credibility.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue:

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



The ripple effects extend beyond the Security Council. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which is supposed to stand as the global voice for human dignity, has also suffered reputational damage. Ordinary people often ask a simple question: how can a body meant to defend human rights include countries accused of violating them? The answer, again, lies in politics. Powerful alliances, strategic voting, and diplomatic bargaining shape who gets a seat at the table. This contradiction is not lost on victims of injustice. For someone living under oppression, the UN is not an abstract institution - it is a symbol of hope. But when that hope is repeatedly disappointed, cynicism replaces trust. The problem is not that the UN does nothing; it is that it does not act consistently. And inconsistency, in matters of justice, feels like hypocrisy.

Supporters of the veto argue that it prevents global conflict by ensuring that major powers remain engaged in the system. There is some truth to this. Without the veto, countries like the United States or Russia might ignore UN decisions altogether. But this argument comes at a cost. Stability achieved through silence in the face of injustice is not true stability - it is suppression.

Moreover, the veto creates a dangerous double standard. Smaller nations are expected to follow international law, while powerful ones can bend or block it. This imbalance undermines the very principle of sovereign equality that the UN was built upon. It tells the world that some voices matter more than others—not because they are right, but because they are strong. There have been attempts to address this issue. Some countries have proposed voluntary limits on veto use in cases of mass atrocities. Others have suggested expanding the Security Council to make it more representative. These ideas are promising, but they face a fundamental obstacle: those who hold power are rarely willing to give it up. Reforming the veto system requires the consent of the very nations that benefit from it.

So where does this leave the UN? It is neither entirely broken nor entirely effective. It still delivers humanitarian aid, supports peacekeeping missions, and provides a platform for dialogue. But its moral authority - the very thing that gives it legitimacy - is under strain. And that strain is directly linked to how veto power is used.

Ultimately, this is not just an institutional problem; it is a question of political will and ethical responsibility. The veto power itself is not inherently evil - it is the behavior of those who wield it that determines its impact. When used responsibly, it can prevent reckless decisions. But when used selfishly, it becomes a tool of obstruction. The world today is more interconnected than ever. Conflicts, climate crises, and human rights violations do not respect borders. In such a world, global institutions must rise above narrow interests. The United Nations cannot afford to be seen as a club of the powerful - it must be a voice for the powerless. If the current trajectory continues, the risk is not that the UN will collapse, but that it will become irrelevant. And irrelevance, for an institution built on hope, is perhaps the greatest failure of all. In the end, the argument is simple but urgent: power, even when institutionalized as veto power, must be restrained by principles. Without that restraint, the very system designed to protect humanity risks becoming complicit in its suffering. A question comes in minds; Do the world's nation need to free the UN from the custody of Veto Powers?

— Prof Dr Shujaul Mulik Khan, Quaid-i-Azam university Islamabad

How the World Is Forced to Fund the Iran War

Qamar Bashir



The result is a striking and deeply troubling paradox. The nations directly engaged in the Iran War are not the ones paying for it. Instead, the financial burden is transferred to a diffuse and largely uninvolved global audience. Energy-importing countries, trade-dependent economies, and ordinary consumers all become indirect financiers of the conflict. The war, in effect, is globalized—not only in its consequences but in its funding. In addition, the indirect cost transfer is already visible across continents. The biggest burden of the war is not military spending—it is the imported economic shock spreading through energy markets, shipping routes, inflation, and financial systems

THE most defining feature of the Iran War is not the missiles, the targets, or even the scale of destruction—it is the silent and systematic transfer of its cost to those who are not fighting it. In an extraordinary display of modern economic engineering, all three principal actors—Iran, United States, and Israel—have structured this conflict in a way that allows them to wage war without bearing its full financial burden. Instead, that burden is being shifted outward to global consumers, trade-dependent economies, and regional allies, transforming a regional conflict into a worldwide economic obligation.

This is what makes the Iran War fundamentally different from traditional wars. Historically, nations financed wars through taxation, borrowing, or internal sacrifice. Today, however, the interconnected nature of the global economy allows powerful states to externalize these costs. Oil prices rise, shipping costs surge, insurance premiums spike, and supply chains tighten—not as unintended consequences, but as embedded mechanisms through which the cost of war is distributed globally. The battlefield may be regional, but the bill is international. At the center of this economic and strategic equation lies the Strait of Hormuz, the most critical energy chokepoint in the world. A significant portion of global oil, liquefied natural gas, and commercial goods passes through this narrow corridor every day. Control over this passage offers not only military leverage but also unparalleled economic influence.

Current estimates suggest that approximately \$1.2 trillion worth of trade flows through Hormuz annually, including around \$800 billion in energy shipments and \$400 billion in non-energy goods such as fertilizers, chemicals, metals, and manufactured products. A 10 percent toll on this trade would generate roughly \$120 billion per year. Such a mechanism would allow Iran, in theory, to recoup the economic damage of war within a single year—not through aid or borrowing, but by leveraging its geographic position within the global trade system. This is where the economic dimension of the war becomes unmistakably clear. Any increase in shipping costs through Hormuz would be passed on to importing countries, raising energy prices, increasing transportation costs, and fueling inflation worldwide. Consumers in distant nations, far removed from the battlefield, would ultimately bear the financial burden. In effect, the Iran War would be funded not just by those involved, but by the entire global economy.

At the same time, the United States operates within its own system of cost distribution. With daily war expenditures estimated at around \$1 billion, a conflict lasting 60 to 70 days would cost approximately \$60 to \$70 billion. However, much of the U.S. military presence in the region is sustained through security arrangements with Gulf states. These host nations, dependent on American protection, often absorb a significant share of these costs. Thus, the United States projects power while redistributing its financial burden to its allies.

Israel follows a similar model. Its wartime expenditures, estimated in the tens of billions, are largely offset through extensive financial and military support from the United States and allied networks. This support ensures that Israel can sustain prolonged military operations without bearing the full economic impact domestically. In this way, Israel also participates in the broader system of cost externalization.

The result is a striking and deeply troubling paradox. The nations directly engaged in the Iran War are not the ones paying for it. Instead, the financial burden is transferred to a diffuse and largely uninvolved global audience. Energy-importing countries, trade-dependent economies, and ordinary consumers all become indirect financiers of the conflict. The war, in effect, is globalized—not only in its consequences but in its funding.

In addition, the indirect cost transfer is already visible across continents. The biggest burden of the war is not military spending—it is the imported economic shock spreading through energy markets, shipping routes, inflation, and financial systems. Nearly one-fifth of the world's oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, and any disruption instantly translates into higher fuel prices, increased freight costs, and cascading inflation worldwide. Countries far removed from the battlefield are paying through rising grocery bills, higher transport costs, and tightening monetary conditions.

The Middle East itself is already absorbing heavy indirect costs. Countries not directly involved in the war are facing fuel price shocks, subsidy burdens, and logistical disruptions. Pakistan, for instance, has raised diesel prices by over 50 percent and petrol by more than 40 percent, while struggling to sustain subsidy programs. India is considering trade restrictions to stabilize domestic markets as energy and freight costs surge. Across the Gulf and surrounding regions, shipping disruptions, stranded vessels, and rising insurance premiums are increasing the cost of doing business, effectively turning the war into a regional economic tax.

Europe is experiencing the same phenomenon through a renewed energy and inflation crisis. Oil prices have surged above \$100 per barrel, forcing governments to cap fuel margins, cut taxes, and release reserves to protect consumers. At the same time, inflationary pressure is pushing borrowing costs higher, affecting mortgages, business financing, and household stability. The war's economic shock is thus embedded not only in fuel prices but in the broader financial architecture of European economies.

For Asia and Africa, the impact is even more severe. Many countries in these regions depend heavily on Middle Eastern energy and trade flows. The war is functioning as a direct economic tax, triggering shortages, subsidy crises, and potential social unrest. African economies, already vulnerable, face slower growth due to rising food, fuel, and fertilizer costs, with projections showing measurable GDP losses if the conflict persists. Across the developing world, the cost of the Iran War is not theoretical—it is immediate, tangible, and deeply destabilizing.

The implications of this model extend far beyond the current conflict. If wars can be structured in such a way that their costs are borne by others, the traditional economic constraints on warfare begin to disappear. This lowers the threshold for conflict and increases the risk of prolonged and repeated wars. The deterrent effect of financial burden—once a powerful force for restraint—is weakened when that burden can be shifted outward. In the end, the most important question is not who is winning on the battlefield, but who is paying for the war. And the answer is increasingly evident: it is the world at large. Through rising energy prices, disrupted trade, and cascading economic effects, the cost of the Iran War is being distributed across borders and societies, often without acknowledgment or consent.

This is the hidden economy of modern warfare—a system in which power is exercised, destruction is inflicted, and the bill is quietly passed on to others. In such a system, victory is no longer defined solely by military success, but by the ability to fight without paying. And by that measure, the Iran War reveals a profound and unsettling truth: those who wage war have learned how to make the world fund it.

— 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 Peacemaker Who Played with Power

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



As the global mood darkened, so did his conduct. The belief that "might is right" gained currency in many corridors of power, and he embraced it eagerly. Law, he argued, was useful only when it served strength. Treaties were tools, not obligations. Morality became flexible, adjusted daily to suit advantage...

ON a hushed night in the year 2060, when the city outside appeared calm but history still murmured beneath the silence, a grandmother sat beside her granddaughter's bed. The child had grown fond of stories that were neither fairy tales nor myths, but reflections of a troubled past—stories meant to sharpen conscience rather than merely entertain. The lights were dimmed, shadows rested on the walls, and the grandmother began. "Once upon a time," she said softly, "there ruled a man who stood at the helm of a powerful country. He was eloquent, theatrical, and acutely aware of the power of perception. He rarely relied on a single identity. Instead, he adopted different names, titles, and pseudonyms—each suited to the audience before him. In one place he was hailed as a peacemaker, in another as a global guardian. His real name has faded, but his conduct remains unforgettable."

In the early years, she explained, his reputation was carefully cultivated. Wherever conflict brewed, he appeared—at conferences, summits, emergency visits—claiming credit for preventing wars that, according to him, would have otherwise turned into great disasters. He would stand before applauding crowds and say that his intervention alone had saved regions from catastrophe. Hosts welcomed him warmly, media celebrated him generously, and admirers praised his courage in "stopping wars before they began." For a time, the world believed him. "He spoke often of reconciliation," the mother said, "and quoted laws and treaties as if they were sacred vows. He warned others against recklessness and preached restraint. People trusted him because they wanted peace, and because confidence, once projected convincingly, can feel like truth." But his character, she continued, was never rooted in principle. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, his stance began to shift. The same man who once condemned interference now found reasons to intrude. His thinking, once wrapped in the language of diplomacy, turned sharply—almost overnight—by a full one hundred and eighty degrees. What had once been restraint became impatience; what had once

been mediation became domination. "He developed a habit," the mother said, "of interfering where he was neither invited nor needed."

Each day brought a new position. One morning he would praise dialogue, by evening he would dismiss it as weakness. One day treaties were binding; the next day they were obsolete. His words no longer anchored his actions. Allies struggled to understand him, adversaries learned to fear him, and smaller nations grew anxious, never knowing which version of him would appear tomorrow.

To many observers, his behavior began to resemble a familiar figure from everyday life—like the stereotypical 'Massi' of the neighborhood, the woman who inserted herself into every household dispute, every street quarrel, every private matter, convinced that no affair could proceed without her involvement. What once seemed concern slowly revealed itself as control. What once appeared helpful turned into habitual intrusion.

"He interfered everywhere," the mother said quietly, "not to solve problems, but to assert presence."

As the global mood darkened, so did his conduct. The belief that "might is right" gained currency in many corridors of power, and he embraced it eagerly. Law, he argued, was useful only when it served strength. Treaties were tools, not obligations. Morality became flexible, adjusted daily to suit advantage. Then came the night that stripped away all remaining illusions. Under the cover of darkness, he ordered an operation beyond his borders. Armed men entered another land and seized its rulers from their own home—without trial, without legal process, without international consent. When the world reacted in shock, he appeared unmoved. Adopting yet another title, he justified the act as necessary for global stability.

"He spoke," the mother said, "as though power itself had replaced law." The room felt heavier.

"He did not stop there," the mother said. "Once he crossed that line, others vanished. He threatened more nations, and treated war like a strategy game. He no longer cared

about rules—only outcomes. Treaties became scraps of paper. Law became something for others to obey."

"Did people stop him?" the granddaughter asked.

"Some tried," the mother replied, brushing her daughter's hair. "But many applauded him. They called him strong. They confused force with courage and speed with wisdom. And so, fear spread, conflicts multiplied, and the world paid a price that took decades to heal."

From that moment onward, his transformations accelerated. His positions shifted daily, sometimes hourly. He spoke of peace while preparing war, invoked morality while violating every norm he once defended. Soon, his rhetoric turned toward an ancient country—first cautiously, then aggressively, and finally with open menace.

No treaty restrained him now. No institution commanded his respect. Critics were mocked, allies confused, and supporters applauded what they mistook for decisiveness. In reality, it was unpredictability elevated to doctrine.

"He ruled," the mother said, "without trust—and a leader without trust is more dangerous than an open enemy."

The daughter turned her face toward her mother. "Did he succeed?" she asked. The mother shook her head slowly. "Power gained without principle never succeeds. His rule left the world more unstable, alliances weaker, and conflicts deeper. Even after he faded from the stage, the damage he caused took years—sometimes decades—to heal." She leaned closer and whispered, "That is why I tell you this story. Remember; a leader who changes principles day by day cannot be trusted. When interference becomes habit, peace becomes performance. And when 'might is right' replaces justice, the world loses its moral compass." She kissed her granddaughter's forehead and turned off the light. As the child drifted into sleep, the lesson lingered in the quiet room—a reminder passed from one generation to the next; that peace is proven by restraint, not slogans; that power without law breeds chaos; and that history never forgets those who wore the mask of peace while practicing the language of force.

Briefs

UAE asks
Pakistan to
return loan

FROM PAGE 01
Repaying the UAE could ease immediate bilateral tensions but may add pressure on foreign exchange reserves unless offset by new inflows, successful IMF disbursements, or rollovers from Riyadh and Beijing.

PTI to
convene
APC of...

FROM PAGE 01
The impact of the war in the Middle East, he said that the government has raised fuel prices excessively, even surpassing increases seen in Nigeria and Vietnam. The PTI's announcement comes following Thursday's sharp increase in the prices of petroleum products. Addressing a press conference along with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik announced the hike in petrol and diesel prices, citing rising global energy costs, triggered by the ongoing war in the Middle East. "The new petrol price has been fixed at Rs458.41 per litre, marking a rise of Rs137.23 per litre. Diesel will now cost Rs520.35 per litre, up by Rs184.49 per litre," he said. However, the PTI rejected the hike, with party leaders saying the new rates were compounded by additional levies. Speaking during today's press conference, PTI leader Taimur Saleem Jhagra said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had previously announced the lowering of fuel prices himself. "Today, the prime minister cannot face the public," he added.

China says
peace talks
advance...

FROM PAGE 01
Mao did not say where the talks were being held, though the neighbors have previously said they were in the northwestern city of Urumqi. China has been mediating and promoting talks, in close communication with both sides to build suitable conditions and provide a platform, Mao said, adding that the three countries would issue further information in due course. The fighting between Pakistan and Afghanistan that started in October has killed scores of people on both sides, with Afghans taking the brunt. Islamabad accuses the Afghan Taliban of harboring Islamist militants who launch attacks in Pakistan, although Kabul denies this calling the militancy its neighbor's domestic problem.

China calls
for respect...

FROM PAGE 01
will face the death penalty as a default sentence. "The legal rights of the Palestinian people should be respected and protected," China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said when asked about the bill at a press briefing on Friday. "We also hope relevant parties will cease actions that escalate tensions and exacerbate conflict," she said, without mentioning Israel by name. "China believes that any law should fulfil legal principles such as equality and justice and should not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, religion or nationality or political views," Mao added.

PM Shehbaz
defends...

FROM PAGE 01
Proposals to increase petroleum prices rejected to protect the common man from additional burden... Fuel and medicine stocks remain sufficient. Relief being delivered directly to beneficiaries through transparent digital systems, bypassing middlemen... Savings from government austerity are being redirected towards targeted support for low-income families. PM directs federal and provincial governments to further strengthen relief mechanisms Focus remains on protecting the poor, agriculture, and transport sectors from impacts of global oil price fluctuations.

PSL Technical Committee
upholds two-match ban
on Fakhar Zaman

Fakhar's appeal rejected after de novo inquiry and hearings with relevant individuals, says PCB

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Super League (PSL) Technical Committee rejected Lahore Qalandars opening batter Fakhar Zaman's appeal against his two-match suspension, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Thursday. According to the cricket board, Fakhar's appeal was heard today by the PSL Technical Committee, comprising Professor Javed Malik, Dr Mumraiz Naqshband, and Mr Syed Ali Naqi, which, after reviewing all evidence and hearing submissions from relevant individuals, upheld the two-match ban on the left-handed batter imposed by match referee Roshan Mahnama. "The appeal was heard today by the PSL Technical Committee comprising Professor Javed Malik, Dr Mumraiz Naqshband, and Mr Syed Ali Naqi," the PCB's statement read. "Pursuant to conducting a de novo inquiry, reviewing all evidence, and hearing submissions from relevant individuals, the Committee has dismissed the appeal and upheld the two match ban imposed by Match Referee Roshan Mahnama," it added. For the unversed, the 35-year-old was 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, during their PSL 11 match against arch-rivals Karachi Kings on March 29. Consequently, he was slapped with a two-match ban on Tuesday, after match referee Mahnama conducted the disciplinary hearing, making the determination following a thorough review of all evidence and providing an opportunity for a personal hearing to Fakhar. Meanwhile, Fakhar, who denied the allegations throughout the disciplinary process, had requested a full disciplinary hearing under the PSL Code of Conduct. The controversy stemmed during the aforementioned fixture when on-field umpires reported an attempt to alter the condition. The incident occurred ahead of the final over of the Kings' run chase, when match officials, Faisal and Sharfuddoula, gathered to inspect the ball and deemed that its condition was altered, which resulted in a five-run penalty for the Qalandars. The penalty brought the equation down to just nine required off the final over instead of 14 for the Kings, which the 2020 champions comfortably amassed with three balls to spare.

PSL 11: Azam, Warner power
Karachi Kings to five-wicket
win against Rawal Pindiz

Azam anchors 198-run chase with 74 while Warner supports with composed fifty

DNA

LAHORE: Karachi Kings completed a 198-run chase as Azam Khan and David Warner struck rapid half-centuries in the 10th match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Thursday. Set to chase 198, the 2020 champions knocked the winning runs for the loss of five wickets and four balls to spare, courtesy of a crucial 76-run partnership for the third wicket between Azam and Warner. The Kings got off to a contrasting start to their pursuit as they lost right-handed opener Muhammad Waseem in the third over with 27 runs on the board. Following the early setback, Salman Ali Agha (29) joined skipper Warner, and the duo batted sensibly to anchor the run chase with an important 43-run partnership for the second wicket, which culminated with the former's dismissal in the ninth over. Agha's dismissal paved the way for



Azam to walk out and bat at No.5 ahead of experienced all-rounder Moeen Ali, and the move paid dividends for the 2020 champions, as he, alongside captain Warner, put together a crucial partnership for the Kings. While Daryl Mitchell got rid of Kings' captain Warner in the 16th over, Azam continued the onslaught and put the former champions within touching distance before being dismissed by Mohammad Amir in the penultimate over.

Azam top-scored for the Kings with a blazing 74 off 34 deliveries, studied with six fours and as many sixes, while Warner made a 36-ball 50, featuring six fours and a six. Mitchell struck on the first delivery of the final over, dismissing Moeen Ali (five) to cause a stir in the Kings' pursuit, but Abbas Afridi smashed a six on the subsequent delivery to steer his side to their third straight triumph in PSL 11. Mitchell was the pick of the bowlers for RawalPindiz, taking three wickets for 32 runs in his 3.2 overs, while Naseem Shah and Amir could pick up one apiece. Kings captain David Warner's decision to field first backfired as the tournament debutants racked up 197/6 in their 20 overs, courtesy of a monumental fourth-wicket partnership between Mitchell and Billings. The Pindiz got off to a shaky start to their innings as Hasan Ali dismissed their captain, Mohammad Rizwan (21), in the third over with just 28 runs on the board.

Iraq returns to
FIFA World Cup
after 40 years

BAGHDAD: Coach Graham Arnold challenged his players to "shock the world" after Iraq became the 48th and final team to qualify for the World Cup with a nerve-shredding 2-1 win over Bolivia in an intercontinental playoff in Mexico on Tuesday. Iraq, whose preparations were disrupted by the war in the Middle East, sealed their first appearance at the finals in 40 years and will play in Group I against France, Senegal and Norway. Goals from Ali Al-Hamadi and Aymen Hussein secured a famous win for Iraq, whose last appearance at the World Cup came at Mexico in 1986. "With everything going on in the Middle East at the moment it made it harder for the players," said the Australian Arnold, who had initially sought to have the fixture postponed due to the disruption caused by the conflict. "Delighted for the players, very good boys, very happy for the 46 million Iraqis," he added. "Hopefully, it will help change the perception of Iraq and the football in Iraq. Doing something in the World Cup nobody expects us to do. Because of travel disruption caused by the US-Israel war on Iran, most of the Iraqi squad only reached Mexico after a gruelling three-day journey from Baghdad that began with an overland crossing into Jordan. But there was little sign of weariness during a confident start by Iraq, who took the lead after nine minutes through Luton Town striker Al-Hamadi – the 24-year-old who moved to Liverpool as a toddler following the outbreak of the 2003 Iraq war. Iraq midfielder Amir Al-Ammari won a corner after a superb free-kick that was saved at full stretch from Bolivia goalkeeper Guillermo Viscarra. From the subsequent set piece, Al-Ammari curled a pinpoint corner on to the head of Al-Hamadi who nodded home for 1-0. Iraq were well worth the early goal and looked in control until Bolivia, who had gradually grown into the game, equalised after 38 minutes. – Agencies

US fighter
jet shot
down
over Iran

FROM PAGE 01
civilians to be on the lookout for survivors. The governor of Iran's Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province said whomever captured or killed the crew "would be specially commended," according to the semi-official Iranian news agency ISNA. The war started more than a month ago with US-Israeli strikes on Iran, triggering retaliation that spread the conflict throughout the Middle East, convulsing the global economy and impacting millions of people worldwide. "Military forces have launched a search operation to find the American fighter pilot who was hit earlier today," Iran's Fars news agency said. The report of the downed jet came as fresh strikes hit Israel, Iran and Gulf countries. Large blasts rocked northern Tehran Friday afternoon, an AFP journalist said. It was not immediately clear what was hit. Earlier, Israel's military reported a new missile salvo from Iran, activating its air defences.

26 people
die in rains
incidents

FROM PAGE 01
nine women, and 35 children. A total of 102 houses damaged due to the rains, of which 82 were partially damaged and 20 were completely destroyed. These incidents occurred in various districts of the province, including Bannu, Abbottabad, Kohat, Peshawar, Nowshera, Bajaur, Lakki Marwat, Kurram, Hangu, Shangla, Buner, Malakand, Upper Dir, Bajaur, Battagram, North Waziristan, and Tank. PDMA, Rescue 1122, district administration, and other relevant institutions are in contact with each other and are continuing relief operations. PDMA has directed the administrations of the affected districts to provide relief goods to the victims as soon as possible. PDMA has specifically instructed the administration of the most affected district Bannu to ensure that financial assistance is provided to the families of the deceased without delay.

Islamabad
jolted by
earthquake

FROM PAGE 01
in many places, with people describing it as moderate to strong in intensity. Social media platforms quickly filled with real-time accounts from Islamabad, Lahore, and various parts of Punjab as citizens shared their experiences and checked on loved ones. Fortunately, no casualties or major structural damage have been reported so far. Emergency services and rescue teams remain on high alert while teams from the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) and the National Seismic Monitoring Centre assess the situation and gather precise data on the quake's magnitude, epicenter, and depth. Pakistan lies in a seismically active zone, and such tremors serve as a reminder for residents to stay prepared for possible aftershocks.

Kuwait
reports
Iranian...

FROM PAGE 01
security in the region. Iran Warns UN Security Council Against "Provocative Action" Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned the UNSC against any "provocative action," particularly regarding the Strait of Hormuz. The statement came ahead of a (later postponed) vote on a Bahrain-sponsored draft resolution that would authorize defensive measures to protect shipping through the strait. Araghchi said such moves by "aggressors and their supporters" would only complicate the situation further. Iran has effectively disrupted or restricted traffic in the strait—a vital chokepoint for global oil flows—in response to US-Israeli strikes, contributing to soaring energy prices. Trump Steps Up Threats Against Iran and Comments on Hormuz President Donald Trump has intensified rhetoric.

Imran Khan, Bushra
approach IHC...

FROM PAGE 01

the judgment delivered on January 31, 2024, by the Accountability Court No. 1, Islamabad, which convicted the couple in the Toshakhana I case and sentenced them to 14 years in Adiala Jail. However, in April, 2024, the IHC suspended the sentences handed out to the former prime minister and his spouse. The petitions submitted today argued that the trial court's judgment was passed without the "proper application of judicial mind" and suffers from a "serious misreading and non-reading of material evidence". The petitions also highlighted Imran's medical condition, specifically "right central retinal vein occlusion," noting that the necessary treatment is unavailable within the premises of Adiala Jail. It should be mentioned that the former premier's health has garnered attention in recent months, most notably after his eye ailment came to light earlier this year. The 54-year-old Bushra was described as a "parda-nasheen" lady with no history of holding public office, asserting that she has been implicated solely due to her marital relationship. In a separate move, Bushra also filed an application seeking a decision on the merits regarding her plea for the suspension of her sentence in the Al-Qadir Trust case. The application noted that her plea under Section 426 CrPC had been pending for over ten months, with notices originally issued on May 15, 2025. The petition alleged that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has employed "procedural manoeuvring" and "dilatatory tactics" to frustrate the proceedings.



KARACHI: H.E. Fatou Harerimana, Rwanda High Commissioner paid a courtesy call on Dr. Sulaiman Shahabuddin, President of Aga Khan University, Karachi. – DNA

PSL 11: Sameer, Shadab star as Islamabad United
secure commanding win over Quetta Gladiators
Sameer Minhas leads United's chase with unbeaten 82,
skipper Shadab Khan contributes flawless 39-ball 69

SAMEER Minhas and Shadab Khan powered Islamabad United past Quetta Gladiators by eight wickets in the ninth match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, on Thursday. United chased down Gladiators' 184-run target with two wickets down in the 19th over, courtesy of a match-winning knock from emerging batter Sameer Minhas and a vital contribution by skipper Shadab Khan. The side got off to a strong start as openers Devon Conway and Sameer Minhas piled on runs early, laying a solid foundation for the chase. However, the 40-run opening stand was broken when Abrar Ahmed dismissed Conway for 18 off 19 deliveries, including two fours and a six. Abrar struck again shortly after, removing Andries Gous for two off four balls, reducing United to 61-2 in 6.5 overs. Sameer and Shadab then steadied the innings, forging a crucial 50-run partnership to take

the total past the 100-run mark and put their side in a commanding position. The young opener remained in sublime form, bringing up his maiden PSL half-century. Shadab also stayed in fine touch, leading from the front and guiding the team towards the target with his ninth PSL fifty. Shadab struck back-to-back boundaries against the opposition bowlers, piling pressure on them as the match slipped away, guiding Islamabad's total past the 150-run mark in the 16th over and raising a 100-run stand alongside Minhas. In the end, Islamabad United chased down the target with Sameer Minhas unbeaten, top-scoring with 83 off 48 balls, including eight fours and three sixes, while Shadab Khan played a brilliant 68 off 38 deliveries, hitting five fours and four sixes. Batting first, the Gladiators reached 183-5 in their allotted 20 overs, despite an explosive start from their opening pair, Shamyil Hussain and Saud Shakeel.

The duo attacked Islamabad United's bowling from the outset, finding boundaries at regular intervals and putting on a 50-run opening stand. The partnership was broken in the fifth over when pacer Salman Irshad dismissed Shamyil Hussain for 21 off 15 balls, which included one four and two sixes. Khawaja Nafay then joined Shakeel to form a promising partnership, but Shadab Khan struck to remove the skipper for a brisk 42 off 26 balls, featuring three fours and three sixes, leaving the Gladiators at 71-2 in 8.1 overs. Runs continued to flow for Quetta, but wickets fell at regular intervals. Imad Wasim claimed Khawaja Nafay for 18 off 14 balls, which included two fours and a six. Shadab Khan struck again in the 12th over, first dismissing wicketkeeper-batter Ben McDermott for three off six balls and then sending back Bevon Jacobs for a first-ball duck, leaving the Gladiators in trouble at

93-5. Hassan Nawaz and Tom Curran then steadied the innings with a crucial partnership, adding valuable runs and helping the team surpass the 100-run mark. Quetta gained momentum in the 16th over as Nawaz smashed 21 runs off Imad Wasim's over, putting the team in a strong position. The duo shared a 50-run stand and continued to score at a brisk pace in the final overs. Nawaz was in top form, hitting boundaries consistently to raise his bat for his fifth PSL half-century. The innings concluded with Quetta Gladiators posting a competitive total of 183-5. Nawaz remained unbeaten on 64 off 35 balls, striking six fours and three sixes, while Curran contributed 29 off 22 deliveries, including two fours and a six. Shadab Khan was Islamabad United's standout bowler, registering figures of 3/23 in four overs, while Imad Wasim and Salman Irshad contributed one wicket each. – APP

Briefs

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in inter-bank trading and closed at Rs 279.10 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 279.11. 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 and Rs 280.15, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs 0.31 to close at Rs 322.18 from the previous day's close of Rs 321.87, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen went remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.74, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 0.65 and closed at Rs 369.50 compared to the previous day's Rs 368.85. The exchange rate of the Emirate and the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant to close at Rs 75.99 and Rs 74.35, respectively.—APP

Sun Yan vows to strengthening Pak-China coop

LAHORE: Consul General of China in Lahore, Sun Yan, has reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening Pakistan-China cooperation. He emphasized that China and Pakistan are all weather strategic cooperative partners, maintaining close coordination on regional and international affairs while supporting each other on core interests. During his visit to Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) here Friday, he highlighted recent diplomatic developments, and referred to the five-point consensus reached on March 31 regarding the regional situation. The consensus called for an immediate ceasefire, promotion of peace talks, protection of civilians and critical infrastructure, safeguarding shipping lanes including the Strait of Hormuz, and upholding the principles of the UN Charter. He noted that this consensus reflects the responsible role of both China and Pakistan in maintaining regional peace and stability. The Consul General also informed the participants about the successful 10th Round of China-Pakistan Consular Consultations held in Beijing on March 31. Both sides discussed strengthening consular cooperation, facilitating cross-border movement, and ensuring the safety and rights of citizens and institutions, sending a positive signal for businesses and citizens of both countries. Appreciating the initiatives of PCJCCI, he highlighted the success of China-Pakistan Love Festival 2025 and acknowledged the Chamber's efforts in language training, policy guidance, talent development, and investment facilitation. He remarked that PCJCCI had emerged as a vital platform for economic cooperation and a strong bond of friendship between the two nations. Consul General Sun Yan also emphasized that the CPEC had entered its second phase of high-quality development, expanding cooperation into industrial collaboration, agriculture modernization, information technology, and people's livelihood sectors.—APP

UK to send Rapid Sentry air defense system to Kuwait

LONDON: Britain is deploying its Rapid Sentry air defense system to Kuwait to help protect British and Kuwaiti interests in the Gulf, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office said on Friday, after an overnight Iranian drone attack on a Kuwaiti oil facility. "The Prime Minister began by condemning the reckless overnight drone attack on a Kuwaiti oil refinery," the spokesperson said. "He reiterated that the UK stands with Kuwait and all our allies in the Gulf." The spokesperson said the leaders discussed the deployment of the UK's air defense system — designed primarily to shoot down drones and other low-flying aerial threats — to Kuwait, which would protect Kuwaiti and British personnel and interests in the region, while avoiding escalation into a wider conflict. Starmer and the crown prince also discussed disruption to global shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and welcomed a meeting chaired by British foreign minister Yvette Cooper on Thursday to draw up a plan to reopen the vital shipping route.—APP

Tahir urges govt for policies to woo foreign investors

He warned that higher fuel prices would not only escalate the cost of doing business but also fuel inflation across the economy. He therefore urged the government to take concrete measures to reduce energy costs and provide relief to industry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has said that the upcoming Federal Budget 2026 presents a historic opportunity for the government to reset Pakistan's economy, restore investor confidence and place the country firmly on the path of sustainable economic growth. Addressing a press conference at the Chamber House on Friday, he said that the purpose of the briefing was to present the proposals and expectations of the business community to policymakers so that a business-friendly, investment-oriented and growth-driven budget could be formulated.

He noted that the rapidly changing global and regional situation, particularly the tensions in the Middle East, has created new investment dynamics. In this scenario, many overseas Pakistanis are exploring alternative investment destinations. He urged the government to capitalize on this opportunity by attracting overseas Pakistani investors through tax rebates, tax holidays and other incentives. Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that while the business community appreciates the government's initiatives aimed at providing relief to the common man, including the subsidy for motorcyclists, the unprecedented increase in petroleum prices has significantly increased the financial burden on the public. He warned that higher fuel prices would not only escalate the cost of doing business but also fuel inflation across the economy. He therefore urged the government to take concrete measures to reduce energy costs and provide relief to industry.

The ICCI President emphasized that the real estate and construction sectors are



among the most vital pillars of Pakistan's economy, as they are connected with numerous industries including cement, steel, electrical goods and transportation, while also generating large-scale employment opportunities. He stressed the need for a transparent, simple and investor-friendly policy framework to revive and accelerate growth in this sector. He added that the Prime Minister has hinted at announcing a package for the construction industry soon. The business community expects that this package will be comprehensive and inclusive, enabling Pakistan to attract investors particularly from GCC countries, who have shown keen interest in investing in the country. Sardar Tahir Mehmood also proposed the establishment of special economic zones for overseas Pakistanis, promotion of tourism

through incentives and public-private partnerships, enhanced facilitation for IT exports and startups, and the effective utilization of Pakistan's vast mineral resources through investor-friendly policies. He further suggested the creation of a one-window investment facilitation system for overseas Pakistanis to simplify investment procedures and eliminate bureaucratic hurdles. He stressed that policy consistency, a simplified tax regime and business-friendly regulations are essential to restore investor confidence. The ICCI President emphasized that key economic decisions should be taken in consultation with chambers of commerce and business community representatives instead of unilateral policymaking, as such collaboration would lead to more practical and effective economic policies.

Reaffirming ICCI's commitment, he said the Chamber will continue to work closely with the government and all stakeholders to promote policies that encourage business growth, investment and economic stability. He expressed hope that by incorporating the proposals of the business community, Budget 2026 can help Pakistan achieve economic stability and emerge as a stronger economic force in the region. On this occasion former Presidents Zubair Ahmed Malik, Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, Executive Members Imran Minhas, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Najeeb Ellahi Malik, Ishaq Sial, Mirza Mohammad Ali, Raja Naveed Satti, former SVP Khalid Chaudhry, former VP Ashfaq Chhattah, ICCI senior members Israr Mishwani, Rana Qaisar, Tehmas Butt, Chaduhry Mohammad Ali and other were also present.

Pak pushes for 'restraint, dialogue' to promote peace

UNITED NATIONS: Describing the Gulf Cooperation Council a pillar of regional stability, Pakistan reiterated its strong condemnation of the attacks against GCC members — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE — during the ongoing deadly conflict in the Middle East and called for restraint, diplomacy and dialogue to accomplish peace. "We appreciate the strategic restraint by the GCC countries in the face of such provocation and aggression," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the UN Security Council, which met under Bahrain's presidency to discuss boosting cooperation between the UN and Arab States in the Gulf. At the same time, he spoke about "deeply troubling events" in the region, including the US-Israeli coordinated attacks against Iran on 28 February that have led to dangerous escalation and rising tensions. "These developments have undermined regional stability and carry serious implications for international peace and security as well as global economy and prosperity," the Pakistani envoy said. "We categorically condemn all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. The targeting of power plants, energy facilities, educational institutions, hospitals and other essential civilian sites is unacceptable and must cease immediately," he added. "De-escalation and complete cessation of hostilities must be our top priority." Ambassador Asim Ahmad also referred to the meeting in Islamabad between the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, saying the discussions reflected a shared recognition of the urgent need to de-escalate tensions, intensify diplomatic engagement, and collectively pursue the peaceful resolution of ongoing crisis. Pakistan, he said, attaches great importance to its fraternal relations with all GCC countries, rooted in shared religious and cultural values, mutual respect and deep people-to-people ties, reinforced by robust political, security, economic and trade partnership, energy and development cooperation. Pakistani vibrant diaspora across GCC serves as a vital bridge, contributing to the prosperity of the host countries, and further strengthening bilateral ties, he said, adding Pakistan will always stand firmly alongside brotherly nations of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. The Pakistani envoy said that enhanced cooperation between the UN and GCC represents a "strategic necessity and practical pathway towards more effective multilateral action. Pointing to its proactive role in Palestine, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon, he said "the GCC has truly emerged as a pillar of regional stability". Ambassador Asim Ahmad drew attention to the General Assembly's unanimous resolution 79/296 reaffirming support for deeper cooperation between the UN and GCC through regular high-level exchanges, joint initiatives and broader collaboration across political, economic and social areas. "We support and reiterate its call to align priorities, promote multilateralism and strengthen collective responses to global challenges," he said.—DNA

Orchid lecture series debuts with focus on China-Pak eco uplift

BEIJING: A senior Pakistani official urged developing nations to study China's development model as a blueprint for the Global South, during the opening session of the 2026 Orchid Lecture Series in Beijing, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Zafar Uddin Mahmood, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on China Affairs and a recipient of the Orchid Award's Friendship Envoy title, told an audience of diplomats and scholars that China's transformation was rooted in three pillars: decisive leadership, long-term policy continuity, and a focus on domestic reform combined with international opening. China's success in lifting over 800 million people out of poverty provides valuable lessons for developing countries, Mahmood said, noting that the country's modernization was specifically tailored to its national conditions rather than following external models. The lecture, titled "Friendship Across Mountains and Seas," comes as China and Pakistan prepare to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Mahmood emphasised that bilateral cooperation has shifted beyond traditional diplomacy into high-quality manufacturing, green technology, and expanded educational exchange. Addressing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Mahmood stated the initiative has moved past its initial focus on energy and transport infrastructure.—DNA

Gwadar kicks off sports festival, prepares for youth summit

GWADAR: The Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) launched a series of social and sports events on April 2, aimed at increasing youth engagement and regional tourism following the Eid al-Fitr holiday season. The "Jashn-e-Sahil Sports Festival" commenced Thursday at GDA-developed facilities, featuring a beach marathon organized in coordination with the Balochistan Department of Sports. Officials said the festival includes various athletic competitions with participants drawn from across the province. A two-day National Youth Summit is scheduled for next week at the GDA Public Higher Secondary School. Organised by the provincial Department of Youth Affairs, the summit is designed to focus on leadership and education for participants traveling from various parts of Pakistan. The city is also preparing for the centenary of Balochi poet and scholar Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi on April 21. GDA confirmed the anniversary will be marked by a series of literary and cultural programs, according to a Gwadar Pro's report. GDA Director General Mo'in-ur-Rehman Khan has instructed relevant departments to finalise arrangements for the upcoming events.—APP

Morocco stopped fewer illegal migration attempts

RABAT: Morocco prevented 6.4 percent fewer attempts by illegal migrants trying to get to Europe in 2025 compared with the previous year, the interior ministry said on Thursday, adding that people were using different routes and that the issue showed no sign of easing. In addition to thwarting 73,640 illegal migration attempts, authorities last year dismantled more than 300 migrant-smuggling networks, the ministry said in emailed responses to Reuters questions. Years of armed conflict across Africa's Sahel region, high unemployment and the impact of climate change on farming communities are among the factors driving migrants toward Europe. Morocco has long been a major departure point for African migrants attempting to reach Europe via the Mediterranean or Atlantic routes, or by scaling fences surrounding the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in northern Morocco, with neighboring Spain, Morocco has strengthened cooperation on undocumented migration since ending a separate diplomatic dispute in 2022. Following tightened controls, a senior official at the directorate overseeing migration and border control said in the emailed comments that migrants had begun using other departure points in West Africa and parts of the southern Mediterranean. "The marked decline in interceptions points to a gradual reduction in irregular flows, reflecting the steady drying up of the migration route transiting through Morocco," he said. Morocco rescued 13,595 migrants at sea in 2025, while 4,372 irregular migrants took part in voluntary return programs to their countries of origin in 2025, the ministry said.—APP

Human remains found on Thai ship attacked in Hormuz strait

BANGKOK: Human remains have been found aboard a cargo ship struck by Iran while transiting the Strait of Hormuz last month, the vessel's owner said Friday, after three crew members were reported missing following the attack. US-Israeli strikes on Iran late February prompted Tehran to respond by effectively closing the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial artery for global oil supplies. The Thai-flagged Mayuree Naree was struck in March while traveling through the strait after departing Khalifa port in the United Arab Emirates.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Students pose for group photo during 23rd Convocation of Model College for Girls G-10/4, in the Federal Capital.

Petrol price hike sparks grave concerns among business community: RCCI

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has expressed grave concern over the sharp increase in petroleum prices, warning that the move will have far-reaching consequences for the economy, businesses, and the general public. RCCI President Usman Shaukat, while reacting to the government's decision to increase POL prices, stated that the unprecedented hike—raising petrol prices by Rs137 per litre to a record Rs458.4—has effectively doubled transportation costs. He cautioned that this surge will significantly fuel food inflation and escalate construction expenses, further burdening both consumers and the business community. He noted that

the new petrol price is disproportionately higher than trends in the international market, attributing the spike to the imposition of a record petroleum levy of Rs160.61 per litre. "Such excessive taxation is placing an unbearable strain on the economy and must be urgently reviewed," he said. Highlighting the need for immediate corrective measures, the RCCI chief proposed a reduction in non-essential government expenditures and a temporary cut in development projects to create fiscal space for relief measures. He also urged provincial governments to pool resources and introduce targeted subsidies to cushion the impact on the masses. Citing an example, he quoted the Punjab government's initiative

(August 2024) of providing relief in electricity prices by allocating Rs45 billion from its own budget, and suggested that similar proactive measures be adopted for fuel price relief. RCCI further called upon the federal government to engage with the IMF to ensure that the burden of levies is not directly transferred to consumers. Usman Shaukat emphasized the importance of adopting a phased approach to fuel price adjustments, coupled with targeted subsidies for vulnerable sectors. "Policymakers must engage with the business community to find balanced solutions that protect consumers while ensuring the sustainability of production," he added.—DNA

Briefs

Trade gap widens 23% with imports outpacing exports

Trade deficit widened to \$27.81 billion in July-March as exports fell and imports rose

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's merchandise trade deficit widened 22.65% year-on-year to \$27.81 billion in the first nine months of the current fiscal year as imports remained more than twice the value of exports, official data showed on Monday, adding to concerns over the country's fragile external position. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, imports during July-March FY26 rose 6.6% to \$50.54 billion, while exports fell 8.04% to \$22.7 billion, underscoring a widening imbalance that economists warn could erode foreign exchange reserves and put renewed pressure on the rupee. The strain persisted in March 2026, when the monthly trade deficit expanded 3.7% year-on-year to \$2.73 billion. Exports dropped 14.4% to \$2.26 billion, while imports also declined 5.4% to \$4.995 billion. Services trade on the other hand provided little cushion. The services deficit widened 3.1% to \$2.14 billion in July-February FY26, as a healthy 18.4% rise in services exports to \$6.46 billion was outpaced by a 14.2% surge in services imports to \$8.6 billion. One positive sign came in February 2026, when the services deficit fell 62% from a year earlier to \$97.8 million. However, analysts warned not to read too much into just one month's data.

Karachi smashes 41-year rain record

Weather likely to remain cloudy today with chances of drizzle and light rain across metropolis

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The recent massive rain spell has broken a 41-year-old record in the port city, bringing a sudden winter-like chill to the metropolis, with PMD reporting 38.7 millimetres of rain in just 24 hours. The figure officially broke the previous April record of 37mm, which was set back on April 2, 1985. The record-breaking rain has caused temperatures to plunge across Karachi. Last night, the minimum temperature was recorded at 16°C, which is 5.8°C lower than the usual average for this time of year. Normally, Karachi sees an average temperature of 21.8°C in April, but this recent spell has left the city feeling much colder than normal. The Met Office said in its latest weather forecast that the current westerly wave is now moving toward the southeast, but its effects will remain in other parts of the country until April 4. For today, Karachi is expected to have partly cloudy skies with only light rain or drizzle. Forecasters confirmed that no more heavy rain is expected in city today.

Over 20 Iranian healthcare facilities hit since March 1

WEB DESK

The WHO chief has warned of escalating attacks on Iran's health system, verifying that 20 healthcare facilities hit since March 1, Al Jazeera reported. At least nine people have been killed, including a member of the Iranian Red Crescent Society. WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said strikes have damaged key sites, including the century-old Pasteur Institute in Tehran, leaving it unable to continue providing services. Psychiatric hospital and a facility producing medicines for cancer and multiple sclerosis were also affected.

Public transport made free in Islamabad for one month

This package comes as part of ongoing efforts to promote public transport usage, reduce traffic congestion, and offer direct relief to the masses

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In a significant relief measure for citizens amid rising living costs, the federal government has announced that public transport in Islamabad will be completely free for one month. Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi stated that the government will bear all expenses for the initiative. He described

the step as being in line with the directives of the Prime Minister to ease the burden on the common man.

The decision aims to provide immediate financial relief to daily commuters, students, and working-class families who rely on buses and other public transport services in the federal capital. Provincial Governments Follow Suit: The move has triggered similar relief announcements from provincial governments: Punjab Chief Minister

has announced free public transport in the province, aligning with the federal initiative to support commuters.

Sindh Chief Minister has announced a Rs 2,000 subsidy for all bike holders (motorcycle owners) to help offset rising fuel costs and provide targeted relief to two-wheeler users. These coordinated steps across federal and provincial levels signal a broader government effort to support public mobility and reduce the

financial pressure on ordinary Pakistanis during challenging economic times.

The one-month free transport period in Islamabad is expected to begin soon, with authorities working on implementation details. Officials have urged citizens to make full use of the facility responsibly. This package comes as part of ongoing efforts to promote public transport usage, reduce traffic congestion, and offer direct relief to the masses.

'Breathtaking': Artemis astronauts blast towards Moon

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Four Artemis astronauts were zooming towards the Moon on Friday after a major engine firing, a milestone that commits NASA to the first crewed lunar flyby in more than half a century. With enough thrust to accelerate a stationary car to highway driving speed in less than three seconds, the Orion capsule engine blasted the astronauts on their trajectory towards the Moon, which they will now loop as part of the 10-day Artemis 2 mission.

In the moments that followed what the US space agency dubbed a "flawless" firing that lasted just under six minutes, astronaut Jeremy Hansen said that "humanity has once again shown what we are capable of." The astronauts said they were "glued to the window" taking pictures, and later passed a floating microphone back and forth as they took questions from US television networks. They said the spacecraft was a little chilly and they were still making it a home, but the crew was all smiles.

NASA's Artemis II mission to fly by the moon, comprising of the SLS rocket with the Orion crew capsule, lifts off from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, US April 1, 2026. "There's nothing that prepares you for the breathtaking aspect of seeing your home planet both lit up bright as day, and also the Moon glow on it at night with the beautiful beam of the sunset," said Christina Koch. Friday's nudge came one day after the enormous orange-and-white SLS rocket carrying the Orion capsule launched from Kennedy Space Center in Florida for the long-anticipated journey around the Moon.

Pentagon shake-up US defence secretary fires Army's chief

The tension with Hegseth was not rooted in substantive differences over the direction of the Army, the Times said, citing military officials. Rather it is the product of Hegseth's long-running grievances with the Army, battles over personnel and his troubled relationship with Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll

DNA

WASHINGTON: US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth fired General Randy George, the Army's chief of staff a move that reflects growing hostility between Hegseth and the Army's leadership, The New York Times reported. Hegseth has fired numerous senior military officers and generals, many of them female or Black, leading some critics to question whether their race or gender contributed to their firing. The Times reported in late March that he had blocked the promotion of two Black and two female Army officers to be one-star generals. Gen. George's removal comes as the U.S. military is engaged in a war with Iran and with a growing military presence, including elements of the Army, in the Middle East. He was appointed to his position in 2023. The tension with Hegseth was not rooted in substantive differences over the direction of the Army, the Times said, citing military officials. Rather it is the product of Hegseth's long-running grievances with the Army, battles over personnel and his troubled relationship with Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll, it said. Over the last year, General George and Driscoll had formed a tight partnership, officials said. Hegseth has also clashed in recent months with General George and Driscoll over the defence secretary's decision to block the promotion of four Army officers to be one-star generals.

General George is expected to be replaced by General Christopher LaNeve, who previously served as Hegseth's senior military assistant in the Pentagon. In addition to removing General George, Hegseth also fired General David Hodne, who was promoted in October to lead the Army's Transformation and Training Command, a key four-star position focused on Army modernization and doctrine. Hegseth also fired Maj. Gen. William Green, the Army's top chaplain, an official told the Times.

Senior Army officials described General George's dismissal as a blow to a service that has seen many of its top three- and four-star officers with deep experience fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan fired or sidelined in recent months, according to The New York Times. In October, Gen. James Mingo, the Army's vice chief of staff, was forced to step down from his position a year earlier than expected. His retirement was hastily announced with little input from senior Army leaders. Senior Army officers reacted with anger and frustration to the news of General George's dismissal, characterizing it as the latest blow to a service that already feels under siege by Hegseth, the newspaper said.

General George served multiple tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan, where he earned a reputation as an innovative combat leader, the Times said. In Afghanistan he pulled troops from remote valleys, where they were engaged in pointless battles, and refocused them on protecting population centers, it was pointed out.

Former Iranian FM urges Tehran to declare victory

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: Former Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif has urged Tehran to declare victory and strike a deal to end the war with the United States and Israel, Al Jazeera reported.

In an article published in the US-based Foreign Affairs, Zarif said Iran should seek an agreement that would both end the current conflict and help prevent another. The former diplomat, who led Iran's negotiations with the United States and other powers over its nuclear programme for several years, outlined what he described as a blueprint for ending the war on terms favourable to Tehran. Among the proposals, Zarif said Iran should offer limits on its nuclear programme and reopen the Strait of Hormuz in return for an end to all sanctions.

He also said Tehran should be prepared to accept a mutual non-aggression pact with Washington, under which both sides would pledge not to attack each other in future. Zarif further suggested economic engagement with the United States, saying such an arrangement could benefit both the Iranian and American people.

He argued that such outcomes would allow Iranian officials to focus less on defending the country from foreign adversaries and more on improving life at home, securing what he called the brighter future Iranians deserve.



US crude jumps more than 11%, Brent nearly 8%

HOUSTON: US oil prices settled more than 11% higher, and Brent soared nearly 8% on Thursday in volatile trading, as traders worried about prolonged disruptions to oil supply the day after President Donald Trump said the United States would continue attacks on Iran. Brent crude futures LCOc1 closed \$7.87, or 7.78%, higher at \$109.03 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate crude CLc1 futures rose \$11.42, or 11.41%, at \$111.54 per barrel, settling at their biggest absolute price rise since 2020. Both benchmarks remained below highs near \$120 a barrel touched earlier in the conflict. Trump said military operations would be

intensified, but did not specify a timeline for ending hostilities. He gave no details on any steps that could lead to a reopening of the Strait of Hormuz "We're going to hit them extremely hard over the next two to three weeks," Trump said. "We're going to bring them back to the Stone Ages, where they belong." Iran is drafting a protocol with Oman to monitor traffic in the strait, an Iranian foreign ministry official said, after a Bloomberg report. Iran has effectively shut down the narrow waterway through which a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas is shipped, in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes that began on February 28.



DUSHANBE: Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Idibek Kalandar, received copies of the Letters of Credence of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Irfan Ahmed. - DNA

Pakistan tells IMF it is ready to raise interest rates

Govt and SBP assured the IMF that tight monetary policy will be maintained

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has given the International Monetary Fund (IMF) written assurances that it will maintain a tight monetary stance, including raising interest rates if needed, to counter mounting inflationary pressures arising from the Gulf war. Islamabad has also assured the lender that it will draw up an action plan to address the rising cost of channelling remittances through banks and exchange companies, while keeping spending within the allocated budget and avoiding overruns.

Amid escalating regional tensions, the government and the State Bank of Pakistan told the IMF they would keep monetary policy tight in the coming months. "We stand ready to hike interest rates if the need arises," the government said. It was communicated to the Washington-based lender that flood-related risks had dissipated, which paved the way for lowering policy rates by 50 basis points in December 2025, but the SBP's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the policy rate unchanged in its March 9, 2026, decision in the aftermath of the eruption of regional conflict. "The Pakistani side is reviewing volatility in global food and fuel prices and the pass-through to domestic prices and core inflation and stands ready to adjust policy as the need arises," said official sources. The government and the SBP will continue efforts to improve the policy framework and strengthen communication,

including by providing greater detail on the MPC's monetary policy considerations in the monetary policy report. "By end-June 2026, Pakistan will further assess how MPC statements and minutes could more clearly (i) convey the committee's assessment of the current and desired policy stance, and (ii) characterise the monetary policy reaction function in light of the committee's risk assessment," said an official. On exchange rate flexibility, Islamabad clearly communicated to the IMF that it will continue with the policy of exchange rate flexibility as the key shock absorber, including against spillovers from the Middle East conflict, and will continue to ensure that balance of payment (BOP) pressures do not impact the Central Bank's ability to accommodate import financing and other outward payments on a timely basis.

To this end, a well-functioning interbank market is also critical to rebuilding foreign exchange reserves. "Pakistan will improve communication and transparency by publishing semi-annual reserve targets, and FX interventions will continue to be instrumental in helping market participants gauge overall FX demand," said the official.

As a first step, it has been decided to remove onerous regulations that unduly burden banks and their clients, including certain documentary requirements. This sets us on a broader path from ex-ante verification to risk-based ex-post supervision of FX transactions.

"The SBP is also developing a roadmap for the gradual removal of FX restrictions, spelling out the appropriate sequencing, including the macroeconomic, financial stability, and other structural preconditions needed for each liberalisation step under a new structural benchmark for end-March 2027," the official added. - APP



General Practice HOSPITAL

Your Health. Our Priority - Every Step of the Way!








General Practice Hospital (GPH) is a state-of-the-art healthcare facility in the heart of Islamabad, offering international-standard medical care for individuals and families. From urgent care and specialized consultations to advanced diagnostics, surgery, and executive health packages – all services are available under one roof. Our concierge consultations, personalized care plans, and comprehensive health programs ensure a smooth and stress-free experience.

We understand that seeking medical care can be overwhelming, but you are never alone. With empathy at the heart of everything we do, we listen, guide, and support you every step of the way. In our clean, premium environment, you'll feel safe, valued, and cared for. Book your appointment today and experience healthcare with compassion.

Our Departments

Our Services



Empathic & Caring for everyone

FOR APPOINTMENT: +92 33 22 474 474

or Visit: Pakland Tower 2, New Blue Area, Islamabad

www.generalpractice.com.pk | generalpractice@islamabad | +92 51 6180 474 | +92 51 6181 474