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UN chief lauds Pakistan efforts for US-Iran truce

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After truce

PM Shehbaz invites Iran, US delegations

"I warmly welcome the sagacious gesture and extend deepest gratitude to the leadership of both the countries and invite their delegations to Islamabad on Friday, 10th April 2026, to further negotiate for a conclusive agreement to settle all disputes"

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: As the US and Iran agreed to an immediate ceasefire everywhere on Pakistan's request, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday invited the delegations of both the countries to Islamabad on April 10 to further negotiate a "conclusive agreement" to settle all disputes. In a post on X, Prime Minister Shehbaz announced that both the US and Iran had agreed to immediate ceasefire everywhere including Lebanon and elsewhere.

"With the greatest humility, I am pleased to announce that the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America, along with their allies, have agreed to an immediate ceasefire everywhere including Lebanon and elsewhere, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY," the prime minister wrote.

"I warmly welcome the sagacious gesture and extend deepest gratitude to the leadership of both the countries and invite their delegations to Islamabad on Friday, 10th April 2026, to further negotiate for a conclusive agreement to settle all disputes," he added. The prime minister said that both parties had displayed remarkable wisdom and understanding and have remained constructively engaged in furthering

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Shehbaz, Pezeshkian hold phone talk

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a telephone conversation with Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this afternoon. During their warm and cordial conversation that lasted for over forty-five minutes, the Prime Minister conveyed his deep appreciation for the wisdom and sagacity of the Iranian leadership in agreeing to the ceasefire and for accepting the Prime Minister's offer to host negotiations between Iran and the U.S. in Islamabad later this week. He also conveyed his respects to His Eminence Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei. President Pezeshkian thanked the Prime Minister and appreciated the efforts of the Pakistani leadership to bring about a temporary ceasefire between

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Cabinet members greet Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif when he arrives to chair the meeting. The members lauded PM efforts for securing a ceasefire. - DNA

Trump says US will 'dig up' uranium buried in Iran

DNA

TEHRAN: President Donald Trump said Wednesday that the US will work with Iran to "dig up and remove" its enriched uranium that was buried under joint U.S-Israeli strikes last summer.

The president said on social media that "There will be no enrichment of Uranium" and that none of the material had been touched since the June attacks. Trump had previously said the US would retrieve the deeply buried material, which is expected to be an intensive undertaking, if it struck an agreement with Iran. Trump added: "We are, and will be, talking Tariff and Sanctions relief with Iran." Trump's remarks came hours after the US,

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Chinese FM to visit North Korea

DNA

BEIJING: China's top diplomat Wang Yi will travel to North Korea on Thursday, Beijing's foreign ministry said, aiming to deepen relations between the neighbors. "China is willing to work with North Korea to strengthen strategic communication, enhance exchanges and cooperation, and continuously advance the traditional friendly and cooperative relations between China and North Korea," spokeswoman Mao Ning told a news briefing.

BREAKTHROUGH
Pakistan, Afghanistan agree to explore comprehensive solution in peace talks: China

The development marks a significant step in efforts to de-escalate tensions that have claimed hundreds of lives since fighting broke out in October 2025. The conflict, which intensified with cross-border strikes, has strained relations between Islamabad and Kabul

DNA

BEIJING: China's Foreign Ministry announced on Wednesday that Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to pursue a comprehensive solution to resolve the conflict that erupted between the two neighbours last October. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a regular press briefing that the two sides reached the understanding during recent peace talks hosted by China in the western city of Urumqi. "Both countries agreed at the meetings in China not to take any actions that would escalate or complicate the situation," Mao Ning said. She added that China would continue to maintain

close communication with both nations and provide a platform for further dialogue.

The development marks a significant step in efforts to de-escalate tensions that have claimed hundreds of lives since fighting broke out in October 2025. The conflict, which intensified with cross-border strikes, has strained relations between Islamabad and Kabul and raised concerns in Beijing over stability near its western borders, particularly in Xinjiang. China, which shares borders with both countries and maintains strong strategic ties with Pakistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has actively mediated to

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Briefs

Palestine welcomes ceasefire

DNA

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian Presidency welcomed on Wednesday the ceasefire agreement reached this morning

between the United States and Iran, considering it a positive and important step towards achieving stability. The Presidency commended the efforts exerted by Pakistan and all parties calling for a ceasefire, stressing the importance of continuing efforts to achieve a permanent end to the state of war in the region. President Mahmoud Abbas called for this ceasefire to include the Palestinian territories, which, whether in Gaza, the West Bank, or East Jerusalem, are subjected to ongoing attacks by colonists and occupation forces, as well as to include a cessation of hostilities against Lebanon. President Abbas added that this is an important step in strengthening the sovereignty, security, and stability of all countries in the region.

Qatar commends Pak role

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday spoke with Minister of State of Qatar, Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaf. On the latest regional developments, the deputy prime minister shared Pakistan's sustained efforts to promote dialogue and diplomacy for peace and stability in the region, according to a press release issued by the foreign office spokesperson. Minister of State Qatar appreciated DPM/FM's efforts and commended Pakistan's constructive role in fostering peace. He also conveyed best wishes of PM/FM of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani to DPM/FM. - APP

Middle East crisis

US lawmakers divided over Trump ceasefire plan

Trump's earlier threat to wipe out Iranian civilization prompted some critics to call on his cabinet to invoke the 25th amendment, which provides for a transfer of power if a president is unable to govern,

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's ceasefire announcement has divided opinion among US lawmakers, with some hailing it as a positive step and others challenging the Republican president's fitness to lead. Trump's earlier threat to wipe out Iranian civilization prompted some critics to call on his cabinet to invoke the 25th amendment, which provides for a transfer of power if a president is unable to govern, particularly in the event of illness. Here are some reactions: - Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez - Democratic congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said Trump's ceasefire announcement "changes nothing." "The President has threatened a genocide against the Iranian people, and is continuing to leverage that threat," she wrote on X.

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Iran truce does not include Lebanon: Israel

NEWS DESK

BEIRUT: Israel renewed its strikes on southern Lebanon on Wednesday, state media reported, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted the Iran war truce does not include Lebanon. The Israeli army also issued an evacuation warning for a building near the southern city of Tyre. Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, which drew Lebanon into the Middle East war by attacking Israel on March 2, has not claimed any operations since 1am.

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After much ado, a fragile peace emerges

ANALYSIS

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



AFTER weeks of heightened tensions, devastating strikes, and a dangerously escalating confrontation, a fragile pause has finally been achieved in the conflict involving United States, Israel, and Iran. The two-week ceasefire, brokered after intense and last-ditch diplomatic efforts reportedly facilitated in part by Pakistan offers a much-needed breather not only for the warring parties but also for an increasingly anxious region and world. While the cessation of hostilities is being welcomed as a positive development, it is, at best, a temporary relief. The real test lies ahead. The coming days will determine whether this pause can evolve into a meaningful and lasting peace or merely serve as a brief interlude before another round of confrontation. Despite the hardened rhetoric and military posturing, it became increasingly evident that all sides had begun to feel the strain of prolonged conflict. Iran, under immense military and economic pressure, appeared eager for a pause to regroup, reassess, and rebuild its capabilities. The United States and Israel, too, were facing mounting challenges both on the battlefield and at home. For Washington, the conflict posed an unprecedented test of its global standing. Traditionally backed by a robust coalition of allies, the United States found itself unusually isolated. Key part-

ners, including NATO, the European Union, and long-standing allies such as Japan and United Kingdom, stopped short of offering unequivocal support. This lack of consensus raised serious questions about the sustainability of unilateral or narrowly supported military interventions in an increasingly multipolar world. Domestically, pressure also mounted on Donald Trump, as segments of the American public grew weary of another prolonged conflict in the Middle East. War fatigue, economic concerns, and political divisions contributed to a growing demand for de-escalation. Israel, on its part, also suffered significant damage both materially and strategically. While maintaining its defensive posture, the cost of sustained confrontation began to weigh heavily, making a temporary pause a pragmatic choice. Amid this complex geopolitical landscape, Pakistan's role as a facilitator of the ceasefire has drawn considerable attention. While the exact nature and extent of its involvement remain subject to interpretation, there is little doubt that Islamabad played a constructive part in bridging communication gaps and encouraging restraint. Whether this development was part of a broader, pre-conceived diplomatic script or an opportunistic intervention, Pakistan has every reason to view the outcome as a diplomatic success. In a region often marked by volatility, the ability to act as a mediator enhances Pakistan's international standing and underscores its relevance in global affairs. The real challenge for Pakistan lies in sustaining this momentum. Facilitating a temporary ceasefire is one thing; shepherding adversaries toward a comprehensive and lasting settlement is quite another. Interestingly, the ceasefire appears to have been shaped significantly by military establishments

on all sides, with political leadership stepping in to formalize the decision. This underscores a recurring pattern in high-intensity conflicts, where ground realities often dictate political outcomes. The militaries involved likely recognized the diminishing returns of continued confrontation. Escalation, beyond a certain point, risks uncontrollable consequences not only for the immediate participants but for the broader region. The decision to pause, therefore, reflects a pragmatic acknowledgment of these limits. One of the most important takeaways from this conflict is the realization that modern warfare is rarely contained. Even when battles are fought between specific states, their repercussions spill across borders, affecting economies, security dynamics, and political alignments far beyond the conflict zone. Regional countries have witnessed firsthand how quickly tensions can escalate and how difficult it becomes to contain the fallout. This should serve as a wake-up call. Strategic realignments may become inevitable as nations reassess their alliances and policies in light of recent events. The old adage holds true: neighbors cannot be changed. The only viable path forward lies in learning to coexist peacefully, managing differences through dialogue rather than confrontation. Another striking aspect of this conflict has been the challenge it posed to the notion of unassailable superpower dominance. The United States, long regarded as the preeminent global power, found its influence constrained not necessarily by military weakness, but by the absence of moral consensus and international support. This episode highlights a critical reality of contemporary geopolitics: power, in isolation, is no longer sufficient. Legitimacy, credibility, and the ability to build coalitions are

equally important. Actions perceived as lacking moral grounding are unlikely to garner sustained backing, even from traditional allies. For Washington, this may serve as an inflection point an opportunity to recalibrate its foreign policy approach in a world that is increasingly skeptical of unilateralism. For Pakistan, the ceasefire presents a unique opportunity but also a significant responsibility. Having positioned itself as a mediator, Islamabad must now navigate a delicate path. The unpredictability of leaders like Donald Trump adds another layer of complexity, requiring careful and measured diplomacy. Maintaining neutrality, ensuring credibility, and fostering trust among all parties will be essential if Pakistan hopes to play a meaningful role in the forthcoming negotiations. While Pakistan's diplomatic gains on the international stage are noteworthy, they must be complemented by stability at home. A country seeking to promote peace externally cannot afford internal discord. Political polarization, legal battles, and governance challenges continue to undermine Pakistan's domestic cohesion. Addressing these issues is not merely a matter of internal governance it is a strategic necessity. Engaging constructively with opposition forces, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, could pave the way for a more stable political environment. The idea of a national government, as proposed by opposition leaders, may warrant serious consideration as a means of fostering unity and consensus. Reconciliation, rather than confrontation, should guide domestic politics. Legal processes must be transparent and fair, free from perceptions of political victimization. Only then can Pakistan project itself as a credible advocate for peace on the global stage.

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Rescue 1122 equipment upgrade in final stages: Salman

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Health and Emergency Services Khawaja Salman Rafique has stated that the government is actively working to enhance the province's capacity to deal with floods, with mock exercises for flood preparedness already underway across Punjab. He added that the procurement of modern communication equipment, landing craft for evacuation, jets, boat carriers, and other flood response tools for Rescue 1122 is in its final stages.

The minister shared these remarks during a special visit to the Rescue Headquarters on Wednesday, where he reviewed flood preparedness measures, ongoing development projects, and the recent flash flood rescue operation in Mianwali.

During the briefing, Provincial Secretary of the Emergency Services Department Dr. Rizwan Naseer informed that under the progress of ADP 25 and 26, Rescue 1122 teams in Mianwali successfully rescued 300 people and 47 animals during the flash flood in the Kurram River. Khawaja Salman Rafique emphasized that advance preparations by the Punjab government will ensure quicker response and more effective rescue operations. He appreciated the timely efforts of rescuers in Mianwali, who safely shifted both people and animals to secure locations.

The minister directed authorities to accelerate the procurement of modern equipment and ensure daily follow-up on progress. He further highlighted that, in line with the vision of the Chief Minister of Punjab, efforts are underway to further strengthen the capabilities of Rescue 1122.

Dr. Rizwan Naseer also noted that response times are being improved for public convenience, adding that Rescue 1122 teams handle thousands of emergencies daily across the province and remain fully prepared to serve the public at all times.—APP

Zero-tolerance policy enforced during matric exams

RAWALPINDI: The Matriculation First Annual Examination 2026 is being conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner in Rawalpindi under a strict zero-tolerance policy against malpractice.

According to the Rawalpindi Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (RBISE) spokesman, the arrangements are being implemented in line with the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, and directives of Chief Secretary Zahid Zaman and Provincial Minister for Education Rana Sikandar Hayat Commissioner Rawalpindi and Chairman Board of RBISE, Engineer Aamir Khattak, said no compromise would be made on examination standard operating procedures (SOPs), warning that strict disciplinary action would be taken against violators. He added that examination centres were being continuously monitored online through a central command and control room. Meanwhile, Controller of Examinations Tanveer Asghar Awan said three candidates were caught copying during a visit to Government High School Ghora Gali, Murree. —APP

ECC okays key TSGs, endorses Betel Nut import reforms

The Committee further approved a Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs. 306 million in favour of the Airports Security Force (ASF) under the Defence Division to meet essential obligations, including payments under the Prime Minister's Assistance Package, encashment of Leave Preparation Reserve (LPR), and Travelling and Daily Allowances



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet met today at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb. The ECC approved a summary submitted by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination for a Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) amounting to Rs. 2.8 billion in favour of the Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI). The Committee was informed that the FDI remains a key national programme aimed at immunizing over eight million children against vaccine-preventable diseases, and the grant will support continued pooled procurement of vaccines, syringes, and Cold Chain Equipment Optimization Platform (CCEOP) in coordination

with the provinces. The ECC also approved a summary submitted by the Commerce Division regarding amendments to the Import Policy Order (IPO), 2022 for the import of Areca nut (betel nut), a widely consumed commodity with significant commercial importance in the domestic market. The revised framework, including pre-shipment inspection and enhanced regulatory oversight, has been introduced, under approval by the Prime Minister, to ensure compliance with phytosanitary and food safety standards, minimize disputes, and facilitate trade in line with international best practices. The Committee further approved a Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs. 306 million in favour of the Airports Security Force (ASF) under the Defence Division to meet essential obligations, including payments under the Prime Minister's Assistance Package, encashment of Leave Preparation Reserve (LPR), and Travelling and Daily Allowances. The ECC also approved a summary submitted by the

Federal Education and Professional Training Division for allocation of Rs. 2 billion through a Technical Supplementary Grant. The Committee noted that the funds have been generated through adjustment within the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and will be utilized for priority initiatives, including establishment of Daanish School, Kuri, Islamabad, and the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme under NAVTTC to enhance youth employability. The ECC emphasized the need for robust monitoring and tracking of fund utilization, with clear performance benchmarks and reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency, efficiency, and alignment with intended outcomes. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Federal Minister for Petroleum Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, along with federal secretaries and senior officials from the relevant ministries, divisions and regulatory authorities.

Efforts afoot to provide relief to public: CM

LARKANA: The Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, stated that Pakistan's political leadership played an important and historic role in the conflict involving Iran, the United States, and Israel. Due to Pakistan's timely intervention, effective diplomacy, and strategic planning, millions of lives were saved, and the region was protected from destruction. He expressed these views while speaking to the media in Jacobabad here on Wednesday. He said that regarding Iran, he had previously mentioned that Pakistan's leadership may have studied and followed the foreign policy of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Pakistan did not join any bloc but remained neutral and conveyed a message of peace and brotherhood to the world. Pakistan's foreign policy has astonished the world. He further said that Pakistan played a key role in the entire sit-

uation by securing concessions from Iran for the passage of oil tankers despite the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and also stood firmly with Saudi Arabia during difficult times. When Saudi Arabia faced an unjustified attack, Pakistan condemned it. He added that globally, whether it was the United States, Israel, Arab countries, or Iran, all agreed to a two-week ceasefire based on Pakistan's proposals. We should be thankful to Almighty Allah for preserving the dignity of the people of Pakistan. Syed Murad Ali Shah said that a policy is being implemented to support motorcycle owners, under which every registered motorcycle owner will receive fuel worth 2,000 rupees. Motorcycle registration offices have been kept open until 10 PM. The Sindh government stands with the federal government in challenging times. In response to a question, he

said that the issue of jobs from grades 1 to 4 had been taken to court by opposition parties, causing some delay. However, the Sindh government has won the case, and appointment orders will soon be issued in districts where the process has been completed, including Jacobabad. He stated that criticism is the job of the opposition, while the people of Sindh are satisfied with the performance of the Pakistan Peoples Party, which is why it has been winning elections continuously since 2008. Earlier, the Chief Minister, along with several leaders including Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah and others, visited Jacobabad to offer condolences to senior politician and PPP leader MNA Aijaz Khan Jakhri on the death of his father Ahmed Khan, also known as Mir Babul Khan Jakhri.—DNA

SMEDA leads consultations to boost SME financing

LAHORE: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), on advice of Prime Minister's Special Assistant (SAPM) Haroon Akhtar Khan, convened a series of five high level meetings with regional stakeholders including banks and industries departments of Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, AJK and Gilgit Baltistan for equitable promotion of the SME financing across Pakistan. SMEDA Chief Executive Officer Nadia Jahangir Seth convened the meetings here Wednesday in collaboration with State Bank of Pakistan, which were attended by the representatives of Sindh Bank, Bank of Khyber, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Pakistan Banks Association (PBA) and the provincial industries Departments. She informed on this occasion that Ministry of Industries and Production, in line with SME development vision of the Prime Minister, was working hard to promote the SME financing in all regions of the country so that the SMEs can grow and contribute larger share in the national economy by expanding their trade both in the local and international markets. SMEDA CEO urged the participants to transform the PM vision into reality by enhancing the volume of SME financing as well as increasing the number of beneficiaries from SME sector in the respective regions. In this regard, the SAPM has directed to replicate the SME financing scheme developed by the Bank of Punjab, which has proved quite a success as more than 110,000 people had benefited and almost 50 percent of borrowers were from low-income groups. The CEO said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, during steering committee meetings, had also emphasized the need to expand credit access to SMEs across Pakistan. She also highlighted SMEDA's role in promoting access to finance as a pillar of its Business Plan and expressed resolve to expedite efforts to improve the SME financing ecosystem across Pakistan. As for on-ground support, Ms. Seth said, SMEDA could help SMEs overcome demand-side challenges such as financial literacy and training and share studies on potential clusters. She said banks and financial institutions had a greater role to play and the respective provincial governments should take ownership and lead from the front. An official of the State Bank of Pakistan gave presentations on SME financing situation in all the provinces, which disclosed that the SME financing currently stands at Rs30.48 billion with over 9,500 borrowers in KP, Rs7.19 billion with 2,412 borrowers in Balochistan, Rs3.96 billion with 1,960 borrowers in Gilgit-Baltistan and Rs5.48 billion in AJK. The participants also reviewed SME financing trends in Sindh, noting growth in outstanding loans and borrower base. They highlighted the success of the Sindh Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF), which has supported over 250 projects and 10,000 microloans with zero non-performing loans over the past 15 years. Sindh Bank shared its focus on SME financing since 2024, reporting significant portfolio growth.—DNA

PEC team visits NTUF, accreditation process completed

FAISALABAD: An evaluation team of the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) visited the National Textile University Faisalabad (NTUF) and successfully completed the accreditation process for the BS Textile Engineering and BS Polymer Engineering programs (Batch 2022 onwards). According to a university spokesperson, the PEC accreditation team led by Professor Dr Muhammad Aamer (SSUET, Karachi) included Engineer Moazzam Khalil (PEC Headquarters, Islamabad), Professor Dr Owais Khutri (MUET, Jamshoro)

and Engineer Dr. Aamer Abbas (UCT BZU, Multan) as textile engineering experts. Meanwhile, Dr Muhammad Zaman (PIAS, Islamabad) and Professor Dr. Javed Iqbal (KFUEIT, Rahim Yar Khan) served as polymer engineering experts. During visit, the PEC team conducted a detailed review of the academic processes, curriculum, laboratories, faculty profiles, and infrastructure in accordance with the prescribed accreditation standards. According to sources, the purpose of the visit is to implement PEC standards in universities, align them with

global quality benchmarks, and provide skilled engineers to the nation. This will increase the demand for Pakistani engineers worldwide and enable them to earn foreign exchange for the country. On this occasion, NTUF Rector/Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Rashid Masood; Dean of the School of Engineering and Technology, Professor Dr. Zulfikar Ali; Chairperson of Textile Engineering, Professor Dr. Hafsa Jamshaid; and Chairman of Polymer Engineering, Dr. Usman Zahir, warmly welcomed the team.—APP

Uniformed uplift cornerstone of KP policy: CM

While addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister said that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that the benefits of development reach every part of the province, and that the upcoming development program will prove to be a significant milestone in the province's economic and social progress.

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi here Wednesday said that uniformed development of all districts of the province was the top priority of the Provincial Government. He was addressing a meeting of the Planning and Development Department held under his chairmanship. According to the spokesperson of the Chief Minister House Peshawar, the meeting reviewed new projects for the Annual Development Program 2026-27 in the sectors of social welfare, sports, tourism, relief, and transport. The Chief Minister directed that the availability of rescue stations be ensured in all tehsils. He also instructed that the province's socio-economic registry be completed by December. Similarly, directions were given to assess the potential for promoting the electric bikes and

scooters industry, as well as heli-tourism. The meeting proposed establishing new Zamung Kor centers, schools for deaf and mute children, and upgrading existing schools. Proposals were also made for upgrading Darul-Amans (shelter homes), establishing new ones, and setting up workshops for bionic artificial limbs. The meeting also considered educational stipends and scholarships for special children, as well as the establishment of new educational complexes. Proposals included building tehsil-level grounds in Hazara and Malakand, sports complexes in Battagram and Upper Dir, indoor game facilities for women, and youth centers. Plans were proposed for discovering new tourist destinations, restoring archaeological sites, rehabilitating historical railway stations, and promoting adventure tourism. A plan to provide electric

scooters to working women and female students was also discussed. Proposals were made for a rail service from Kohat to Kharlachi, a suburban train system, double-decker electric buses for tourism, and the purchase of new electric buses for the BRT system. The meeting also proposed extending the BRT Peshawar network to Charsadda, Nowshera, and Khyber. Additionally, plans were suggested for establishing new rescue stations and extending emergency rescue services in mining districts to include mine rescue operations. While addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister said that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that the benefits of development reach every part of the province, and that the upcoming development program will prove to be a significant milestone in the province's economic and social progress.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

APRIL

- April 04/Senegal National Day
- April 07/W. H. O. World Health Day
- April 12/Somalia Armed Forces Day
- April 15/DPR Korea The Day of the Sun
- April 16/Denmark National Day
- April 17/Iran Army Day
- April 17/Syria Independence Day
- April 18/Zimbabwe Independence Day
- April 24/Holy See Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate
- April 25/DPR Korea Armed Forces Day
- April 26/Tanzania National Day
- April 27/Sierra Leone Independence Day
- April 27/South Africa Freedom Day
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- PIMS.....9261170-79
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Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Kazak envoy, Rector NUML discuss academic ties

The Rector conveyed his sincere appreciation to the Ambassador for his visit and for his forward-looking proposals aimed at strengthening academic and cultural ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan, visited the National University of Modern Languages for a courtesy call on the Rector. The meeting was attended by Director General NUML, Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan, First Secretary Mr. Manarbek Nurtazin from the Embassy of Kazakhstan, Dean Faculty of Languages Dr. Jameel Asghar, and Director NILO Dr. Huma Hayat. The Rector NUML extended a warm welcome to the distinguished guest and provided a comprehensive overview of the university, highlighting its academic excellence, strong emphasis on modern languages, and expanding scope in computing and emerging disciplines. H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin appreciated NUML's significant contributions to higher education and acknowledged its pivotal role in promoting linguistic and cultural understanding. During the meeting, the Ambassador proposed the establishment of a Centre for Turkic Civilization at NUML. The proposed Centre aims to serve as a hub for academic, cultural, and research collaboration among Turkic states, with potential activities including translation services, joint research initiatives, cultural programs, and academic exchanges. It was discussed that the Centre could be established under the patronage of Astana, with NUML serving as the executing and engagement platform. The Rector expressed keen interest in the initiative and requested the Embassy of Kazakhstan to formally facilitate the establishment process. Both sides agreed on the need to appoint a focal person to coordinate with relevant embassies and develop a comprehensive framework and roadmap for the Centre's operationalization. Furthermore, Mr. Kistafin informed about planned cultural activities and an education fair at Nazarbayev University



and extended an invitation to a NUML delegation to participate in these events. He noted that the establishment of the proposed Centre would open new avenues for collaboration with leading universities across Turkic states, including student and

faculty exchanges, as well as joint academic initiatives. The Rector conveyed his sincere appreciation to the Ambassador for his visit and for his forward-looking proposals aimed at strengthening academic and cultural ties.

and extended an invitation to a NUML delegation to participate in these events. He noted that the establishment of the proposed Centre would open new avenues for collaboration with leading universities across Turkic states, including student and

Shaza praises PM for role in ceasefire efforts

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for helping mediate a ceasefire, saying Pakistan's positive diplomacy has shown strong results at the global level. According to a statement by the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, she also thanked Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for his role in the process, adding that Pakistan's commitment to peace, dialogue and regional stability has once again been highlighted. She said Pakistan played an important role in helping bring about a ceasefire between Iran, the United States and their allies, and noted that this success reflects wisdom, patience and strong leadership. Shaza Fatima said Pakistan's constructive diplomacy has been recognised worldwide and suggested that the country deserves the Nobel Prize for its efforts to promote global peace and effective diplomacy. Calling the Islamabad talks an important step towards lasting peace, she said Pakistan has always played a positive role in encouraging meaningful dialogue in the region. She reaffirmed that Pakistan remains committed to promoting harmony, stability and cooperation, adding that peace and partnership will remain its top priorities.—APP

FGEHA to launch two new housing sectors soon

ISLAMABAD: To meet the growing housing needs in the federal capital, a decision has been made to establish two new residential sectors, F-12 and G-12. Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) is currently engaged in preparatory development work for both sectors, and their formal announcement is expected soon. FGEHA's official sources told that the layout plan for Sector F-12 has already been completed; however, approval of its PCI is still pending. Meanwhile, the PCI approval process for Sector G-12 is in its initial stages. Development work on both sectors will begin after the approval of PCI. Sources further stated that Sector F-12 may be launched separately, or both sectors could be introduced simultaneously; however, no final decision has yet been made.

Pak's key role in reducing regional tensions: Dr Tariq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said Pakistan has once again shown leadership at the global level as a country that supports peace, wisdom and responsibility. In a statement on X on Wednesday, he said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan played an active and strategic role in lowering tensions in the region. He said the continuous and coordinated diplomatic efforts of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar helped present Pakistan's position effectively at the international level. The minister said Pakistan has proven that it is not just watching events but is playing a leading role by protecting its national interests and promoting peace, dialogue and stability in the region. He added that Pakistan's efforts to help achieve a ceasefire between Iran and the United States show its commitment as a responsible country. "This leadership guides the nation in difficult times and works day and night for peace," he said. He also reaffirmed that Pakistan remains committed to unity, stability and lasting peace.—APP

RCCI lauds civil, military leadership for Iran-US ceasefire

The President of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Usman Shaukat, and Group Leader Sohail Altaf, in a joint statement, have welcomed the Iran-US ceasefire. They extended heartfelt congratulations on behalf of RCCI and the entire business community to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar for their decisive and visionary leadership in facilitating the historic two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran.

"We must first bow in gratitude to

Almighty Allah for granting us this historic success and for elevating Pakistan's stature across the world," they stated. They further said that at a time when regional tensions had escalated to dangerous levels and the situation was heading towards a major crisis, Pakistan's timely diplomatic efforts played a pivotal role in de-escalation. This achievement reflects Pakistan's emerging role as a responsible and influential country on the global stage. They expressed optimism about the success of the Islamabad agreement and the positive outcomes of

future negotiations for sustainable peace in the region. RCCI has also urged the government to review the temporary measures imposed due to the war-like situation and its economic impact. These include reduced business hours, work-from-home policies, speed restrictions, and increases in petroleum and LPG prices. The business community hopes that the Prime Minister and his economic team will reassess these measures and announce effective steps to promote business activity and support economic recovery.—DNA

Tarar calls ceasefire role historic moment for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday described the day as one of the most important in Pakistan's history, following the country's diplomatic role in helping broker a ceasefire between Iran and the United States. Speaking in the National Assembly, he said the nation is thankful to Almighty Allah for giving Pakistan, its leadership and its people this honour. He expressed hope that Pakistan will continue to succeed in promoting peace and that its flag will remain high in a peaceful world. Tarar said the situation had been very serious

a day earlier as tensions between the two countries increased, but improved due to Pakistan's active diplomacy. He credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their continuous efforts, which led to the ceasefire and brought global attention to Pakistan's role. He congratulated the nation, President Asif Ali Zardari, and PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif for their leadership and support in ensuring a focused diplomatic approach. The minister also appreciated the unity shown by all political parties,

including the opposition, saying the whole nation spoke with one voice for peace. He stressed that peace is the only way forward for the region and the world, especially at a time of rising tensions. The Minister said the Prime Minister will also brief the National Assembly on the matter. Calling for unity, he urged political parties to set aside differences and send a clear message that Pakistan stands for peace and stability. He also asked opposition parties to reconsider protest plans, stressing the need for national unity as the world watches closely.—APP

APHC lauds Pak's role in averting US-Iran escalation

APHC also urged the international community to recognise and support Pakistan's efforts, advocating for diplomacy and dialogue over conflict to build a more peaceful and equitable world order

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter, in a high level meeting held on Wednesday under the leadership of its convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, said Pakistan played a "timely, balanced and effective" mediatory role in defusing tensions between the United States and Iran, helping avert a potential war at a critical juncture. According to the press release, Hurriyat leaders observed that at a moment when global conditions were rapidly sliding towards confrontation and uncertainty, Pakistan demonstrated responsible diplomacy, far sighted leadership and an unwavering commitment to peace. They said Islamabad's efforts not only prevented a potentially devastating conflict but also contributed significantly to regional stability and global security. The meeting emphasised that the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir proved instrumental

in bringing both sides to the negotiating table through sustained diplomatic engagement and quiet backchannel efforts. This intervention, they noted, substantially reduced the risk of a large-scale military confrontation, reinforcing Pakistan's image as a responsible and peace-promoting state. The statement further highlighted that Pakistan has consistently prioritised dialogue, diplomacy and adherence to international law in resolving global disputes. The recent development, it said, stands as a practical manifestation of the country's growing role as a credible and proactive actor in international peacebuilding. Hurriyat leaders also pointed out that the mediation not only helped avert a humanitarian crisis but also prevented potential shocks to the global economy, including disruptions in energy supplies and regional instability. Drawing a parallel, the APHC urged India to move towards a just, lasting and peaceful resolution of the

Kashmir dispute, stressing that durable peace in South Asia remains impossible without addressing the longstanding issue. They called for a solution in line with United Nations resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The leaders asserted that just as Pakistan has demonstrated constructive engagement at the global level, India should abandon what they termed coercive policies and instead adopt meaningful dialogue to resolve the dispute in accordance with principles of justice. Concluding the meeting, the Hurriyat leadership lauded the government, armed forces and diplomatic institutions of Pakistan as a "moment of national pride," expressing hope that the country would continue to play an active role in promoting global peace, stability and justice. APHC also urged the international community to recognise and support Pakistan's efforts, advocating for diplomacy and dialogue over conflict to build a more peaceful and equitable world order.—DNA

Bhandara welcomes US-Iran ceasefire

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly member Isphanyar Bhandara has welcomed the ceasefire between the United States, its allies, and Iran, calling it a positive result of timely diplomatic efforts. Geographic Reference In a statement, he said Pakistan played a constructive role in reducing tensions and promoting talks at a critical moment, which helped prevent the risk of a major conflict in the region. He praised the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), saying their coordinated efforts and effective communication with all sides encouraged restraint and dialogue. "Pakistan has once again shown its commitment to peace and stability through responsible diplomacy," he said. He added that Pakistan's role has emerged as that of a responsible, reliable, and peace-loving country. He especially noted that the leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir and his strategic engagement played a key role in building understanding between different parties. Bhandara expressed hope that this ceasefire will pave the way for lasting peace and meaningful talks.

World steps back from brink of catastrophe: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: Central leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Sherry Rehman, on Wednesday said the world had stepped back from the brink of a devastating conflict, describing the recent situation as one in which "humanity had come dangerously close to catastrophe." Speaking in the Senate on a motion to discuss the prevailing regional situation, she said the world had pulled back from the edge of a major crisis, warning that the consequences could have been far more severe for the entire region and beyond. She said global tensions had reached an alarming level, adding that the situation could have seriously impacted not only Muslim countries but the entire world. She acknowledged the efforts of Pakistan's leadership and its diplomatic engagement, saying the country had played a role in helping steer the situation towards de-escalation. She also expressed appreciation for international efforts, including those by Iran and the United States, in moving towards a ceasefire and dialogue. Sherry Rehman stressed the need for sustained diplomatic engagement to ensure lasting peace. She warned that any escalation could have led to unimaginable consequences, affecting economies, development, and basic human security across the region. She said the world must collectively act to preserve peace, adding that no country could afford another large-scale conflict. Sherry Rehman said Pakistan had emerged as a responsible state advocating dialogue and stability, and urged all nations to fulfil their responsibilities in maintaining the fragile peace. She emphasised that the coming days would be critical in determining whether the ceasefire could be transformed into a durable and sustainable peace.—APP

IRSA releases 93,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 93,000 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 146,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1460.74 feet which was 60.74 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 28,400 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1149.80 feet, which was 99.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.—APP

Briefs

CTO Virk
directs
smooth traffic
flow

ISLAMABAD: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk chaired an important meeting to review traffic management during ongoing construction work and rainy conditions in the federal capital. An ITP official told APP on Wednesday that SP Traffic, DSPs, and traffic staff, including moharrars attended the meeting. CTO Virk directed officers to ensure smooth traffic flow on roads undergoing construction work. Virk also ordered deployment of additional personnel on Park Road and other major arteries to manage traffic effectively. He emphasized that citizens should be provided maximum assistance during rain and directed officers to remain vigilant while performing their duties. The CTO further instructed officers to ensure the timely dissemination of information and facilitate commuters to minimize inconvenience. Islamabad Traffic Police reiterated its commitment to maintaining smooth traffic flow and providing maximum facilitation to road users across the federal capital.—APP

ITP issues
rain advisory

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Wednesday issued a traffic advisory as intermittent rain continued in the federal capital, urging citizens to follow safety measures while traveling. An ITP official told APP that motorists should use fog lights during rain and keep their speed low to avoid accidents on slippery roads. He said drivers and motorcyclists must strictly adhere to lane discipline while traveling. 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 during rainy conditions. He added that Islamabad Traffic Police officers were present on roads to facilitate and guide citizens. The official said citizens could contact the traffic helpline 1915 or dial 15 for assistance and guidance.—APP

Wah, Hubei
varsities
launch
joint lab

ISLAMABAD: The University of Wah on Tuesday announced the establishment of a China-Pakistan Joint Laboratory aimed at advancing research in new energy technologies, marking a significant step in bilateral academic collaboration. According to an official statement, the "Wuhan City (China-Pakistan) Joint Laboratory for Extreme-Environment New Energy Storage and Grid Connection Technology" was formally established on April 6, 2026, in collaboration with the School of New Energy and Electrical Engineering at Hubei University, Wuhan, China. According to Gwadar Pro, "This landmark initiative is a major step forward in strengthening academic and research ties between Pakistan and China," reads the statement and it adds that the initiative aims to foster innovation in advanced energy technologies while addressing pressing global energy challenges, particularly in extreme environmental conditions.—APP

PVARA holds first
authority meeting

In just under a year since its establishment, PVARA has issued No Objection Certificates to international virtual asset exchanges, established the regulatory sandbox framework, signed memoranda of understanding with international regulatory counterparts, and has made significant progress to advance the regulatory architecture

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) virtually convened its first formal Authority meeting under the Virtual Assets Act, 2026, marking a defining moment in Pakistan's journey toward becoming a credible, regulated virtual asset jurisdiction. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, while participating on special invitation, appreciated the efforts of Authority to attract the investors for hedging and diversified asset allocation. He termed the passage of the Virtual Assets Act "as an important milestone and emphasized the

need for fast tracking the licensing regime" The meeting was chaired by Bilal Bin Sagib, Chairperson PVARA, and was attended by the Deputy Governor State Bank of Pakistan, the Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, the Additional Secretary Finance, the Secretary Law and Justice, and the Chairman National AML-CFT Authority. The Authority confirmed its formal composition under the Virtual Assets Act, 2026 approved recruitment committees across all hiring tiers, and noted that advertisements for key positions have been published. The Authority also approved the issuance of a regulatory directive requiring prior NOC from PVARA for all virtual asset promotional and marketing

activities during the transition period, reviewed progress made since PVARA's establishment, and provided directions on institutional priorities under the new legislative framework. Speaking at the meeting Chairperson Bilal Bin Sagib said "The enactment of the Virtual Assets Act, 2026 gives PVARA a permanent statutory foundation. Today's meeting translates that legislative milestone into operational reality Pakistan is open for regulated, compliant virtual asset business, and we are moving forward with urgency and clarity." In just under a year since its establishment, PVARA has issued No Objection Certificates to international virtual asset exchanges, established the regulatory

sandbox framework, signed memoranda of understanding with international regulatory counterparts, and has made significant progress to advance the regulatory architecture. With the Virtual Assets Act now enacted, PVARA has launched its recruitment drive to build the permanent institutional capacity that will take Pakistan's virtual asset framework from foundation to full operation. With Pakistan ranked among the top three countries globally in crypto adoption, the Authority reaffirmed its commitment to building a regulatory framework that protects consumers, ensures financial integrity, and positions Pakistan as a destination for responsible virtual asset innovation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Attaulah Tarar called on Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan.

Chairman Senate
highlights Pakistan's
diplomatic role

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday said that Pakistan is in the limelight owing to its proactive and effective diplomacy in recent regional crises and the Iran-US standoff, which has further strengthened the country's standing at the international level. Addressing the National Tourism Dialogue held in connection with the Pakistan Travel Mart 2026, he said Pakistan has played a constructive and responsible role in global affairs, contributing to regional peace and stability through sustained diplomatic engagement. The Chairman Senate highlighted that tourism holds immense potential to drive Pakistan's economic growth, enhance its global image, and promote national cohesion. He also commended Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan for his dedicated efforts in organizing the dialogue and advancing the tourism agenda in the country. He remarked that the theme of PTM 2026, "Shaping the Future of Travel: Innovation, Sustainability, and Global Connectivity," reflects Pakistan's commitment to aligning with emerging global tourism trends. Praising the public-private partnership model of PTM, he described it as a successful example of collaboration between the government and the private sector, which is essential for fostering sustainable growth, innovation, and investment in the tourism industry. Highlighting Pakistan's vast tourism potential, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani stated that the country offers a unique blend of ancient civilizations, cultural diversity, and natural beauty. From the historic sites of Mohenjo-daro and Mehrgarh to the legacy of the Indus Valley Civilization and the rich heritage of Gandhara, Pakistan presents a remarkable civilizational journey. Additionally, its majestic mountain ranges, scenic valleys, and diverse landscapes have the capacity to attract tourists from across the globe. Referring to his personal connection with Multan, he shed light on the spiritual significance of the "City of Saints" and noted that Pakistan's Sufi traditions play a vital role in promoting peace, tolerance, and harmony. "Pakistan is not just a destination, but a meaningful and enriching experience," he remarked. The Chairman Senate underscored that tourism is a powerful engine of economic development, contributing to foreign exchange earnings, job creation, and infrastructure development. Recalling his tenure as Prime Minister, he said efforts were made to improve connectivity and promote Pakistan's tourism potential globally, adding that PTM represents a continuation of that vision. He further informed that PTM 2026 is showcasing a range of investment-ready tourism projects, including initiatives developed with the support of the Special Investment Facilitation Council, reflecting Pakistan's strong commitment to attracting both domestic and foreign investment in the tourism sector.—DNA

APPAC pays
tributes to
Pakistan
averting
imminent
conflict

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The American-Pakistani Public Affairs Committee (APPAC) extended its deepest congratulations to the governments of the United States and Pakistan for averting an imminent conflict in the region. The government of Pakistan, under the steadfast leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Asim Munir, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, demonstrated unparalleled resolve in securing a historic ceasefire. In a formal statement, APPAC, a prominent Pakistani American advocacy organization, applauded Pakistan's tireless dedication to peace. Dr. Ijaz Ahmed, Chairman of APPAC, and Asad Chaudhry, Board Member and Director of Media Relations, expressed hope that these landmark peace efforts would spark a new era of regional cooperation, uniting many Muslim-majority countries in a shared vision. We also extend our warmest congratulations to Iran for recognizing Pakistan's pivotal role and aligning with this expansive peace vision. As Pakistani Americans, we take immense pride in these achievements.—APP

Pak's
leadership
praised

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi Wednesday lauded the leadership of Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir for their commendable role in facilitating a ceasefire between Iran and United States. In a statement, the minister said Pakistan played a vital role in saving the region from potential devastation, adding that effective diplomacy during challenging circumstances paved the way for peace. He noted that Pakistan's leadership had set a global example by achieving what once seemed impossible, emphasizing that the country's efforts for peace deserved international recognition. Highlighting Pakistan's constructive engagement, the minister said the country's positive diplomacy had proven effective in promoting regional stability and harmony. Khichi described the negotiations held in Islamabad as a significant step toward lasting peace, stressing that dialogue and cooperation remain the only guarantee for a brighter future in the region. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment, he said the country remains determined to promote global peace, stability, and partnership through continued diplomatic efforts.—APP

Monitoring, Evaluation Staff
carry out field assessment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: For the first time, full-time field monitoring staff have been recruited through a specialized service provider and deployed in the Federal Directorate of Education on the directions of the Federal Secretary for Education to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of 432 public sector educational institutions across the capital. The Monitoring and Evaluation Assistants (MEAs) have been equipped with motorcycles and tablets loaded with standardized monitoring tools and applications. Following comprehensive in-house training,

they are now actively conducting field visits—capturing real-time data and generating evidence that drives timely diagnostics and corrective actions to enhance the quality of education. In a review meeting chaired by the Secretary, initial monitoring reports were thoroughly examined, and clear directions were issued for immediate remedial measures. Early insights are already paving the way for smarter decisions and faster improvements. The MEAs' work is proving instrumental in strengthening governance, enhancing transparency, and boosting institutional performance across public schools and colleges under FDE. This consistent and data-driven

monitoring approach is transforming how institutions function. By fostering accountability and enabling informed decision-making, this initiative is not just monitoring performance—it is reshaping the learning landscape. It promises significant improvements in learning outcomes, instructional quality, and assessment practices, while also uplifting the overall educational environment. Ultimately, this robust mechanism is a major step toward cultivating a culture of positive accountability and sustained institutional excellence, contributing meaningfully to the achievement of Quality Education (Goal 4) under the Sustainable Development Goals.

Chinese
embassy
awards
Ambassador
scholarship to
KIU students

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan has awarded a scholarship grant worth Rs. 4 million to students at Karakoram International University (KIU) under the Ambassador's Merit-cum-Need Scholarship Program, according to a statement. The university's Directorate of Public Relations said the funding will support talented and deserving

students in continuing their higher education. The scholarships will be distributed among students at the main campus as well as all sub-campuses, according to a Gwadar Pro's report. Prof. Dr. Attaulah Shah, Vice Chancellor of KIU, conveyed his sincere appreciation to the Chinese Ambassador and the embassy delegation, describing their support as a meaningful contribution toward strengthening opportunities for young people in Gilgit-Baltistan. "This scholarship initiative will play an important role in nurturing competent and well-educated graduates who can make valuable contributions to society," he stated. "It is a commendable effort that brings significant benefits to the students, the university and the entire region." The university's Financial Aid Office has announced applications are open for both undergraduate and graduate students. Applicants must meet eligibility requirements, including a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 for consideration under both merit and need-based criteria.

'Islamabad talks' set for Friday to
advance Iran-US ceasefire efforts

ISLAMABAD: High-stakes diplomatic talks between Iran and the United States are likely to take place in Islamabad on Friday April 10, in what is being widely viewed as a decisive opportunity to consolidate a fragile ceasefire and steer the region away from a broader conflict, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. The planned negotiations follow a Pakistan-facilitated two-week ceasefire, which has created a narrow but critical window for diplomacy. The Islamabad talks are expected to mark the first direct, in-person engagement between Tehran and Washington since the escalation of hostilities, significantly raising their diplomatic importance. Pakistan has emerged as a central mediator in the crisis, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extending formal invitations to both sides to convene in Islamabad. Leveraging its balanced relations with Iran, the United States, key Middle Eastern countries, and China, Islamabad has positioned itself as a credible and trust-

ed interlocutor at a time of heightened tensions. The urgency of the talks has been underscored by recent regional developments, including attacks on Saudi Arabia that have heightened fears of a wider, multi-country conflict. At one stage, analysts warned that the region was on the brink of a broader war with global implications. Experts believe China has played a complementary role in supporting the peace initiative, as Pakistan maintained close coordination with Beijing throughout the process. High-level engagements, including Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's recent visit to China, focused on aligning diplomatic strategies and assessing the evolving regional landscape. China's last-minute outreach to Tehran is believed to have helped create space for dialogue. At the multilateral level, diplomatic positioning at the United Nations has also contributed to shaping a conducive environment for talks. China and Russia's use of veto power on key

resolutions, along with Pakistan's calibrated decision to abstain, is believed to have helped build confidence with Iran and encourage its participation in the peace process. Beyond diplomacy, the economic stakes remain significant. The conflict has already disrupted global markets, particularly through rising oil prices. Energy-importing countries, including Pakistan, have been directly impacted, facing mounting inflationary pressures due to increased fuel costs. The Strait of Hormuz is expected to be a central focus of the negotiations, given its critical importance to global energy supplies. Any agreement on ensuring secure and uninterrupted maritime passage would have far-reaching economic implications. As part of ongoing confidence-building measures, there have already been indications of conditional access arrangements, including the safe passage of Pakistani vessels through the strategic waterway.—DNA

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A Wake-Up Call for the World: Lessons from the Iran War and the Urgent Need for Unity

PROF DR SHUJAU MULK KHAN

THE ongoing Iran war has become more than just a regional conflict; it is a defining moment for the world. Beyond the battlefield, it has exposed deep structural weaknesses within Islamic countries - political fragmentation, economic dependency, and strategic vulnerability. If there is one overarching lesson to be learned, it is this: without unity, coordination, and self-reliance, rest of the nations, especially, the Muslim world will continue to remain susceptible to external pressures and internal instability. One of the most striking realities highlighted by the conflict is the absence of meaningful unity among Islamic nations. Despite sharing religious, cultural, and historical ties, Muslim countries have failed to act collectively in times of crisis. Instead, geopolitical rivalries - particularly between major regional players - have often paralyzed joint action. Analysts have long pointed out that divisions within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have undermined its ability to respond effectively to crises, as national interests frequently override collective goals. The Iran war reinforces the urgent need to transform this symbolic organization into a functional and decisive body. The OIC, which represents 57 member states, has the potential to become a powerful platform for political coordination, conflict resolution, and economic cooperation. Yet, in its current form, it lacks enforcement mechanisms and strategic cohesion. Islamic countries must reimagine the OIC as an active institution capable of unified decision-making, rather than merely issuing statements of concern. Closely tied to this is the growing discourse around the creation of a NATO-like alliance for Muslim countries. The idea of an "Islamic NATO" has been proposed multiple times, especially during periods of heightened regional tension. The Iran war underscores the necessity of such a framework. A collective defense arrangement could deter external aggression, reduce reliance on foreign military powers, and enhance strategic autonomy. While challenges such as political mistrust and leadership rivalries remain significant, the cost of inaction is far greater.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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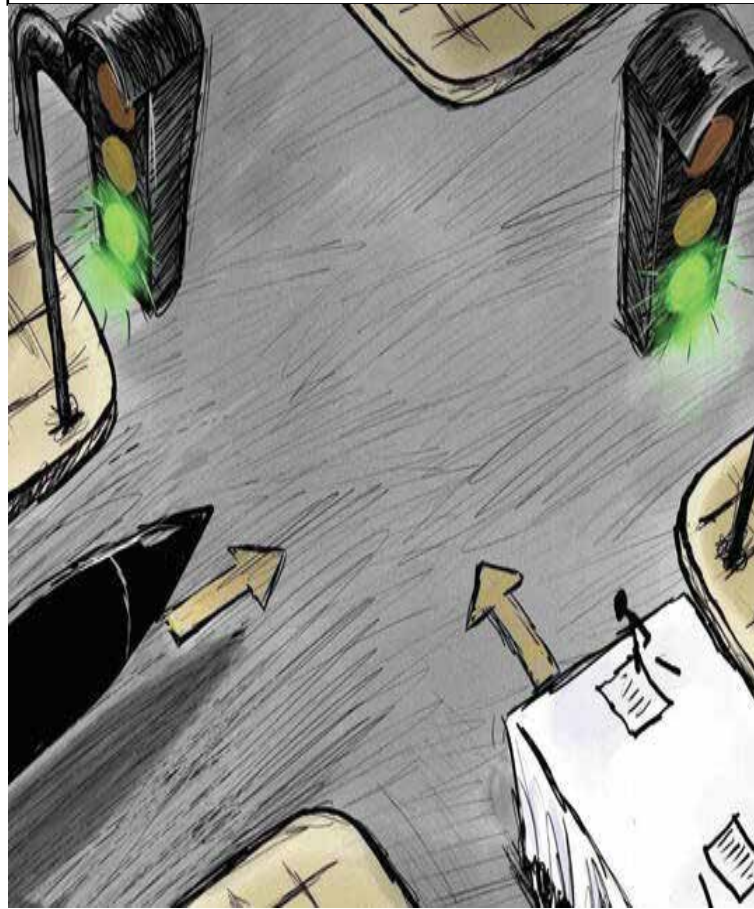
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Another crucial lesson from the war is the central role of energy resources - particularly oil, in shaping global power dynamics. The conflict has demonstrated how disruptions in oil supply can ripple across the global economy, reinforcing the continued dominance of hydrocarbons in international relations. Many Muslim-majority countries possess vast oil and gas reserves, yet they often lack full control over how these resources are managed, priced, and protected. To address this, Islamic countries must develop coordinated energy policies. This includes not only safeguarding infrastructure but also ensuring that oil wealth is used strategically to strengthen economic independence and political leverage. A unified energy bloc within the Muslim world could significantly influence global markets and reduce vulnerability to external manipulation. Equally important is the issue of foreign military presence in Muslim lands. The Iran war has brought renewed attention to the strategic role of foreign air bases in the region. Many of these bases serve as launching points for military operations, effectively placing parts of the Muslim world within the strategic framework of external powers. This reality raises critical questions about sovereignty and long-term security. Reducing dependence on foreign military protection should be a priority. While such bases are often justified in terms of security guarantees, they can also entangle host nations in conflicts that do not serve their national or collective interests. The path forward lies in building indigenous defense capabilities and fostering regional security cooperation, thereby eliminating the perceived need for external military presence. However, it is essential to acknowledge that achieving these goals will not be easy. The Muslim world is diverse, encompassing a wide range of political systems, economic conditions, and strategic priorities. Historical grievances and ideological differences further complicate efforts at unity. Yet, the Iran war illustrates that disunity comes at a high cost—not only in terms of security but also in economic stability and global influence. Moreover, the conflict highlights how external powers continue to dominate the strategic landscape of the region. Despite the involvement of multiple global actors, the balance of power remains heavily tilted, with major decisions often being shaped outside the Muslim world. This imbalance underscores the urgency of developing a unified voice and a joint strategy among Islamic nations. In conclusion, the Iran war should serve as a turning point for the Muslim world. It is a stark reminder that fragmentation breeds, while unity fosters strength. Islamic countries must move beyond rhetorical solidarity and take concrete steps toward integration—strengthening the OIC, exploring a collective defense framework, asserting control over natural resources, and reassessing the role of foreign military bases. The choice is clear: continue on the current path of division and dependency, or embrace a future defined by unity, sovereignty, and strategic independence. History has provided the lesson; it is now up to the Muslim world to learn from it and act decisively.

Pakistan's Diplomacy Redefines the Iran War

Qamar Bashir



Iran's proposed 10-point peace plan became a critical turning point in this unfolding crisis. While not fully aligned with U.S. expectations, it nonetheless provided a framework for dialogue. Key elements included the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz under coordinated oversight, the lifting of sanctions, the release of frozen assets, and the establishment of secure transit protocols. Though some demands—such as compensation payments and complete U.S. military withdrawal from the region—were seen as unlikely to be accepted, the proposal itself created diplomatic...

THE world stood on the edge of an unimaginable catastrophe on April 7, when Donald J. Trump issued a chilling ultimatum—warning that an entire civilization, rooted in over 5,000 years of history and home to more than 90 million people, could be reduced to ashes within hours. The threat was not merely rhetorical; it carried the weight of military capability that could have ignited a chain reaction of destruction across the Middle East and beyond. The potential consequences were staggering: regional collapse, global economic paralysis, mass displacement, and a humanitarian disaster of historic proportions. Yet, at the very brink of this abyss, diplomacy intervened—not from the traditional centers of global power, but from an unexpected quarter. The leadership of Pakistan, spearheaded by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, emerged as a decisive force that altered the course of events. Through persistent engagement, strategic persuasion, and calibrated diplomacy, they succeeded in securing a two-week ceasefire—an outcome that many had deemed impossible just hours earlier. This intervention was not merely symbolic; it was transformative. It demonstrated that even in a world dominated by military alliances and power politics, thoughtful diplomacy could still prevail. Convincing a leader like Trump—known for his unpredictability and reliance on a narrow circle of trusted advisors, including Benjamin Netanyahu—required not only courage but exceptional diplomatic finesse. Pakistan's leadership managed to introduce a moment of reflection into a rapidly escalating crisis, effectively pulling the world back from the brink. At the same time, Iran's role in this confrontation cannot be overlooked. Despite facing sustained military pressure from both the United States and Israel since the escalation began on February 28, Iran demonstrated a remarkable capacity for resilience. Its ability to defend its territory, maintain operational coherence, and respond strategically underscored its position as a formidable regional power. Tehran's actions were not limited to defense; they included calibrated offensive measures that signaled its capability to impose costs on its adversaries while avoiding uncontrolled escalation. Iran's proposed 10-point peace plan became a critical turning point in this unfolding crisis. While not fully aligned with U.S. expectations, it nonetheless

provided a framework for dialogue. Key elements included the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz under coordinated oversight, the lifting of sanctions, the release of frozen assets, and the establishment of secure transit protocols. Though some demands—such as compensation payments and complete U.S. military withdrawal from the region—were seen as unlikely to be accepted, the proposal itself created diplomatic space where none previously existed. This initiative allowed the United States to recalibrate its position. By agreeing to a two-week ceasefire, Trump effectively created a face-saving exit from a conflict that had grown increasingly complex and costly. What was initially projected as a swift and decisive campaign had instead evolved into a protracted confrontation with no clear endgame. The ceasefire provided Washington with an opportunity to step back without appearing to concede defeat—a crucial consideration in both domestic and international political contexts. For the broader Middle East, the implications were profound. Regional states, many of which had found themselves caught between competing pressures, were granted a reprieve. Their infrastructure—already strained by strikes on energy facilities, transport networks, and desalination plants—now had a chance to recover. Economically, the stabilization of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of global oil supply flows, helped ease immediate fears of a global energy crisis. Israel, however, faces a different set of lessons. The assumption that it could operate as the unchallenged military authority in the region has been fundamentally questioned. Iran's response demonstrated that it possesses not only the will but also the capability to counter Israeli and allied actions across multiple domains—military, strategic, and diplomatic. The conflict has revealed that the balance of power in the Middle East is more complex than previously assumed. Moreover, the discourse surrounding extreme military options—including discussions in some policy circles about the potential use of tactical nuclear weapons—highlighted the dangerous trajectory the conflict had taken. Such considerations underscored the urgency of diplomatic intervention and reinforced the importance of restraint. The ceasefire, therefore, was not just a pause in hostilities; it was a critical interruption of a path that could have

led to irreversible consequences. Pakistan's role in achieving this outcome marks a significant moment in its diplomatic history. Traditionally viewed through a regional lens, Pakistan has now demonstrated its capacity to influence global events. By facilitating dialogue between adversaries and advocating for de-escalation, it positioned itself as a credible mediator in one of the most volatile conflicts of the modern era. This achievement reflects not only political will but also a deep understanding of geopolitical dynamics. Iran, on its part, emerges from this phase of the conflict with renewed confidence. Its ability to withstand coordinated pressure from two powerful adversaries and still engage in diplomacy reinforces its image as a resilient and sovereign state. The narrative of capitulation has been replaced with one of endurance and strategic patience. For the United States, the ceasefire offers an opportunity for introspection. The conflict highlighted the limitations of military solutions in addressing complex geopolitical challenges. It also exposed the risks associated with being drawn into regional disputes that do not directly threaten core national interests. By stepping back, Washington can reassess its approach and potentially realign its strategy toward more sustainable forms of engagement. The coming two weeks will be critical. The negotiations set to take place in Islamabad carry the weight of global expectations. Success will require not only political commitment but also a willingness to compromise on all sides. The stakes are immense, but so too is the opportunity—to transform a moment of crisis into a foundation for lasting peace. In the final analysis, what transpired on April 7 will be remembered not for the destruction that nearly occurred, but for the diplomacy that prevented it. It is a reminder that even in an era defined by conflict and competition, the power of dialogue remains indispensable. The efforts of Pakistan's leadership, combined with Iran's strategic resilience and the United States' eventual recalibration, have together created a window—however narrow—for peace to prevail. Whether this window leads to a durable resolution or closes under renewed tensions will depend on the choices made in the days ahead. But for now, humanity has been granted a pause—and with it, a chance to choose a different path.

Unmasking the Mossad-RAW Nexus

Sadaf Noreen Awan

The focus on Balochistan is neither random nor purely tactical; it is a war for the future. Balochistan is a land blessed with immense natural wealth, gold, copper, and Rare Earth Minerals (REMs) that are the lifeblood of the 21st-century global economy. The "Mossad-RAW" nexus views Balochistan as a dual-purpose target. Firstly, by instigating insurgency and funding separatist elements, they aim to create a permanent state of unrest. This prevents Pakistan from achieving economic independence through its resources. Secondly, they seek to secure these minerals...

MOSSAD and RAW are two sides of the same coin, a singular currency of destabilization that the Muslim world must urgently recognize and understand. This unholy alliance is not merely a regional threat, but a coordinated global engine designed to dismantle the sovereignty of Islamic nations. The contemporary world stands at a precipice, not by accident, but by design. As the scent of gunpowder drifts across borders and the cries of the oppressed echo from the rubble of Gaza to the rugged terrains of Balochistan, a discerning eye can trace these tragedies back to a singular source: a sophisticated, multi-layered "Architecture of Chaos." At the heart of this global destabilization lies the clandestine alliance between Mossad and RAW, a partnership fuelled by Zionist expansionism and Hindutva hegemony. This is not merely a regional skirmish; it is a calculated attempt to dismantle the last standing pillars of Muslim resistance. **Mossad's Penetration and the Iranian Frontier;** Mossad is not just an intelligence agency; it is the operational arm of a messianic, expansionist ideology. For decades, its primary objective has been the neutralization of any Islamic power capable of challenging the "Greater Israel" project. Iran, with its 47 years of steadfast resistance and strategic preparation, has long been the primary obstacle. Mossad's methodology, characterized by the assassination of nuclear scientists and the sabotage of critical infrastructure, is designed to create internal fissures where military might fails. However, the strategy has shifted. Seeing the resilience of the Iranian state, Mossad has pivoted toward a "Periphery Doctrine," seeking to destabilize the neighbours of its enemies. This brings us to the tragedy of Afghanistan and the subsequent infiltration into Pakistan. Following the vacuum left by the US withdrawal, Mossad and RAW have utilized Afghan soil as a breeding ground for proxy warfare. Their shared objective? To bleed Pakistan from within, ensuring that the only nuclear-armed Muslim state remains too distracted by internal strife to provide a meaningful deterrent on the global stage. **The Resource War;** The focus on Balochistan is neither random nor purely tactical; it is a war for the future. Balochistan is a land blessed with immense natural wealth, gold, copper, and Rare Earth Minerals (REMs) that are the lifeblood of the 21st-century global economy. The "Mossad-RAW"

nexus views Balochistan as a dual-purpose target. Firstly, by instigating insurgency and funding separatist elements, they aim to create a permanent state of unrest. This prevents Pakistan from achieving economic independence through its resources. Secondly, they seek to secure these minerals for the Western-Zionist industrial complex. To them, Balochistan is a "Strategic Mine" to be looted, while to us, it is a sacred part of our federation. Their plan is to turn Balochistan into a "New Bagram" a staging ground for "Boots on the Ground" operations that could eventually target Iran's eastern flank. **Modi, Netanyahu, and the "Fatherland" Delusion;** The ideological marriage between Narendra Modi and Benjamin Netanyahu represents one of the most dangerous developments of the 21st century. When Modi visited Israel and invoked the term "Fatherland" (Pityrbhumi), he wasn't just engaging in diplomatic pleasantries. He was signalling the alignment of "Hindutva" and "Zionism", the two ideologies that share a common visceral enmity toward the Muslim identity. Netanyahu's Israel, the butcher of tens of thousands of Palestinian children, has become the role model for Modi's India. From the brutal lockdowns in Kashmir to the state-sponsored marginalization of Indian Muslims, the Indian state is implementing the "Gaza Model" on its own soil. A "Fatherland" built on the corpses of innocent children can never be loyal to humanity, let alone to its Muslim neighbours. This alliance is not based on mutual respect, but on a shared thirst for dominance over Muslim lands and resources. **From Pahalgam to the Brink of War** As India approaches its election cycle, the world must remain hyper-vigilant. History has shown that the Modi regime relies on "Validation through Blood." The false-flag propaganda witnessed during events like the Pahalgam incident serves as a psychological tool to whip up war hysteria. By painting Pakistan as an existential threat, Modi seeks to distract from his domestic failures and consolidate power. However, India must remember the lessons of the past. Every time they have attempted to test Pakistan's resolve, whether through surgical strike myths or aerial incursions, they have been met with a response that left their leadership humiliated and their pilots captured. The "Surprise" we delivered in the past was a mere glimpse of our capabilities. If Modi attempts another

misadventure for the sake of his ballot box, he may find that he has no country left to govern. **The Two-Front War;** The Zionist-Hindutva plan is now clear, trap Pakistan and Iran in a pincer movement. While Iran is already engaged in a high-stakes confrontation with the US-Israel axis, the plan is to simultaneously drag Pakistan into a full-scale war with India. The recent suspension of civilian flights at Indian border airports in Srinagar and Jodhpur, the testing of air-raid sirens in Jaisalmer, and the Indian Army Chief's visits to temples for "victory prayers" are not mere coincidences. These are the drums of war. They aim to paralyse the Muslim world's "War Machine." They believe that by bankrupting our economies and fueling internal unrest, they can eventually move in to "defame" and "de-nuclearize" us. They seek to turn the Indus into a river of fire, but they underestimate the spiritual and military depth of the nations they are challenging. **A Nuclear Deterrent and the Muslim Resolve;** Let this be a definitive warning to Mossad and the planners in New Delhi, do not mistake our patience for weakness. Taking Pakistan lightly will be the ultimate blunder of your existence. We are not a nation of cowards hiding behind drones; we are a sovereign nuclear power with a military, and an air force whose professional brilliance is etched in the nightmares of our enemies. The US and Israel are currently learning bitter lessons from Iran. They are realizing that "High-Tech" superiority fails against a nation that has "Imani Basirah" (Faith-driven Insight). A conflict with a Muslim who fears no one, but Allah is a conflict that comes at a price the Western-Zionist world cannot afford to pay. If you set our house on fire, the flames will not stay within our borders; they will consume your "Fatherlands" and your "Greater" dreams. To conclude, we have not forgotten the blood of the children in Gaza, nor have we forgotten the oppression in Kashmir. Every drop of blood spilled by the Mossad-RAW nexus only strengthens our resolve. The "Mossad-RAW" architecture of chaos is reaching its peak, but so is the awakening of the Ummah. The people of Pakistan and Iran, despite their economic hardships, understand the stakes. This is a battle for our survival, our faith, and our future generations. To Netanyahu and Modi, your "Greater Israel" and "Akhand Bharat" are sandcastles built on the shores of a rising tide of justice. We are ready. Our silos are ready. Our hearts are ready.

Briefs

PM Shehbaz invites Iran, US delegations

FROM PAGE 01
the cause of peace and stability. "We earnestly hope, that the 'Islamabad Talks' succeed in achieving sustainable peace and wish to share more good news in coming days," PM Shehbaz added. Earlier, US President Donald Trump announced a two-week suspension of "bombing and attacks" on Iran, describing it as a double-sided ceasefire, just a couple of hours after a request from Prime Minister Shehbaz. "Based on conversations with Prime Minister Shehbaz, Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, of Pakistan, and wherein they requested that I hold off the destructive force being sent tonight to Iran, and subject to the Islamic Republic of Iran agreeing to the complete, immediate, and safe opening of the Strait of Hormuz, I agree to suspend the bombing and attack of Iran for a period of two weeks," Trump announced on his social media platform Truth Social. Prime Minister Shehbaz had requested President Trump to extend the deadline for two weeks to allow diplomacy to run its course and also Iran to open Strait of Hormuz for a corresponding period as a goodwill gesture.

US lawmakers divided...

FROM PAGE 01
Trump's actions "have clearly driven our country past the threshold for impeachment or invocation of the 25th amendment," she added. "Whether by his Cabinet or Congress, the President must be removed from office. We are playing with the brink." - Lindsey Graham - Republican senator Lindsey Graham, a close Trump ally and foreign policy hawk, said congressional oversight is needed to "kick the tires." "At this early stage, I am extremely cautious regarding what is fact vs. fiction or misrepresentation," Graham wrote on X. "That's why a congressional review process like the one the Senate followed to test the Obama Iranian deal is a sound way forward." - Chuck Schumer - Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer earlier called Trump "an extremely sick person" in response to the Republican president's threat that "a whole civilization will die tonight." "I'm glad Trump backed off and is desperately searching for any sort of exit ramp from his ridiculous bluster," the Democrat posted on X after the ceasefire was announced.

What do we know about US-Iran ceasefire?

FROM PAGE 01
"This will be a double-sided CEASEFIRE! The reason for doing so is that we have already met and exceeded all Military objectives and are very far along with a definitive agreement concerning Longterm PEACE with Iran, and PEACE in the Middle East," he said. Trump said the US had received a "10 point proposal" from Iran that was "workable" with all previous points of past "contention" agreed. Iranian Foreign Minister, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, thanked Pakistan for its mediation efforts in a statement posted to X. Araghchi confirmed that Trump had accepted Iran's 10-point proposal as a basis for future negotiations and said Iran's armed forces would "cease their defensive operations," to see negotiations through. Araghchi also confirmed that Iran had received and was considering the US's 15-point proposal and would allow ships to pass through the Hormuz straight pending "technical limitations." "For a period of two weeks, safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, will be possible via coordination with Iran's Armed Forces," he said in a statement published to X. Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said his country supported the ceasefire but that agreement did "not include Lebanon" in a statement carried by Reuters.

PSL 11: Sahibzada Farhan, Josh Philippe lead Sultans to comfortable win over Pindiz

Multan Sultans chase down 183-run target for the loss of three wickets and 22 balls to spare

DNA

LAHORE: Sahibzada Farhan and Josh Philippe scored fifties as Multan Sultans beat Rawalpindi by seven wickets in the 14th match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Monday. Set to chase a 183-run target, the Sultans comfortably knocked the winners runs for the loss of just three wickets and 22 balls to spare. The leaders, however, had a contrasting start to their pursuit as Mohammad Amir dismissed their in-form opener Steve Smith (five) in the second over with just 12 runs on the board. But the early setback did not bother the Sultans as in-form Farhan and Philippe turned the game on its head by putting together a blazing 110-run partnership for the second

wicket, which saw both batters amassing their respective half-centuries. The monumental stand was eventually broken by Amir in the 12th over when he outfoxed Philippe with a slower delivery, who remained a notable run-getter for the Sultans with a brisk 56 off 30 deliveries, comprising six fours and three sixes. Farhan, on the other hand, followed suit 11 balls later, getting cleaned up by Amir Khan after top-scoring for the Sultans with 68 off 36 deliveries, studded with five sixes and four fours. Following the back-to-back departure of set batters, skipper Ashton Turner and his deputy Shan Masood batted sensibly at the backend and steered their side to glory on the second delivery of the 17th over with an unbeaten 47-run partnership. Masood remained unbeaten with a 15-ball 27, while Turner made 26 not out from just

10 deliveries. Mohammad Amir was the pick of the bowlers for the Pindiz, taking two wickets for 32 runs in his three overs, while Mohammad Amir Khan bagged one. Put into bat first, the seventh-placed side racked up 182/8 in their 20 overs despite Faisal Akram's four-wicket haul. The Pindiz got off to a shaky start to their innings as their opener Yasir Khan (five) was dismissed by Muhammad Ismail in the third over with just 15 runs on the board. Following the early stutter, captain Mohammad Rizwan (19) was joined by Kamran Ghulam in the middle, and the duo batted sensibly to raise an anchoring 33-run partnership for the second wicket, which culminated with the former's dismissal off Arafat Minhas in the sixth over. Ghulam was then involved in brief part-

nerships with Abdullah Fazal (14) and Daryl Mitchell (17), until eventually getting dismissed by Akram in the 10th over and walking back after scoring a 24-ball 35, laced with three fours and two sixes. His dismissal paved the way for Sam Billings to walk out and bat at No.6, and the wicketkeeper batter waged a valiant fight to add valuable runs at the backend with his unbeaten 56 off 34 deliveries, studded with seven fours and a six. He also shared a 33-run partnership for the sixth wicket with Dian Forrester, who played a blistering 24-run cameo off just 11 deliveries, featuring three sixes. Akram spearheaded the Sultans' bowling charge with economical figures of 4/31 in his four overs, followed by Minhas, who bagged two wickets, while Peter Siddle and Ismail chipped in with one scalp apiece.

Shehbaz, Pezeshkian hold phone

FROM PAGE 01
Iran and the U.S. and conveyed his best wishes for the people of Pakistan. He confirmed that Iran would be participating in the negotiations in Islamabad. Both leaders agreed to remain in close contact.

Trump says US will 'dig up' uranium buried...

FROM PAGE 01
Israel and Iran agreed to a ceasefire. Sporadic attacks were reported after the deal was announced. And Israel said the deal did not apply to its fighting with the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon. A series of Israeli strikes hit several areas in central Beirut on Wednesday, the state-run National News Agency reported. Loud booms could be heard throughout the city and smoke was rising from several points. It was not immediately clear what was targeted, but several of the strikes were in busy commercial locations

Pakistan, Afghanistan agree to explore...

FROM PAGE 01
prevent further instability. The Urumqi talks, which began last week, follow multiple rounds of diplomatic engagement by Chinese officials, including telephone calls between foreign ministers and visits by special envoys. Afghan officials have previously described the discussions as "useful" and "constructive," while Pakistan has welcomed China's role in facilitating direct dialogue. Both sides are reportedly exploring long-term mechanisms to address border security, terrorism concerns, and refugee issues that have fuelled the current crisis. Analysts view China's mediation as a reflection of its growing influence in regional conflict resolution. Beijing has repeatedly emphasised that dialogue is the only path to lasting peace in the region. Mao Ning reiterated that China stands ready to support continued negotiations, hoping the current momentum leads to a durable ceasefire and comprehensive agreement benefiting all parties.

Iran truce does not include...

FROM PAGE 01
Hezbollah halted fire on northern Israel and on Israeli troops in Lebanon in the early hours of Wednesday as part of the US-Iran ceasefire announced earlier, three Lebanese sources close to the group told Reuters. Iran-backed Hezbollah is expected to issue a statement outlining its formal position on the ceasefire and on Netanyahu's assertion that Lebanon is not included, the three Lebanese sources said. Israel's military said it "continues fighting and ground operations" in its war against the Lebanese militia Hezbollah. French President Emmanuel Macron said on Wednesday that he welcomed the ceasefire between Iran and the United States, at the start of his meeting on defense with advisers and members of his cabinet, but added the situation in Lebanon remained critical and called for Lebanon to be included in the deal. Lebanon's army warned people against returning to the country's south on Wednesday.

Dubai Basketball's statement comeback fuels EuroLeague hopes

Serbian guard Aleksa Avramovic led the comeback, scoring 12 of his 15 points in the decisive fourth quarter to swing momentum in Dubai's favour

DUBAI: Dubai Basketball produced one of the standout performances of their debut EuroLeague campaign, overturning a 14-point deficit in the final quarter to defeat Zalgiris Kaunas 77-65 in Round 36 and keep their play-in ambitions alive. Up against one of the competition's most formidable sides, Dubai trailed 53-39 heading into the fourth quarter, with their chances of securing a Top 10 finish slipping away. What followed was a remarkable display of resilience, as they outscored Zalgiris 38-12 in the final 10 minutes to complete a stunning turnaround. Head coach Jurica Golemac hailed his team's determination and defensive intensity after the game, while also acknowledging the support of fans

back home. "We didn't give up, we never lost faith. I think defensively we played one of the best games of the season. We were locked in," he said. "This win, like every win, is for our city of Dubai and for our fans. We know they are following every game, that they are with us, cheering and giving us all the support and love that we feel from here. "We are missing them. I know they miss us, and we want to come back home as soon as possible." The result carried added significance, ending Zalgiris Kaunas's four-game unbeaten run in the EuroLeague and marking Dubai as one of the few teams this season to defeat the Lithuanian club both home and away. With a Top 10 finish required to

reach the play-in stage - where teams ranked seventh to 10th compete for the final two playoff spots - the victory keeps Dubai firmly in contention heading into the final stretch of the regular season. Serbian guard Aleksa Avramovic led the comeback, scoring 12 of his 15 points in the decisive fourth quarter to swing momentum in Dubai's favour. He was supported by Davis Bertans and Bruno Caboclo, whose contributions at both ends of the court proved crucial as Dubai closed out the game in front of a partisan 15,000-strong crowd. Dubai Basketball now face two remaining regular-season fixtures, both to be played in Bosnia, with victories in both probably required to secure a place in the EuroLeague Top 10.



Romanian soccer great Mircea Lucescu has died at age 80

BUCHAREST: Mircea Lucescu, the Romanian soccer great who was a serial trophy winner as a player and a coach, has died. He was 80. Lucescu's death was confirmed by Bucharest University Emergency Hospital on Tuesday. He had been hospitalized after reportedly suffering a heart attack on Friday morning. "Mr. Mircea Lucescu was one of the most successful Romanian football coaches and players, the first to qualify the Romanian national team for a European Championship, in 1984," the hospital said in a statement. "Entire generations of Romanians grew up with his image in their hearts, as a national symbol." - APP

Iran ceasefire 'fragile'

BUDAPEST: US Vice President JD Vance on Wednesday welcomed a "fragile truce" with Iran, urging Tehran to negotiate in "good faith" to reach a long-term deal and warning US President Donald Trump was "not one to mess around." He spoke shortly after Washington and Tehran agreed a two-week truce to the war, announced before Trump's deadline to agree a deal or face obliteration. Tehran has warned the war is not over until formal terms are negotiated. "If the Iranians are willing in good faith to work with us, I think we can make an agreement," Vance said during a visit to Budapest. He added if the Iranians don't come to the negotiating table, "they're going to find out that the President of the United States is not one to mess around. He's impatient. He's impatient to make progress." Vance said Trump had shown "that we still have clear military, diplomatic, and maybe most importantly we have extraordinary economic leverage." "If they're going to lie, if they're going to cheat, if they're trying to prevent even the fragile truce that we've set up from taking place, then they're not going to be happy," he added. Vance started his Budapest visit on Tuesday to support Hungarian nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who is facing an unprecedented challenge to his 16-year rule in Sunday's parliamentary elections. - APP



Arsenal beats Sporting Lisbon on Havertz's late goal

DNA

LONDON: DKai Havertz scored in stoppage time to give Arsenal a 1-0 win in the first leg of its Champions League quarterfinal against Sporting Lisbon on Tuesday. The substitute fired past goalkeeper Rui Silva from close range at Estadio Jose Alvalade to give Mikel Arteta's team the advantage ahead of next week's second leg at the Emirates. In Tuesday's other quarterfinal, Bayern Munich beat Real Madrid 2-1 at the Bernabeu. Havertz settled a tight game of few chances in Lisbon by combining with fellow substitute Gabriel Martinelli. The German controlled the ball in the box and then side-footed into the net to hand Sporting its first loss at home since August. "To score a late goal is always nice," Havertz told Amazon Prime. "We will take that result. There is still a lot of work to do next week." Victory saw Arsenal bounce back from successive defeats which cut its quadruple trophy hunt in half in recent weeks. Losses in the League Cup final and FA Cup quarterfinals had shaken the Premier League leader going into Tuesday's match.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif Welcomes Ceasefire

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif welcomed ceasefire between United States and Iran, and congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their sincere and unparalleled efforts toward global peace. She added that Allah Almighty has chosen Pakistan to establish peace, for which no amount of gratitude would be sufficient. Chief Minister Punjab said that Pakistan's sincere and historic efforts for peace in the region and the world have made the impossible possible. She added that leadership of the United States, Iran, and all Islamic countries deserve congratulations, whose efforts have

brought peace to billions of people. She stated that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir have saved the world from a third world war. She remarked that Pakistan, emerging after the "Battle for Truth," has become a central force for peace in the world. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed hope that Pakistan's sincere efforts will lead to lasting peace, and conflicts will be resolved through dialogue. She concluded that in the history of global peace, names of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir will be written in golden words. - APP

Pakistan Open FIFA Campaign Against Turks & Caicos

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's women's football team is set to make history as they kick off their maiden appearance in the FIFA Women's Series against Turks and Caicos Islands today (Thursday), marking a significant milestone for the sport in the country. The national side arrived in Côte d'Ivoire two days ago for the prestigious international event and has since been actively training under head coach Adeel Rizki, fine-tuning preparations ahead of their opening fixture. This historic participation reflects the steady progress of women's football in Pakistan and signals the beginning of a promising new era for the national team. Pakistan's inclusion in the FIFA Women's Series has been made possible through the efforts of Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani. During a meeting with FIFA Pres-

ident Gianni Infantino on the sidelines of the Club World Cup, Gilani highlighted PFF's initiatives aimed at promoting and developing women's football in the country. The FIFA Women's Series runs from April 9 to April 16. Pakistan will face Mauritania in their second match on April 12, before taking on hosts Côte d'Ivoire in their final group fixture on April 16. PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani expressed confidence in the team, stating that his leadership is focused on ensuring sustained growth and long-term development of football in Pakistan. **Squad:** Goalkeepers: Zeeyana Jivraj, Nisha Ashraf, Arzoo Hazara. **Defenders:** Isra Khan, Anaya Ahmad, Anmol Hira, Kayla Siddiqui, Karissa Jivraj, Alia Sadiq, Maria Khan, Nizalia Siddiqui. **Midfielders:** Suha Hirani, Rameen Fareed, Layla Banaras, Sanah Mehdi, Zehmena Malik. **Forwards:** Mariam Mahmood, Aqsa Mushtaq, Aiman Altaf, Nadia Khan, Maryam Zehri, Azwa Chaudhry.

India mulls reptile river guards on Bangladesh border

"We have asked our field units to study the feasibility of the approach and send the report as soon as possible," he added

KOLKATA: India is considering releasing snakes and crocodiles along its frontier with Bangladesh, the Border Security Force said Wednesday, as New Delhi seeks to stave off unauthorized crossings. Bangladesh is almost entirely encircled by India and the border stretches for more than 4,000 kilometers (2,485 miles), large parts of which are unfenced across delta regions where Himalayan rivers wind toward the sea. Senior Border Security Force officer Manoj Barnwal told AFP that "the use of reptiles" was discussed in a February meeting with the Home Ministry. "We have been asked to explore the feasibility of

deploying reptiles such as snakes or crocodiles in vulnerable riverine gaps," said Barnwal, deputy inspector general of the paramilitary force based in Kolkata, near the border with Bangladesh. "The plan revolves around leveraging natural deterrents like crocodiles and snakes in flood-prone zones, along the unfenced area where traditional fenceings are either ineffective or not possible," he added. The border between India and Bangladesh cuts through the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest. "It's an innovative move, but there are several challenges and it raises safety concerns," Barnwal said.

"How do we procure the reptiles? What impact might it have on the people in the villages sitting along the riverine border?" "We have asked our field units to study the feasibility of the approach and send the report as soon as possible," he added. Relations between New Delhi and Dhaka soured after a 2024 revolution in Dhaka ended the autocratic rule of the then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who fled to India. Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman is in New Delhi on Wednesday - the most senior envoy from Dhaka to visit since the 2024 uprising - in

a bid to rebuild frosty diplomatic relations. India has constructed border fencing stretching hundreds of kilometers (miles), and arrested scores of Bangladeshis attempting to cross the frontier in the wake of Hasina's overthrow. The Hindu nationalist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has long taken a hard-line stance on immigration, particularly from neighboring Muslim-majority Bangladesh. Top Indian officials have referred to migrants as "termites" and "infiltrators." Rights groups have accused India of also pushing hundreds of Bengali-speaking Muslims into Bangladesh without due process. - APP

Briefs

From trade to culture
Kazakhstan-Germany
ties gain momentum

ASTANA : First Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Roman Sklyar met with Gunther Krichbaum, Minister of State for European Affairs at Germany's Federal Foreign Office, Qazinform News Agency reports, citing primeminister.kz. During the talks in Astana on Monday, both sides discussed the current state and prospects for deepening trade, economic, and cultural-humanitarian ties. The officials also reviewed issues of coordinating joint efforts to strengthen the ongoing dialogue between Kazakhstan and Germany. The parties expressed their commitment to continued close cooperation within the "Central Asia - Germany" framework and other international platforms. Concluding the meeting, the German diplomat expressed his gratitude for the warm reception and reaffirmed Germany's readiness to further expand the partnership between the two nations. Previously, Kazakhstan and Germany discussed green hydrogen production and export.—APP

Gold price surges by Rs 15,700 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold increased in the local market on Wednesday, with 24 karat gold per tola rising by Rs 15,700 to settle at Rs 504,162 compared to Rs 488,462 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 13,460 to Rs 432,237 from Rs 418,777, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs 12,339 to Rs 396,231 against Rs 383,892 in the international market, the price of gold increased by \$157 to \$4,814 per ounce from \$4,657. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs 440 to Rs 8,184, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs 377 to Rs 7,016. The price of silver in the international market increased by \$4.40 to \$77.00 per ounce from \$72.60.—APP

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.05 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 279.06. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279.00 and Rs 280.10, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs 3.72 to close at Rs 326.12 from the previous day's close of Rs 322.40, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen increased by 02 paisa and closed at Rs 1.76, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 4.82 and closed at Rs 374.44 compared to the previous day's Rs 369.62. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham remained constant at Rs 75.98 whereas that of Saudi Riyal increase by 2 paisa to Rs 74.35.—APP

Iraq, Syria reopening airspace after war closure

BAGHDAD: Iraq's civil aviation authority said it was reopening the country's airspace on Wednesday following the announcement of a US-Iran ceasefire, after it was closed due to the Middle East war. "The Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority announces the reopening of Iraqi airspace to air traffic effective today, following the stabilization of the situation and the return of conditions to normal," it said in a statement.—APP



ISLAMABAD: GB CM Justice (R) Yar Muhammad called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and States and Frontier Regions Division. Engir Amir Muqam was also present in the meeting.

Gillani highlights Pak's diplomatic role, tourism potential

He remarked that the theme of PTM 2026, "Shaping the Future of Travel: Innovation, Sustainability, and Global Connectivity," reflects Pakistan's commitment to aligning with emerging global tourism trends

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday said that Pakistan is in the limelight owing to its proactive and effective diplomacy in recent regional crises and the Iran-US standoff, which has further strengthened the country's standing at the international level. Addressing the National Tourism Dialogue held in connection with the Pakistan Travel Mart 2026, he said Pakistan has played a constructive and responsible role in global affairs, contributing to regional peace and stability through sustained diplomatic engagement. The Chairman Senate highlighted that tourism holds immense potential to drive Pakistan's economic growth, enhance its global image, and promote national cohesion. He also commended Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan for his dedicated efforts in organizing the dialogue and advancing the tourism agenda in the country. He remarked that the theme of PTM 2026,

"Shaping the Future of Travel: Innovation, Sustainability, and Global Connectivity," reflects Pakistan's commitment to aligning with emerging global tourism trends. Praising the public-private partnership model of PTM, he described it as a successful example of collaboration between the government and the private sector, which is essential for fostering sustainable growth, innovation, and investment in the tourism industry. Highlighting Pakistan's vast tourism potential, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani stated that the country offers a unique blend of ancient civilizations, cultural diversity, and natural beauty. From the historic sites of Mohenjo-daro and Mehrgarh to the legacy of the Indus Valley Civilization and the rich heritage of Gandhara, Pakistan presents a remarkable civilizational journey. Additionally, its majestic mountain ranges, scenic valleys, and diverse landscapes have the capacity to attract tourists from

across the globe. Referring to his personal connection with Multan, he shed light on the spiritual significance of the "City of Saints" and noted that Pakistan's Sufi traditions play a vital role in promoting peace, tolerance, and harmony. "Pakistan is not just a destination, but a meaningful and enriching experience," he remarked. The Chairman Senate underscored that tourism is a powerful engine of economic development, contributing to foreign exchange earnings, job creation, and infrastructure development. Recalling his tenure as Prime Minister, he said efforts were made to improve connectivity and promote Pakistan's tourism potential globally, adding that PTM represents a continuation of that vision. He further informed that PTM 2026 is showcasing a range of investment-ready tourism projects, including initiatives developed with the support of the Special Investment Facilitation Council, reflecting Pakistan's strong commitment to attracting both

domestic and foreign investment in the tourism sector. He warmly welcomed international delegates from Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and other countries, as well as representatives of global tourism organizations. He noted that increasing international participation is a testament to growing global confidence in Pakistan's tourism potential. He congratulated the organizers, partners, and participants on the successful convening of Pakistan Travel Mart 2026 and reaffirmed his commitment, as Chairman Senate, to fully support legislative and policy initiatives aimed at promoting tourism and positioning Pakistan prominently on the global tourism map. On this occasion, Member of the Provincial Assembly Punjab Syed Ali Haider Gillani and Adviser to the Chairman Senate and Ambassador to ISC, Misbah Khar were also present.—DNA

India mulls reptile river guards on Bangladesh border

KOLKATA: India is considering releasing snakes and crocodiles along its frontier with Bangladesh, the Border Security Force said Wednesday, as New Delhi seeks to stave off unauthorized crossings. Bangladesh is almost entirely encircled by India and the border stretches for more than 4,000 kilometers (2,485 miles), large parts of which are unfenced across delta regions where Himalayan rivers wind toward the sea. Senior Border Security Force officer Manoj Barnwal told AFP that "the use of reptiles" was discussed in a February meeting with the Home Ministry. "We have been asked to explore the feasibility of deploying reptiles such as snakes or crocodiles in vulnerable riverine gaps," said Barnwal, deputy inspector general of the paramilitary force based in Kolkata, near the border with Bangladesh. "The plan revolves around leveraging natural deterrents like crocodiles and snakes in flood-prone zones, along the unfenced area where traditional fencing is either ineffective or not possible," he added. The border between India and Bangladesh cuts through the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest. "It's an innovative move, but there are several challenges and it raises safety concerns," Barnwal said. "How do we procure the reptiles? What impact might it have on the people in the villages sitting along the riverine border?" "We have asked our field units to study the feasibility of the approach and send the report as soon as possible," he added.—DNA

Bakhtawari terms Pak ceasefire efforts steps to regional peace

ISLAMABAD: Patron-in-Chief of the Azerbaijan Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari stated that Pakistan's effective and timely diplomatic efforts, which led to a two-week temporary pause in regional tensions, represent a positive and encouraging step towards global peace. He expressed optimism that the expected Iran-US talks in Islamabad will play a key role in establishing lasting peace in the region. In his statement, he said that Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif's prudent strategy and timely decisions were instrumental in achieving this important development, while Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's support in line with national policy, strategic foresight, and efforts for regional stability are also highly commendable. He added that strong coordination between the political and military leadership has further strengthened Pakistan's image as a responsible, effective, and peace-loving state on the global stage. Ahsan Bakhtawari noted that the willingness shown by US President Donald Trump and the leadership of Iran to agree on a temporary ceasefire is a positive sign that reflects the importance of diplomatic dialogue. He emphasized that Pakistan's credibility and trust at the international level are increasing, and the country is emerging as an effective mediator capable of serving as a bridge between major global powers. He further stated that the easing of tensions has already begun to produce positive effects in global markets. The development has raised hopes for the normalization of trade routes, particularly stability in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global passage for energy supply and international trade. The ceasefire is expected to support the restoration of supply chains, promote trade and investment opportunities, and benefit Pakistan's business community as well as the global economy. He expressed hope that this two-week temporary ceasefire will serve as a foundation for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, and that the expected Iran-US negotiations in Islamabad will move forward with positive outcomes. He urged all parties to continue diplomatic engagement to ensure sustainable peace so that the region can progress towards stability, development, and prosperity.—DNA

The consequences of bombing Iran's power stations

PARIS, France: US President Donald Trump has threatened to destroy Iran's power stations and bridges, but bombing electricity plants would likely spur a humanitarian crisis and fierce retaliation from Tehran, experts say. Previous airstrikes from the United States and Israel during the more than five-week war have hit energy infrastructure such as gas production facilities or oil depots, as well as transport routes. But taking any of Iran's roughly 90 power plants offline would represent a major escalation with immediate consequences for civilians and the local economy. Iran's abundant gas reserves are used to generate around 79 percent of the country's electricity, according to the Paris-based International Energy Agency. Its power stations are clustered around the biggest urban and industrial areas in the north, particularly around the capital Tehran, as well as the Gulf coast which is close to the main gas reserves. The biggest plant is Damavand, which supplies the capital, followed by Shahid Salimi Neka in northern Mazandaran province, and the Shahid Rajaei plant in northern Qazvin province, according to Iranian power infrastructure group MAPNA. Brenda Shaffer, an energy expert at the US Naval Postgraduate School, told AFP: "It is important to point out that Iran was undergoing a very severe energy crisis prior to the start of the current war. Iran has chronic shortages in electricity, natural gas and refined oil products." No, according to the Washing-

ton-based Atlantic Council think-tank. "The Iranian military has only limited ties with the national electricity system," analysts Joseph Webster and Ginger Matchett wrote on Monday. "Instead, like most militaries, the Iranian military primarily uses middle distillates, especially diesel and jet fuel." Strikes would "harm Iran's critical infrastructure and civilian population, while doing little to harm the Islamic Republic's military capabilities," they added. UN rights chief Volker Turk on Tuesday decried the "incendiary rhetoric" in the Middle East war, warning that deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure was "a war crime." Nishant Kumar, a Middle East energy expert at the Rystad Energy consultancy, told AFP an attack on a power station would destabilize the Iranian grid and lead to rolling localized blackouts. "Sectors such as steel, cement, petrochemicals, and automotive manufacturing cannot operate under unstable power conditions or rolling blackouts," he added. Backup power systems such as diesel generators would be critical for essential services such as hospitals, but they must be regularly resupplied. "Banking and telecommunications are among the most vulnerable sectors. ATMs and bank branches generally have limited backup power, while mobile network towers rely on batteries that typically last only two-to-four hours," he added. Iran's power network is interconnected with those of its neighbors such as Turkey or Armenia, but

their capacity to provide more energy is limited. Despite its more limited military capabilities, Iran has sought to mirror US and Israeli attacks so far, seeking to match targets in Israel or the Gulf region with those hit inside the Islamic republic. For example, when Israel attacked its South Pars gasfield in mid-March, Tehran responded by damaging a key liquefied natural gas production facility across the Gulf in Qatar. Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned Tuesday that its response could "go beyond the region" and would include infrastructure "to deprive the United States and its allies of oil and gas in the region for years." They also noted that Iran had "exercised great restraint for the sake of good neighborliness," in a veiled threat to Gulf countries whose energy production facilities, pipelines and ports are crucial to the world economy. Iran's military has in the past also threatened the crucial water desalination infrastructure of its neighbors. Desalination plants provide 42 percent of drinking water in the United Arab Emirates, 70 percent in Saudi Arabia, 86 percent in Oman and 90 percent in Kuwait, according to a 2022 report from the French Institute of International Relations think tank. In the event of escalation by the US and Israel, Iranian military officials have also indicated they would fully activate their Houthi allies in Yemen, who joined the war in a limited capacity in late March.—DNA

India space industry moots future of mission operations SPECIAL

NEW DELHI: Space industry leaders gathered in Bengaluru on Wednesday for the Indian Space Research Organization's summit to explore emerging technologies and strategies shaping the future of space mission management. The three-day International Conference on Spacecraft Mission Operations is co-organized by the ISRO, the Astronautical Society of India, and the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center. "This conference will bring all advances in spacecraft operations and the requirements for a sustainable space. The knowledge base will surely make space missions and operations smarter, safer and more ambitious," Dr. A.K. Anil Kumar, director of the ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC), told the participants. "We will explore mission design, navigation, communication, automation and the tech driving it all, including the ground segment automations missions like Mars rovers, satellite constellations, human spaceflight, and other advanced areas, which push boundaries." The conference was first held in 2023, also in Bengaluru — home to ISRO headquarters and numerous aerospace startups — and focused on automation in space mission operations. The 2026 event's theme focuses on space domain awareness and sustainable space mission management. "As more countries and private players deploy large satellite constellations, orbital spaces are becoming significantly more crowded, making visibility and coordinated management of space assets essential," Lt. Gen. AK Bhatt (retd.), director general of the Indian Space Association and one of the conference's speakers, told Arab News.—APP

Greece to ban social media for under 15-year-olds: PM

ATHENS: Greece will ban access to social media for children under 15 from January 1, 2027, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said on Wednesday. "We have decided to go ahead with a difficult but necessary measure: ban access to social media for children under 15 years old," he said in a video posted on TikTok. "Greece is among the first countries in the world to adopt such a measure," the prime minister said, adding that he would put pressure on the European Union to follow suit. Mitsotakis said he used social media to make the announcement so he could address teenagers and children directly: "I know that some of you are going to be angry.... Our aim is not to keep you away from technology but to combat addiction to certain applications that harms your innocence and your freedom." "Science is clear: when a child is in front of screens for hours, their brain does not rest," he said. Australia in December became the first country in the world to require TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat and other top sites to remove accounts held by under-16s, or face heavy fines.—APP

Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan eye \$30b in joint investments

JEDDAH: Saudi investment in Uzbekistan has surged by 400 percent over the past five years, reaching \$26 billion, as the Saudi-Uzbek Business Council intensifies efforts to expand bilateral partnerships. The council is currently organizing field visits across the Kingdom to explore new investment opportunities and connect them with Uzbek counterparts, according to its CEO, Faisal Ba Abdullah, in remarks to Al-Eqtisadiyyah. Ba Abdullah said the two countries aim to raise total investments to \$30 billion by the end of this year, up from just \$200,000 in 2020, before rising sharply following \$5 billion in agreements signed in 2021 to reach \$26 billion today.—APP

Briefs

French couple leave Iran after more than three years in jail

TEHRAN: A French couple who spent more than three years in an Iranian prison on espionage charges are on their way home, French President Emmanuel Macron says. Cecile Kohler, 41, and Jacques Paris, 72, were arrested during a tourist trip in May 2022 on spying charges that France said were baseless, and held in Tehran's notorious Evin prison. They were freed in November and had been under house arrest at the French embassy in the Iranian capital, Tehran, ever since. "This is a relief for all of us and obviously for their families," Macron posted on X on Tuesday. He also thanked Oman "for their mediation efforts". A French foreign ministry source told the AFP news agency that the couple left Iran at dawn Tuesday in a diplomatic convoy with the French ambassador and had travelled to neighbouring Azerbaijan. France's foreign minister, Jean-Noel Barrot, has not given details of couple's movements but said they were "free at last" and that he had spoken to them by phone. "They told me of their emotion and joy at soon being reunited with their country and their loved ones," he wrote on X. Paris's daughter, Anne-Laure Paris, told AFP: "We are waiting for their return to France so we can give them a big hug." - Agencies

PSX surges over 12,000 points

DNA
KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) surged by more than 12,000 points on Wednesday after Pakistan's diplomatic efforts paused the ongoing US-Israel war on Iran. The benchmark KSE-100 index jumped to 165,119.26 points after rising by 13,445.81 points or 8.15%, up from the previous close of 151,673.45 points. The market was halted minutes after opening due to the surge and resumed trading at 10:42am. Mediated by Pakistan, US President Donald Trump agreed to a two-week ceasefire with Iran, less than two hours before his deadline for Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz or face devastating attacks on its civilian infrastructure. Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araqchi, said in a statement Tehran would cease counter-attacks and provide safe passage through the waterway, if attacks against it stop. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also announced that he has invited the leadership from both nations to Islamabad on April 10 to further negotiate a conclusive agreement to settle all disputes.

Solidifying Pakistan-Romania friendship Senate of Pakistan launches national anthem in choral format



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Senate of Pakistan hosted a distinguished cultural and diplomatic event, bringing together ambassadors of friendly countries, senators, and guests to mark the official launch of the national anthem of Pakistan, Qaumi Tarana, in a choral format, while celebrating the enduring partnership between Pakistan and Romania. The programme commenced with an informal gathering of ambassadors with H.E. Yousaf Raza Gillani, Chairman of the Senate. It continued

with the inauguration of a diplomatic exhibition dedicated to over six decades of Romania-Pakistan bilateral relations, highlighting key milestones in political dialogue, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange. The exhibition was officially opened through a ribbon-cutting ceremony jointly conducted by Chairman Gillani and H.E. Dan Stoiculescu, Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan. Foreign Ambassadors and Pakistani parliamentarians toured the exhibition, reflecting a shared commitment to strengthening international cooperation and friendship. A highlight of the event was the performance of

the national anthem of Pakistan in its historic choral arrangement by the Romanian National Chamber Choir "Madrigal - Marin Constantin," presented during the opening of the Senate plenary session in the presence of ambassadors, senators, and guests. On this occasion, Chairman Gillani recalled that, on the occasion of Pakistan Day (23 March), Romania offered Pakistan the first-ever professional choral arrangement and written score of its national anthem. This landmark cultural initiative was presented to the Senate on the auspicious day when Pakistan played a crucial diplomatic role in

reaching a ceasefire in the Middle East. He further expressed his appreciation to the Romanian authorities for their support in advancing this historic initiative, emphasizing that the project represents a lasting cultural bridge between Pakistan and Romania, symbolizing friendship, mutual respect, and a shared vision for deepening bilateral relations. During the plenary session, senators from both the government and opposition benches also expressed their gratitude to Romania for this historic gesture. The event reaffirmed the strength of Romania-Pakistan relations and underscored the vital role of cultural diplomacy in bringing nations closer together.

UN chief hails two-week ceasefire between US, Iran



APP
UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has welcomed the announcement of a two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran, describing it as a positive step toward de-escalating tensions in the Middle East. The UN chief "calls on all the parties to the current conflict in the Middle East to comply with their obligations under international law and to abide by the terms of the ceasefire in order to pave the way toward a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region," his Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement issued at UN Headquarters in New York, praising Pakistan's efforts towards peace in the region. The statement came after US President Donald Trump announced Tuesday that he agreed "to suspend the bombing and attack of Iran for a period of two weeks." Guterres emphasized that an immediate end to hostilities is critical to protecting civilian lives and alleviating human suffering amid the ongoing crisis, stemming from US-Israeli war on Iran. He also expressed appreciation for the mediation efforts led by Pakistan and other nations working to facilitate the ceasefire agreement, according to Dujarric. "The Secretary-General's Personal Envoy Jean Arnault is in the region to support efforts toward lasting peace," he added.

Pakistan sees drop in energy production

NEWS DESK
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's energy sector is undergoing a fragile shift, with declining domestic production and rising reliance on imports, as supply growth struggles to keep pace with increasing demand. Indigenous energy production fell from 53 MTOE to 50 MTOE, while imports increased from 33 MTOE to 34 MTOE, highlighting growing reliance on external sources. Total primary energy supply rose only slightly by 1.58% to 82 MTOE, mainly due

to imports of LPG, oil, coal, and electricity. LPG (+28.56%), imported electricity (+20.11%), oil (+14.51%), coal (+6.32%), and hydropower (+1.21%) increased, while natural gas, LNG (-4.1%), nuclear, and renewables declined, signalling tightening domestic availability. Final energy consumption grew 8.32%, led by commercial (+23.38%), industrial (+16.78%), transport (+9.44%), and government (+14.79%) sectors, reflecting economic recovery, though agricultural use fell 30.97% and domestic use declined slightly, raising rural access concerns.

Oil plunges, equities jump worldwide

COMMERCE DESK
LONDON: Oil prices dived, stocks surged, and the dollar was knocked back on Wednesday as a two-week Middle East ceasefire sparked a relief rally, fuelled by hopes that oil and gas flows through the Strait of Hormuz could resume. The news capped weeks of financial market volatility and geopolitical upheaval after US and Israeli strikes on Iran in late February pushed tensions to the brink, with Tehran effectively choking off the strategic waterway that carries about 20% of the world's oil and gas.

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday agreed to a ceasefire with Iran, less than two hours before his deadline for Tehran to reopen the strait or face devastating attacks on its civilian infrastructure. Market reaction was swift and dramatic, with US crude futures down around 16% to \$94.59 a barrel, while Brent futures LCOc1 also slid 15% to \$92.35 per barrel. S&P 500 futures ES1 leapt over 2%, while European futures jumped over 4%. The US dollar fell broadly, having been the haven of choice during the tumult. In Asia, Japan's Nikkei surged about 5% while South Korea's Kospi rose 6%, triggering a halt in trading.

China lauds Pakistan role for Middle East stability

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Meets Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, received the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Mr. Jiang Zaidong, on Wednesday afternoon. During the meeting, DPM/FM Dar reiterated Pakistan's firm commitment to dialogue and diplomacy as the only viable path toward achieving lasting peace and stability

in the Middle East and West Asia. Ambassador Jiang Zaidong expressed China's deep appreciation for Pakistan's constructive and positive role in promoting peace and security across the Middle East and the Gulf region. Both sides expressed the hope that ongoing diplomatic efforts would result in durable peace and security in the region, serving the interests of all concerned parties. The meeting underscores the strong and enduring strategic partnership between Pakistan and China, with both countries aligning closely on regional and international issues.

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