

EU to impose counter tariffs worth \$28 billion on US goods

London (News Desk) The European Union will impose counter tariffs on 26 billion euros (\$28 billion) worth of US goods from next month, the European Commission said on Wednesday, ramping up a global trade war in response to blanket US tariffs on steel and aluminium. US President Donald Trump's increased tariffs of 25 per cent on all steel and aluminium imports took effect on Wednesday as prior exemptions, duty free quotas and product exclusions expired. The European Commission said it will end the current suspension of tariffs on US products on April 1 and will also put forward a new package of countermeasures on US goods by mid-April. The suspended tariffs apply to products ranging from boats to bourbon to motorbikes, and the EU said it would now start a two-week consultation to pick other product categories. The new measures will target around 18 billion euros in goods, with the overall objective to ensure that the total value of the EU measures corresponds to the increased value of trade impacted by the new US tariffs, the EU said.

Nasa fires chief scientist, more Trump cuts to come

Washington (News Desk) Nasa announced on Tuesday the dismissal of its chief scientist and others to comply with orders from President Donald Trump, marking the latest in a series of administration actions undermining climate change research. While the move affects only 23 people, a spokeswoman indicated more cuts are coming. The first round notably eliminates the Office of the Chief Scientist, led by Katherine Calvin, a renowned climatologist who contributed to key UN climate reports. She and other US delegates were also barred from attending a major climate science meeting in China last month. "To optimise our workforce, and in compliance with an Executive Order, Nasa is beginning its phased approach to a reduction in force, known as a RIF," agency spokeswoman Cheryl Warner said. "A small number of individuals received notification March 10 they are a part of Nasa's RIF. If they're eligible, those employees may opt to participate in the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority, or VERA, or complete the RIF process." Also eliminated are the Office of Technology, Policy, and Strategy and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Branch of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Border closure slows return of Afghans, says International Organisation for Migration

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has said the closure of the Torkham border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan has affected the return and deportation of Afghan nationals. The movement of people via the border crossing was abruptly suspended on Feb 21 after Pakistani and Afghan security forces developed differences over construction activities on both sides of the border. Since then, officials and tribal elders on both sides have been holding talks about reopening the border. According to the IOM data released on Monday, 6,191 Afghans returned to their country of birth through five border crossing points along the border between February 16 and 28. Of them, 3,040 or 49pc returned via the Torkham border. However, the number of Afghans who returned or were deported through the border fell by 47pc, compared to the first 15 days of February. Pakistan has ordered Afghan nationals residing illegally in the country and those with Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders to leave the country by March 31 as part of its repatriation drive, which started in 2023. Last month, Dawn reported that the government had devised a plan to move registered Afghan refugees out of Islamabad and Rawalpindi and gradually repatriate them back to their country. Cumulatively, since Sept 15, 2023, 842,429 persons have returned to Afghanistan. Of them, 36,438 returned since Jan 1. According to the International Organisation for Migration, the fear of arrest was the biggest reason for the return, as 89pc of Afghans said they were going back to avoid legal action. Around 25pc cited the deportation of their family to the International Organisation for Migration, the fear of arrest was the biggest reason for the return, as 89pc of Afghans said they were going back members as the reason. Around 32pc said they were returning due to economic factors, such as the inability to pay rent, while 26pc said they couldn't afford utility bills. The majority of returnees were between 18 and 59 years of age (44pc), while 31pc were between five and 17 years. More men (52pc) than women (48pc) returned between February 16 and 28.



US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker calls on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad on March 11, 2025.

'Humiliated': Palestinian victims of Israel sexual abuse testify at UN

Washington (News Desk) Palestinians who say they suffered brutal beatings and sexual abuse in Israeli detention and at the hands of Israeli settlers testified about their ordeals at the United Nations this week. "I was humiliated and tortured," said Said Abdel Fattah, a 28-year-old nurse detained in November 2023 near Gaza City's

Al Shifa hospital where he worked. Ahead of the hearings Daniel Meron, Israel's ambassador to the UN in Geneva dismissed them as a waste of time, saying Israel investigated and prosecuted any allegations of wrongdoing by its forces. Fattah gave his testimony from Gaza via video-link to a public hearing, speaking through an interpreter. He

described being stripped naked in the cold, suffering beatings, threats of rape and other abuse over the next two months as he was shuttled between overcrowded detention facilities. "I was like a punching bag," he said of one particularly harrowing interrogation he endured in January 2024. The interrogator, he said, "kept hitting me on my

genitals... I was bleeding everywhere, I was bleeding from my penis, I was bleeding from my anus." "I felt like my soul (left) my body." Shocking Fattah spoke on Tuesday during the latest of a series of public hearings hosted by the UN's independent Commission of Inquiry (COI) on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

China, Russia, Iran to hold nuclear talks in Beijing on Friday

Beijing (News Desk) China will hold a meeting on Friday in Beijing with Russia and Iran on the Iranian "nuclear issue", its foreign ministry said, with both nations sending their deputy foreign ministers. Ties between Iran and Russia have deepened since the start of the Ukraine war in 2022, with a strategic cooperation treaty signed in January. Both have good relations

with China. China's Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxun will chair the meeting, Mao Ning, a spokesperson of its foreign ministry, told a regular press conference on Wednesday. The meeting will follow a closed-door gathering of the United Nations Security Council in New York the same day regarding Iran's expansion of its stocks of uranium that are close to weapons-grade.

Last week, Russia said Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov discussed international efforts to tackle Iran's nuclear programme with its ambassador, Kazem Jalali, after reports that Russia agreed to help US President Donald Trump's administration in communicating with Iran. Tehran has long denied wanting to develop a nuclear weapon. However, the UN atomic watchdog

IAEA has warned it is "dramatically" accelerating enrichment of uranium to up to 60 per cent purity, close to the weapons-grade level of roughly 90pc. Iran reached a deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, with Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States in 2015, that lifted sanctions on Tehran in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.



President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen speaks during a debate on urgent decisive steps and unwavering support for Ukraine, as part of a plenary session at the European Parliament, in Strasbourg, France, on March 11

Elon Musk ordered to make DOGE records public

WASHINGTON: (News Desk) A US judge ordered the government-downsizing team created by President Donald Trump and spearheaded by billionaire Elon Musk to make public all records concerning its operations, which he said had been run in "unusual secrecy". In a lawsuit launched by Citizens for

Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) on Feb 20, the court directed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to release its internal documents. The court order requires Trump's government to file a status report on the production of documents by March 20, and to confer with the

plaintiffs on a joint report, including a timeline, by March 27. Since his return to the White House in January, US President Donald Trump has launched a vast offensive aimed at cutting public spending and reducing the role of the federal government. To that end, he tapped Musk, a top campaign donor

turned senior adviser, to lead DOGE, which has cut thousands of government jobs and upended agencies — prompting numerous lawsuits. The judge said the authority exercised by DOGE "across the federal government and the dramatic cuts it has apparently made with no congressional input.

Dalai Lama's book offers 'framework' for Tibet after his death

NEW DELHI: (News Desk) The Dalai Lama published a book on Tuesday which he says is a "framework for the future of Tibet", to guide compatriots in relations with Beijing after his death. China says Tibet is an integral part of the country, and many exiled Tibetans fear Beijing will name a successor to the Dalai Lama when he dies, bolstering control over a land it poured troops into in 1950 — 75 years ago this coming October. The book, "Voice for the Voiceless", describes the Dalai Lama dealing with successive leaders of the People's Republic of China on behalf of Tibet and its people. "The right of the Tibetan people to be the custodians of their own homeland cannot be indefinitely denied, nor can their aspiration for freedom be crushed forever through oppression," the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader writes.

Batting coach Yousuf to travel with Pakistan squad to New Zealand

LAHORE: (News Desk) Hours after pulling out of Pakistan's touring party to New Zealand, newly-appointed batting coach Mohammad Yousuf said he will be travelling with the squad. The Pakistan Cricket Board had announced that Yousuf had opted out due to his daughter's illness with a new-look Pakistan team scheduled to leave for New Zealand in the wee hours of Wednesday to play five Twenty20 Internationals and three One-day Internationals against the Black Caps. Three hours after the initial notification of his withdrawal, the PCB issued another statement announcing the batting great will be on the flight after his daughter's health had improved. "Doctors have informed me that the health of my daughter is now better so now I am going with the team to New Zealand," Yousuf was quoted as saying. Pakistan ended their short training camp at the LCCA Ground on Monday night with newcomers in the T20 side, Abdul Samad, Hasan Nawaz and Mohammad Ali, vowing to give their best in New Zealand. Power-hitter Samad was called up to the side for the first time following impressive performances in the Champions T20 Cup and said he has been asked by the team management to "play his natural game according to the demand in the middle order". "New Zealand are a strong side but we feel we have our bases covered," he added. Hasan is the first player from Layyah to be called up to the Pakistan squad and the opener was "ready to bat at any position".

Pakistan snowshoers make finals at Special Olympics

TURIN: (News Desk) Demonstrating an impressive performance, Pakistan's snowshoeing athletes advanced to the finals in the 200m and 800m races at the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Turin on Tuesday. Female athletes Iqra Akram, Manahil, Shah Galoon, and Tabassum Nasir along with their male compatriots Ali Raza, Saboor and Mohammad Afaq qualified for the 200m final while Moazzam Iqbal secured a spot in the 800m final. According to the officials of the Pakistan contingent, the athletes showed "unmatched speed, endurance, and determination" to earn their places in the finals scheduled for March 13 at the Palazzetto dello Sports arena in Rome. Farkhanda Jabeen, the head of Pakistan's delegation, highlighted the importance of divisioning in ensuring fair competition at the Special Olympics. According to her, divisioning allows athletes with similar speed and ability levels to compete against each other, providing a meaningful and competitive experience.

Argentina starts trial over death of football icon Maradona

BUENOS AIRES: (News Desk) Argentina began a long-awaited trial on Tuesday of the medical team for football star Diego Maradona, over four years after his death in 2020, in a case that has riled emotions in the South American country where the World Cup winner is still revered. Maradona's family, lawyers and his former nurses, brain surgeon and psychiatrist accused of homicide by negligence, arrived at the court on the outskirts of capital city Buenos Aires in what promises to be a drama-filled and lengthy saga. Outside the San Isidro appeals court, fans held up placards with the message "Justice for D10S," using a nickname based on Maradona's shirt number and the Spanish word for God. "Thank you all for coming," Veronica Ojeda, Maradona's former partner and mother of one of his sons, 12-year-old Dieguito, told the crowd as she fought back tears. Maradona's older daughters, Dalma and Gianinna, entered the building without saying anything to the press or supporters. "They killed him, and today they will have to deal with it here," Maradona fan Sergio Gimenez said outside the court. Maradona, immortalised in Argentina in huge murals and tattoos, is considered one of the greatest footballers ever. Seven members of the medical team are due in court in a trial expected to last several months. An eighth member faces a trial by jury in July. Maradona died at home in November 2020 from heart failure at age 60 while recovering from surgery to remove a blood clot days earlier. His medical team reject the charges of "simple homicide with eventual intent" in the treatment of the former Boca Juniors and Napoli player. Prosecutors read out the indictment to a packed courtroom, where they described the conditions of care received by the late star as "calamitous, reckless, deficient, unprecedented." They alleged that protocols were broken by medical professionals and that the home where Maradona was recovering from surgery was described as a "theatre of horror" where nobody did what was required.

Pakistan, US reaffirm trade and security ties

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) The United States and Pakistan on Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to expanding economic and trade relations while deepening cooperation in counterterrorism and security, the Foreign Office (FO) said. The renewed resolve followed a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker in Islamabad. "The two sides, inter alia (among other things), agreed to upscale and

strengthen economic and trade relations as well as cooperation in counterterrorism and security domains," the Foreign Office said. The meeting took place at a critical time, just days before the anticipated implementation of a new US travel ban, expected this week. FO says diplomat deported from Los Angeles was on private trip. The ban follows President Donald Trump's Executive Order 14161, titled "Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National

Security and Public Safety Threats". Signed on Jan 20, 2025, the order was one of Mr Trump's first actions upon returning to office. Under the directive, key US officials, including the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security, the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence, were given 60 days (until March 21, 2025) to submit a report identifying countries with inadequate vetting and screening processes. The findings could lead to partial or full travel suspensions for nationals of those countries.

The order, aimed at strengthening national security and public safety, has drawn criticism for its similarities to Mr Trump's earlier "Muslim ban", with concerns that it may disproportionately affect certain regions. Pakistan is believed to be among the countries at risk of inclusion in the travel ban, largely due to security and vetting concerns linked to militancy issues. Government officials and diplomats have expressed hope that the Trump administration will share further details before

finalising the restrictions. The Foreign Office statement did not say whether the US diplomat had given any clarity about the expected ban or Mr Dar had conveyed the government's concerns on the issue. Despite frostiness in ties, a notable progress in US-Pakistan relations came last week with the capture and extradition of Islamic State-Khorasan operative and Afghan national Sharifullah to the United States. The handover was met with words of appreciation from Washington, and with a telephone con-

versation between Mr Dar and US National Security Adviser Mike Waltz. Entry refusal K.K. Ahsan Wagan in a separate statement, the Foreign Office confirmed the embarrassing incident of Pakistan's Ambassador to Turkmenistan K.K. Ahsan Wagan being refused entry into the United States and deported from Los Angeles. "The officer had been travelling for a private visit. The matter is being investigated by the Foreign Ministry," a statement attributed to spokesman Shafqat Ali Khan said.