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Iran vows to keep Hormuz strait blocked as long as war continues

- Energy secretary claims US Navy escorted ship through 'troubled waters', later deletes X post
- Araghchi shoots down Trump's signal for talks, says will fight as long as necessary
- Israel says 'not done with offensive' yet; Hegseth claims unleashing 'most intense strikes' yet
- US 'unhappy' with Israeli strikes on Iranian oil facilities
- Pakistan continues diplomatic efforts; slams invasion of Lebanon



TEHRAN: Rescuers work in the rubble of a residential building after air strikes in the Resalat area.—Reuters

TEHRAN / WASHINGTON: The US continued to put out more mixed signals on Tuesday, as US President Donald Trump told *Fox News* that it was possible he would be willing to talk with Tehran, while his Pentagon chief vowed to ramp up strikes against Iran, promising "the most intense day of strikes" yet.

Iran's forces, however, vowed to fight on, declaring that not one litre of oil would be exported from the Gulf while its war with the United States and Israel continues.

The vow came as the US energy secretary claimed, then withdrew a statement saying the navy had escorted commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

Chris Wright posted on X that the US Navy had escorted an oil tanker through the Strait of Hormuz "to ensure oil remains flowing to global markets."

Soon after, he deleted the post for rea-

sons that were unclear, and White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt later denied the report.

A day after Trump claimed the war

Oil plunges 15pc amid 'hopes' of de-escalation: Page 9

Mideast war displaces 100,000 in Lebanon: Page 12

Minab missile fragments came from US Tomahawks: NYT: Page 12

2,000 Pakistani students evacuated from Iran, NA told: Page 12

would be "ended soon" in a bid to calm oil markets, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) also mocked his bid to

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Pakistan steps into 5G era with \$507m spectrum sale

- Jazz acquires largest share with 190MHz; announces 5G test trials at 180 towers
- Ufone secures 180MHz; Zong wins 110MHz
- 5G rollout planned in five major cities within five to six months

By Kalbe Ali



PTA CHIEF Hafeezur Rehman and IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja open the spectrum auction.—Dawn

KARACHI: The government completed its 5G spectrum auction on Tuesday, with 480 megahertz (MHz) sold for \$507 million at the end of the third round of bidding.

The three bidders — Zong, Jazz and Ufone — competed heavily for the 2,600MHz band, a key frequency range for 5G services. Zong acquired 110MHz, Ufone 180MHz and Jazz 190MHz during the auction.

Pakistan offered spectrum across several bands, including 700MHz for \$32.5m, 1,800MHz for \$16.8m, 2,100MHz for \$70m, 2,300MHz for \$10m, 2,600MHz for \$12.5m and 3,500MHz for

\$6.5m per lot.

The bidding process was launched in the presence of Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, former IT minister Syed Aminul Haque, and the chairperson and some members of

the National Assembly Standing Committee on IT and Telecom.

All three telecom operators were required to acquire at least 100MHz. Among them, Jazz purchased the largest share

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PM orders third-party audit of austerity plan

- Dar-led panel to review, report progress; Friday declared additional weekly holiday
- Sindh also closes schools until March 31; Punjab notifies 21-day closure
- Sindh's austerity plan covers shorter workweek, 50pc cut in fuel allocation, ban on official events

By Syed Irfan Raza and Tahir Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD / KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed all federal ministries and divisions to strictly adhere to the "war austerity plan", declaring that all government departments would undergo third-party audits to assess whether the plan was being implemented in its true spirit.

"The austerity measures taken by government departments should undergo a third-party audit to assess their impact and ensure transparency and effectiveness," PM Shehbaz said while presiding over a meeting to review the austerity plan that he had

announced a day earlier to cope with the situation arising from the global energy and oil crisis triggered by the US-Israel war on Iran.

Judiciary adopts austerity measures: Page 3

KP cuts in-person classes to four days a week amid oil crisis: Page 8

Troops guard B'desh depots after oil riots: Page 10

The premier emphasised that Pakistan must ensure economic stability

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Pakistan, India trade barbs at UN Security Council over Afghanistan

- Exchange took place after New Delhi's representative condemned Pakistan for carrying out air strikes on TTP hideouts
- Chinese envoy says Beijing working to reduce Islamabad-Kabul tensions

By Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: Pakistan and India exchanged strong words at a United Nations Security Council meeting during a debate on Afghanistan, with Islamabad defending its counter-terrorism actions and New Delhi condemning cross-border air strikes.

The exchange followed remarks by Naseer Ahmad Faiq, who serves as interim charge d'affaires of Afghanistan's permanent mis-

sion to the United Nations. Afghanistan's Taliban authorities are not represented at the UN

Afghanistan designated 'state sponsor of wrongful detention': Page 10

Afghan Taliban posts in Arandu, Kurram destroyed: Page 12

and do not recognise Mr Faiq. In his statement, Naseer Faiq

highlighted civilian casualties during the Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict and stressed the need to fight terrorism. He did not, however, mention Al Qaeda, the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), or other groups.

In his reply, Pakistan's Permanent Representative, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, said he was compelled to take the floor again after listening to remarks by the Afghan and Indian

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Premier hopes new supreme leader will 'bring peace to Iran'

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: In the first official correspondence with Iran's new supreme leader, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday wrote to Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to continue to work "closely" with the Islamic republic, and hoping that the new leader will bring peace and stability to the neighbouring Muslim state.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the PM also expressed condolences over the assassination of his father and former supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, by US and Israeli forces.

Iran's Assembly of Experts had named him the new supreme leader to succeed his father a couple of days ago.

The PM Office said the premier congratulated Ayatollah Mojtaba on his appointment as the supreme leader and voiced optimism that he would lead his country towards "peace, stability, and prosperity".

He also offered "condolences on the martyrdom of his revered father, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei". PM Shehbaz noted that the martyrdom of the former supreme leader had "deeply saddened the people of Pakistan, who stand in solidarity with the leadership and people of Iran during this difficult time".

He expressed faith that the new supreme leader would guide his country

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Minister urges media caution on foreign policy amid ME crisis

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday called on the media to exercise caution when discussing matters related to Pakistan's foreign policy amid escalating tensions in the Middle East, citing "unease" voiced by "friendly countries".

He made the remarks while addressing a press conference alongside Information Minister Attaullah Tarar and Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry.

Law minister, NAB chief fail to turn up for Senate briefing: Page 3

The press conference came against the backdrop of conflict in Iran, which has been embroiled in a war with the United States and Israel since the latter's February 28 strikes, prompting retaliatory strikes from Iran on neighbouring countries, which house US bases.

Taking note of the recent escalation in the Middle East following US-Israeli

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Govt to table SOE bills to satisfy IMF

Pakistan is set to introduce a series of bills in parliament to bring more than a dozen state-owned enterprises under standard statutory, fiduciary and governance compliance as part of efforts to meet IMF conditions and complete the programme review. At least two sets of legislation will be presented to the National Assembly within days to meet a structural benchmark repeatedly missed earlier. **Page 9**

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SKY IS NOT THE LIMIT ANYMORE!

IT'S MORE THAN JUST SPEED

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