

Stop threatening, blackmailing: China to US

Trump and Japan eye
"win-win" in tariff talks

Washington: US President Donald Trump said he will join tariff negotiations with Japan on Wednesday, alongside Treasury and Commerce officials. This follows his 90-day pause on a 24% tariff on Japanese goods. Trump said talks will cover tariffs, military costs, and trade fairness. Japan's envoy Ryosei Akazawa expressed hope for a "win-win" outcome. Top Japanese officials denied allegations of manipulating US Treasury markets to influence the pause. **AFP**

China's Q1 growth hits
5.4% as amid US tariffs

Bangkok: China's economy grew 5.4% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2025, boosted by strong exports as firms rushed to ship goods before steep US tariffs—up to 145%—took effect. Industrial output rose 6.5%, with advanced tech sectors. Analysts warn of a slowdown ahead. Chinese exports to the US now account for under 15% of total exports. Exports helped economy expand at a 5% annual rate in 2024 and this year's official target is about 5%. **AP**

China appoints a new
trade negotiator

Taipei: China has appointed Li Chenggang as its new trade negotiator, replacing Wang Shouwen, amid intensifying tariff tensions with the US. Li, a former WTO ambassador, brings deep international trade experience as Beijing faces 145% US tariffs and responds with 125% on American goods. With both sides nearing a tariff standoff, analysts say the shift signals China's focus on resilience, domestic consumption, and strengthening ties. **AP**

This statement comes after Donald Trump said it was up to Beijing to come to the negotiating table to discuss ending their trade war



Chinese-made cars lined up at the port in Nanjing, in China's province as they wait to be loaded onto ships for export | **AP**

BEIJING

CHINA told Washington on Wednesday to "stop threatening and blackmailing" after US President Donald Trump said it was up to Beijing to come to the negotiating table to discuss ending their trade war.

Trump has slapped new tariffs on friend and foe alike but has reserved his heaviest blows for China, with new levies of up to 145 per cent on many Chinese imports even as Beijing has retaliated with duties on US goods of 125 per cent. "If the US really wants to resolve the issue through dialogue and negotiation, it should stop exerting extreme pressure, stop threatening and blackmailing, and talk to China on the basis of equality, respect and mutual benefit," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said. "China's position has been very clear. There is no winner in a tariff war or a trade war," Lin said, adding.

ing "China does not want to fight, but it is not afraid to fight."

Trump's new levies mean that the tariffs on certain Chinese goods are as high as 245 per cent, which the White House said in a factsheet on Tuesday were "as a result of its retaliatory actions."

Beijing's commerce ministry said in a statement later on Wednesday.

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The Republican administration has, however, given temporary reprieve for certain tech products such as smartphones and laptops. The White House said on Tuesday it was up to Beijing to make the first move towards ending the dispute, which economists warn could cause a global recession.

"The ball is in China's court. China needs to make a deal with us. We don't have to make a deal with them," said a statement from Trump read out by Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt. China also has been highlighting its focus on trade with countries other than the United States at various trade fairs that are showcasing its vast market and competitiveness as a manufacturing giant. **APF**

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'Israeli troops to be in Gaza, Lebanon & Syria indefinitely'

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI defense minister said Wednesday that troops will remain in so-called security zones in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria indefinitely, remarks that could further complicate talks with Hamas over a ceasefire and hostage release.

Israeli strikes across Gaza meanwhile killed another 22 people, according to local health officials, including a girl who was not yet a year old. The girl's mother, who was wounded in the strike, embraced her daughter, still wearing a bloodied blue and white dress, before she was taken for burial.

Israeli forces have taken over more than half of Gaza in a renewed campaign to pressure Hamas to release hostages after Israel ended their ceasefire last month. Israel has also refused to withdraw from some areas in Lebanon following a ceasefire with the Hezbollah militant group last year, and it seized a buffer zone in southern Syria after rebels overthrew President Bashar Assad in December.

"Unlike in the past, the (Israeli military) is not evacuating areas that have been cleared and seized," Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement. The military "will remain in the security zones as a buffer between the enemy and (Israeli) communities in any temporary or permanent situation in Gaza — as in Lebanon and Syria."

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Place: Coimbatore
Date: 17.04.2025

Asst. General Manager & Zonal Head
UCO Bank

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Place: Coimbatore
Date: 17.04.2025

Asst. General Manager & Zonal Head
UCO Bank

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By: **Authorised Officer**
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Harvard is a joke, undeserving of US federal funding: Don

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Donald Trump called Harvard a "joke" on Wednesday and said it should lose its government research contracts after the top US university refused to accept demands to come under federal political supervision.

"Harvard can no longer be considered even a decent place of learning, and should not be considered on any list of the World's Great Universities or Colleges," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

"Harvard is a joke, teaches Hate and Supremacy and should no longer receive Federal Funds."

Trump is furious at the storied university — which has produced 162 Nobel prize winners — for rejecting his demand to submit to government supervision on admissions, hiring and political slant.

Other institutions, including Columbia University, have bowed to less far-ranging demands from the Trump administration, which claims that educational elite is too left-wing.

Harvard flatly rejected the pressure, with its president, Alan Garber, saying this week that the university refuses to "negotiate over its independence or its constitutional



US President Donald Trump | **AP**

rights."

Trump this week ordered the freezing of \$2.2 billion in federal funding to Harvard, a global research powerhouse. He also threatened to strip the university of its tax-exempt status as a nonprofit educational institution. His war against the intellectual elite is echoed in similar, unprecedented pressure campaigns against top law firms and media groups, including the Associated Press.

Demonstrating the broadening resonance of the row, Golden State Warriors basketball coach Steve Kerr spoke out in support of Harvard after his team defeated the Memphis Grizzlies. **APF**

Row over trans rights: UK court rules definition of 'woman' based on sex at birth

LONDON

BRITAIN'S Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that the legal definition of a "woman" is based on a person's sex at birth, a landmark decision with far-reaching implications for the bitter debate over trans rights.

In a win for Scottish gender-critical campaigners who brought the case to the UK's highest court, five London judges unanimously ruled that "the terms 'woman' and 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 refer to a biological woman, and historical sex."

However, the act also "gives transgender people protection" against discrimination in their acquired gender, Justice Patrick Hodge said in handing down the verdict.

The UK government welcomed the ruling for bringing "clarity" to the debate.

It is the culmination of a years-long battle between the Scottish government and the campaign group For Women Scotland (FWS) — which launched an appeal to the Supreme Court after losing pleas in Scottish courts over an obscure legislation aimed at hiring more women in public-sector bodies.

Dozens of FWS and other gender-critical campaigners, who argue that biological sex cannot be changed, cheered the ruling, hugging and crying outside the court.

"This has been a really really long ride," said Susan Smith, co-director of For Women Scotland.

Today, the judges have said what we always believed to be the case: that women are protected by their biological sex," she said. "Women can now feel safe that services and spaces designated for women are for women."



Directors of For Women Scotland celebrate as they leave Britain's Supreme Court in London | **AP**

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The Scottish government said it accepts the verdict and would focus on "protecting the rights of all." Trans rights activists had raised concerns that a ruling in favour of FWS could risk discrimination against trans people in their chosen gender. **APF**

WHO member countries agree on draft pandemic treaty

LONDON

Five years after COVID-19 triggered national lockdowns, economic uncertainty and killed millions, the World Health Organization's member countries agreed on a draft "pandemic treaty" that sets guidelines for how the international community might confront the next global health crisis.

After the world's largely disastrous response to the coronavirus, countries tasked the WHO with overseeing a pandemic treaty in 2021; negotiations concluded early Wednesday on an agreement expected to be adopted next month at the UN health

agency's annual meeting in Geneva. WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus heralded it as a historic moment, saying countries have proven that "in our divided world, nations can still work together to find common ground and a shared response."

Following US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the country from the WHO in January, American officials were barred from participating in the talks and are not expected to sign the treaty. During COVID-19, it was largely American research and development that produced the most effective vaccines and medicines. **AP**

Kremlin says ready to help Iran-US nuclear talks

Moscow: The Kremlin said Wednesday that Russia was ready to do "everything" in its powers to help find a diplomatic resolution to the stand-off between the United States and Iran over Tehran's nuclear programme. The comments come a day before Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is due in Moscow for talks with top Russian officials, including the state of the US-Iran talks. Moscow, which commands the world's largest confirmed arsenal of nuclear weapons, has deepened its military ties with Iran since it launched its offensive on Ukraine in February 2022. "The Russian Federation remains ready to do everything within our capabilities to contribute to the settlement of the situation by political and diplomatic means," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, responding to a question from AFP over whether Moscow would consider being a guarantor of any deal.