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Middle East war to have spill over effect: UN chief

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Serena Hotels celebrates World Women day

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Three petrol shipments due today

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Briefs

IED blast targets Bannu police cops

STAFF REPORT

LOWER SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: At least two policemen were martyred, and 31 others sustained wounds, including five cops and 26 civilians, after an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Rustam Bazaar of Wana town in Lower South Waziristan district, an official said on Saturday. The deadly explosion occurred in the Rustam Bazaar of the KP's tribal district at around 5pm. Following the incident, police cordoned off the area and launched an investigation. According to police officials, the explosion occurred when policemen on routine patrol were present in the Rustam Bazaar, Wana. During this time, explosive material planted near the main gate of the supermarket detonated with a loud blast, injuring policemen and civilians present at the scene, while two policemen were martyred on the spot. DSP Wana Circle Asghar Ali Shah said that the explosive material had been planted at the main entrance of the supermarket and was detonated through a remote control or a timed device. Immediately after the blast, residents, police personnel and rescue teams initiated relief operations and shifted the injured to the District Headquarters Hospital in Wana.

Dar talks to Jordan FM

APP

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Sunday, spoke with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan Ayman Safadi and they expressed deep concern over the evolving regional situation. "DPM/FM emphasized the urgent need for de-escalation, and the importance of dialogue and diplomacy as essential for peace, and stability in the region and beyond," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

Gwadar fisherman killed by missile debris

DNA

GWADAR: A fisherman from Gwadar was killed after the debris of an Israeli projectile intercepted by Iranian air defence systems hit his boat in Iranian waters, officials said on Sunday. Gwadar Deputy Commissioner (DC) Naqibullah Kakar confirmed the incident to Dawn that took place on Saturday, saying that the deceased was identified as Muhammad Tayyab, a resident of Gannz, a small coastal town in Balochistan's Gwadar district. District Police Officer Attaur Rehman also confirmed the incident and told Dawn that Tayyab "went into Iranian waters for Iranian oil". DC Kakar believes an attempt was made to attack fishing boats in a coastal area of Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province, but the projectile was intercepted and destroyed by the Iranian air defence system. "A portion of the debris from that drone or missile hit Tayyab's fishing boat, resulting in his death," he added. The officials said Tayyab's body was taken to his native town, Gannz, via the sea, and he was later buried.

Fitna al Hindustan

Security forces kill 13 khwarij terrorists in KP

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from Indian sponsored killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area

NEWS DESK / DNA

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces killed 13 khwarij belonging to Indian Proxy Fitna Al Khwarij in a series of high-tempo intelligence driven operations in five separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. "During an intelligence based operation in Bajaur District, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location and after an intense fire exchange, five khwarij were sent to hell," said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). In two other encounters in Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan Districts, three khwarij belonging to Indian Proxy Fitna Al Khwarij were successfully neutralized, it further said. Simultaneously, in two separate engagements in Khyber and South Waziristan Districts own troops effectively neutralized five more khwarij. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from Indian sponsored killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area. It is imperative to highlight, that these operations are being conducted concurrently as Pakistan continues to counter emerging challenges along its borders with Afghanistan. The Security Forces of Pakistan remain resolute and unwavering in their commitment to defend the nation's frontiers. "Sanitization operation are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored Kharij found in the area as relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e

PM lauds security forces

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Sunday, commended the security forces for eliminating 13 terrorists of Indian proxy Fitna al Khwarij during different operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The prime minister observed that under a well-devised plan, the security forces had been achieving major successes against terrorists, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. He further said that the entire nation was standing with Pakistan Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism, reiterating that they would not rest till complete eradication of terrorism from the country.

Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country," the news release said.

T20 World Cup

India overpower New Zealand to win title for 3rd time

Men in Blue bowl out New Zealand for 159 after posting a daunting 255-run total on the scoreboard

SPORTS DESK

AHMEDABAD: India beat New Zealand by 96 runs in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 final at Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, on Sunday, to become the first team to win the tournament three times. Set to chase a daunting 256-run target, New Zealand's batting faltered against a disciplined Indian bowling attack and could muster 159 before getting bowled out in 19 overs despite Tim Seifert's half-century. The opening batter waged a lone battle for the Blackcaps with a gutsy 52 off 26 deliveries, hitting five sixes and two fours. Besides him, only Mitchell Santner and Daryl Mitchell could amass double figures, making 43 and 17, respectively. Jasprit Bumrah spearheaded India's bowling charge with a four-wicket haul, conceding just 15

runs in his four overs. He was supported by Axar Patel, who bagged three wickets, while Varun Chakravarty, Hardik Pandya and Abhishek Sharma chipped in with one apiece. New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner's decision to field first backfired as his team's bowling unit conceded 255/5 in 20 overs against the home side. India got off to a flamboyant start to their innings as their opening pair of Sharma and Samson put together 98 runs in just seven overs. Rachin Ravindra eventually broke the opening partnership on the first delivery of the eighth over by getting Sharma caught behind, who made 52 off 21 deliveries, laced with six fours and three sixes. Following his dismissal, Ishan Kishan joined Samson in the middle, and the duo ensured retaining India's momentum by knitting a 105-run partnership

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LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offers condolence over demise of late Zaeem Qadir, senior politician and former Provincial Minister. - DNA

Israel vows to target new supreme leader

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Israel Vows to Target Khamenei's Successor as Iran Nears Consensus on Heir March 8, 2026 - Tensions in the Middle East have escalated sharply following reports that Iran has reached a "majority consensus" on a successor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In response, Israel has issued a bold statement vowing to pursue the yet-unnamed heir, signaling a potential intensification of covert operations and regional conflict. According to sources familiar with Iranian internal deliberations, the Islamic Republic's leadership has been quietly working to secure a smooth transition of power as Khamenei, now 86, faces growing health concerns.

Pak army thwarts cross-border infiltration

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army troops foiled an infiltration attempt near the border fence in the Chaman sector, killing one militant during an exchange of fire, security sources said. According to the sources, security forces continue operations to protect the border fence and prevent cross-border infiltration. They said a group of three to four terrorists attempted to infiltrate the border area in the Chaman sector but was intercepted by Pakistani troops. Sources added that the militants were targeting the border fence and attempting to cut it, prompting a swift response from the security forces.

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Middle East War

PM to announce austerity plan amid global fuel crisis

The burden of austerity should be borne judiciously by all segments of society, while the elite and privileged class should set an example of adopting adjustments and austerity measures"

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would unveil an austerity plan of the government on Monday in view of the prevailing global fuel crisis due to the US/Israel-Iran war, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. On Friday, the government announced an increase in the petroleum product prices by up to Rs55 in the wake of the regional energy crisis. In a press release, the PMO said the PM Shehbaz chaired a meeting on Sunday and reviewed the austerity plan. "The meeting was apprised that the final plan regarding austerity and savings will be announced tomorrow (Monday)," it confirmed. The meeting was, however, informed that the country had adequate reserves of petrol and diesel, and the government had already taken precautionary measures to meet any awkward situation, it said. It added that the government had already prepared a contingency plan under which

work from home and distance learning had been proposed till the situation returns to normal. However, the PM had halted the plan on Friday and decided to review it on a weekly basis. Presiding over the meeting, PM Shehbaz stressed the need for sensible use of petroleum products during the crisis, it stated. The release quoted PM Shehbaz as saying, "The government will provide significant relief to the masses once the situation stabilises. The burden of austerity should be borne judiciously by all segments of society, while the elite and privileged class should set an example of adopting adjustments and austerity measures." The prime minister urged all members of the federal cabinet, federal and provincial ministers and government servants to play their effective role in providing relief to the people and the provision of available resources, it added. "The government was fully aware of the situation and fluctuation of international

Continued on Page 06

Second Pakistani killed in Dubai as Middle East conflict rages on

Al Barsha area located along Sheikh Zayed Road; fatality raises death toll from recent attacks to four people

DNA

DUBAI: A Pakistani driver was killed in Dubai's Al Barsha area on Saturday evening after debris from an aerial interception struck his vehicle shortly after Iftar, authorities confirmed. The incident occurred near Sheikh Zayed Road behind the Mall of the Emirates. Officials said the impact sparked a brief fire, but no other injuries were reported. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine whether the driver received an emergency alert on his mobile phone and if safety instructions were followed. The Al Barsha area is located along Sheikh Zayed Road, one of Dubai's busiest highways. The fatality raises the toll from the recent attacks to four people, including two Pakistani nationals. Previously, a Pakistani national, Murid Zaman, hailing from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was killed in Abu Dhabi's Madinat Zayed area. Zaman, as per diplomatic officials, was killed in an Iranian missile strike after being struck by missile fragments. The Middle East region has been pushed into turmoil after the US and Israel launched an attack on Iran, martyring its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and senior military leadership.

Continued on Page 06

US pressing Sri Lanka not to repatriate Iranian crew

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US is pressing Sri Lanka not to repatriate the survivors from an Iranian warship it sank this week or the crew of a second Iranian ship that is in Sri Lankan custody, according to an internal State Department cable seen by Reuters. A US submarine sank the frigate Dena in the Indian Ocean about 19 nautical miles off Sri Lanka's southern port city of Galle on Wednesday, killing dozens of sailors and dramatically widening Washington's pursuit of the Iranian navy. On Thursday, Sri Lanka began offloading 208 crew members from a second Iranian ship, the naval auxiliary vessel Booshehr, which had found itself stranded in Sri Lanka's exclusive economic zone but outside its

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Section 144 extended in Punjab

LAHORE: The Punjab Home Department has announced a seven-day extension in the enforcement of Section 144 across the province, effective until March 14, 2026. The measure has been taken in view of potential terrorist threats and concerns over public safety.

Under the notification, public gatherings, processions, and demonstrations involving four or more people are prohibited without prior permission. Unauthorized assemblies at public places will also be restricted. Law enforcement personnel on duty, as well as gatherings related to weddings, funerals, official meetings, and court proceedings, are exempted from the ban.

A complete ban has also been imposed on the display and use of all types of weapons in public areas. Intelligence reports indicate that sensitive gatherings could be targeted for terrorist or sectarian activities.

The provincial authorities have directed district administrations and police departments to strictly enforce Section 144 to ensure the safety of citizens and maintain law and order. All necessary measures will be taken to protect lives and property.—APP

KP cabinet discusses important projects today

PESHAWAR: The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has summoned the 49th meeting of the provincial cabinet on Monday, March 9 at 2:00 PM at the Cabinet Room of the Civil Secretariat here. The meeting will be chaired by Chief Minister Sohail Afridi. According to a notification issued by the administration department, the cabinet will discuss several important projects and policy matters related to provincial development including urban infrastructure, energy, health, education and social welfare. Provincial ministers, advisers and senior officials of relevant departments have also been invited to attend the meeting. The agenda includes approval for financial support from the provincial treasury for the establishment of a Forensic Science Laboratory in Peshawar. The project aims at improving scientific investigation of crimes and enhance the capacity of law-enforcement agencies. The cabinet will also be briefed on the Peshawar Revitalization Plan, which focuses on improving urban facilities and the development of the city.—APP

Women assured timely rights, justice, action by UN worldwide

ISLAMABAD: International Women's Day is being observed on Sunday enthusiastically and with great zeal and vigour across the globe, including Pakistan. The Women's day theme is "Give To Gain" and its continuation with "Rights, Justice, Action. For ALL women and girls" (#ForAllWomenAndGirls). This year's theme affirmed women's rights, liberty, empowerment, and strength, and prepared them for active participation in the country's development and progress. As there is a patriotic Pakistani song, sung by renowned Singer Naheed, a few years ago titled "Hum Maain, Hum Behnain, Hum Betiyan, qomon ki izzat hum se ha" (We are Mothers, We are Sisters.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, MNAs Anjum Aqeel Khan, Malik Abrar, MPAs Chaudhry Sher Ali, Malik Iftikhar, Tariq Sadiq, Sardar Tahir, Zubair Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ijaz Abbasi, Chaudhry Masood, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Tahir Ayub, Chaudhry Riffat, Malik Naem and others in a group photo at an Iftar dinner hosted by renowned businessman Chaudhry Wajid Ayub.

No room for terrorism in KP, says Governor Kundi

He said that Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had always taken practical steps for the rights, dignity and equality of women and the party's history in this regard was a matter of pride

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday said there was no room or space for terrorism in the province and paid tribute to security forces for their successful operations against terrorists in various districts. The Governor said security forces carried out effective intelligence-based operations in different areas of the province and eliminated several Khawarij militants, which he termed a commendable achievement. He said the sacrifices and professional capabilities of the Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies in the war against terrorism were a source of pride for the entire nation. The Governor said terrorists were given a strong and effective response during operations conducted in Bajaur, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber and South Waziristan. He added that timely actions by security forces foiled the nefarious designs of terrorists. Faisal Karim Kundi said Pakistan's security forces were determined to defend the country and ensure peace, adding that

the entire nation stood firmly with its forces in the fight against terrorism. He said operations against anti-state elements would continue until the menace of terrorism was completely eradicated. The Governor reiterated that the efforts of security forces and law enforcement agencies for maintaining peace and protecting citizens in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were commendable, adding that the entire nation saluted their sacrifices. Meanwhile, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday said that empowering women was the foundation of a civilized, progressive and balanced society. In a message issued on the occasion of International Women's Day, the Governor said that Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had always taken practical steps for the rights, dignity and equality of women and the party's history in this regard was a matter of pride. He said the leadership of PPP had played a historic role in making women powerful, capable and self-reliant. He particularly paid tribute to former prime minister

Benazir Bhutto Shaheed for encouraging Pakistani women to move forward in political, social and economic fields and for taking revolutionary steps to bring them into the national mainstream. The Governor said the Benazir Income Support Programme, launched on the directions of President Asif Ali Zardari to ensure economic empowerment of women, had emerged as one of Pakistan's most important social protection initiatives, providing financial assistance to millions of deserving women and helping strengthen their independence. Faisal Karim Kundi said PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was carrying forward the mission of his martyred mother by prioritizing women's education, economic empowerment and social protection in the party's political agenda. He said that as Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, his vision was to ensure opportunities for women in education, skills development, employment and leadership so that they could play a full role in the development of society.—DNA

Call for strong coordination to prevent fuel hoarding

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Sunday held a meeting with Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Federal Petroleum Minister Ali Perwaiz Malik to review the evolving regional situation and its possible impact on Pakistan's energy supplies and economy.

The meeting, held at the CM House in Karachi, was attended by Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lajjar, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Secretary Energy Shuhab Ansari and other officials, a CM House communiqué said.

The federal delegation included Additional Secretary Petroleum Division Zafar Abbas, Executive Director Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority Atif Sajjad, DG (Oil) Petroleum Division Imran Ahmad, Member (Oil) OGRA Zainulabideen, Managing Director Sui Southern Gas Company Muhammad Amin and Muhammad Idrees.

The meeting was given a detailed briefing on rising

global oil prices and the country's fuel reserves. Federal officials warned that if the Middle East conflict escalates further, crude oil prices could reach \$120 per barrel, putting additional pressure on Pakistan's economy.

The participants also discussed emergency energy conservation measures aimed at managing fuel consumption and ensuring the continuity of economic activity.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah emphasised the need for responsible use of energy and public cooperation. He said the government's priority was to keep the wheels of the national economy moving while managing the energy situation prudently.

The chief minister said the proposals discussed in the meeting would be presented before the cabinet for further deliberation and decision-making.

Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said the federal government was

closely monitoring global energy markets and preparing contingency plans to deal with the financial impact of rising oil prices.

He added that if crude oil prices surged significantly, Pakistan's monthly oil import bill could increase by up to \$600 million, putting pressure on the country's external account.

Federal Petroleum Minister Ali Perwaiz Malik said fuel conservation measures were essential to ensure that existing reserves lasted longer and remained available for essential sectors.

The meeting was informed that three petrol cargoes were expected to reach Pakistan by Monday. However, officials expressed concern about the possibility of hoarding at petrol pumps.

Participants were also informed that Qatar had issued a force majeure declaration that could affect LNG supplies, raising further concerns about the country's energy outlook.—APP

IESCO achieves 95pc recovery in power theft cases: CEO

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) achieved a 95 percent recovery in cases related to electricity theft during 2025, while Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses were reduced to single digits in line with targets set by National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), Chief Executive Officer Engineer Chaudhry Khalid Mahmood said. In an exclusive interview with APP, the IESCO chief said the company registered 2,092 FIRs against power theft during the year and arrested 785 individuals. A total of 3,402,341 units were charged to offenders, while detection billing amounting to Rs177.88 million was issued, of which Rs168.90 million was recovered, reflecting a 95 percent recovery rate. He said the company had also successfully completed the installation target of 1.2 million state-of-the-art Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters in the Rawalpindi region, a major step towards improving transparency and reducing power losses. Mahmood said higher incidents of electricity theft had been reported in areas including Bhara Kahu, Nilore, Tarnol, Golra and Rawal Road. To curb illegal hooks and direct connections in these localities, the Aerial Bundled Cable (ABC) system had been introduced, which significantly reduced line losses. Providing circle-wise details, he said the highest number of FIRs—818—were registered in Attock Circle, followed by 318 in Rawalpindi City, 303 in Islamabad, 237 in Chakwal, 283 in Rawalpindi Cantt and 133 in Jhelum. Rawalpindi Cantt achieved a 100 percent recovery rate. He said most cases of electricity theft involved direct supply or loop connections, accounting for 1,900 incidents, while 192 cases involved meter tampering, tilting or shunt methods. The IESCO chief said joint operations by the company's operations teams and Meter and Testing (M&T) surveillance units had been intensified across domestic, commercial, industrial and agricultural sectors. Alongside enforcement actions, the company was also running awareness campaigns, including on social media, to discourage power theft. Consumers have been urged to report electricity theft through the helpline 118, assuring that the identity of informants would remain confidential. Mahmood said the strengthening of the system had significantly reduced line losses, while AT&C performance had improved to single digits in accordance with NEPRA's prescribed targets, reflecting effective monitoring and operational measures. He also appreciated the performance of Project Director AMI Syed Mohsin Raza Gilani, saying that under his leadership nearly 1.2 million smart meters had been installed in the Rawalpindi region so far.—DNA

Gujrat: Minister reviews sewerage projects, visits housing scheme

Later, the minister visited a newly constructed house near Dhol Sarai under the "Apni Chhat Apna Ghar" programme, where he met the beneficiary family and congratulated them on the completion of their home

DNA

GUJRAT: Punjab Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Public Health Engineering Bilal Yaseen visited Gujrat on Friday and reviewed the pace and quality of sewerage and drainage development projects worth billions of rupees underway in the city. During the visit, the minister inspected the construction of a 100-cubic capacity disposal station at Zahoor Elahi Stadium and reviewed work on the installation of a nearly two-kilometre main force HDPE pipeline at Bole Chowk. Managing Director WASA Gujrat Kashan Hafeez Butt briefed the minister on the progress of the ongoing development schemes. The briefing highlighted that

WASA Gujrat is executing multiple projects to improve the city's sewerage and drainage system under the Punjab Development Programme. These include construction of disposal stations, RCC pipe manufacturing, supply and installation of HDPE pipelines, desilting of sewerage lines and development of storm water drains and street pavements in different areas under Zone A and Zone B packages. Earlier, a meeting was held at the Deputy Commissioner's Office where Deputy Commissioner Noor-ul-Ain Qureshi and the WASA managing director gave a detailed briefing on the progress of the schemes. The minister directed officials to accelerate work so that maximum progress could be achieved before Eid and the monsoon season. He also asked for immediate

follow-up regarding the provision of remaining machinery for WASA. The minister further directed officials to strengthen safety measures at the Service Murr disposal station. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Yaseen said the projects being implemented under the special directives and funding of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif would significantly improve drainage facilities in the city. He stressed that all schemes should be completed on time and in accordance with modern engineering standards to ensure long-term benefits for citizens. Later, the minister visited a newly constructed house near Dhol Sarai under the "Apni Chhat Apna Ghar" programme, where he met the beneficiary family and congratulated them on the completion of their home.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MARCH

- March 01/Bosnia National Day
- March 03/Bulgaria National Day
- March 06/ Ghana Independence Day
- March 12 /Mauritius National Day
- March 17/Ireland St. Patrick's Day
- March 20/Tunisia Independence Day
- March 21/Namibia National Day
- March 25/Greece National Day
- March 26/Bangladesh National Day
- March 27/Myanmar Armed Forces Day

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
- Shifa International 4603666



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Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: An employee of electric bus service help to boarding disable woman passenger, at a bus station in the Federal Capital.

Nespak inspects Kachehri flyover, Peshawar Road underpasses

Project Head Rana Daud expressed satisfaction over the progress so far, saying the project was moving ahead smoothly, including technical investigations and relocation of high-transmission electricity lines

RAWALPINDI: The Kachehri Chowk re-modelling project has reached around 70% completion, while authorities have finalized the design of three new underpasses on Peshawar Road to improve traffic flow on one of Rawalpindi's busiest arteries. This was briefed during a high level visit comprising officials from National Engineering Services Pakistan (Nespak), along with Project Director FWO Col Akber Khan and Brig (Rtd) Ijaz Qamar Kiyani. The team visited the Kachehri Chowk project and proposed underpass sites to review progress and technical aspects of the schemes. Led by Project Head PMU Rana Daud, the Nespak team carried out a detailed inspection of the ongoing construction

work and reviewed technical components of the Kachehri Chowk project. Officials also assessed the post-completion traffic flow plan to evaluate its impact on easing congestion in the area. The team reviewed the quality control mechanism and expressed satisfaction over the pace and standard of work. The manoeuvrability of heavy vehicles, particularly the movement of electric buses through U-turns, was also examined and certain design modifications were proposed. Superintending Engineer Punjab Highways Ashfaq Anwar, along with officials from relevant departments and service providers, was also present during the visit. Officials said effective interdepartmental coordina-

tion led by Commissioner Rawalpindi Engr Amir Khattak was helping ensure timely completion of the project. Meanwhile, work has also started on three underpasses, planned on Peshawar Road at Race Course Park Chowk, Army Graveyard Chowk and Charing Cross to streamline traffic movement. The visibility has been surfaces as major work on shifting high transmission power lines, base works and environmental preservation work have been completed. Engineer (EXEN) Punjab Highways Rana Qamar Ali told APP that work on the underpasses will formally start on March 28, when the area will be cordoned off and excavation activities will begin. "Shifting of utilities is nearing

completion and the project is expected to be completed by the end of June as per directions of the Chief Minister Punjab", he said. Under the construction plan, work will begin on one side of the road while traffic will be diverted to the other side to maintain two-way traffic during the construction phase. During the visit, the Nespak team also finalized the underpass design, including service roads and U-turn facilities to accommodate future traffic needs. Project Head Rana Daud expressed satisfaction over the progress so far, saying the project was moving ahead smoothly, including technical investigations and relocation of high-transmission electricity lines.—APP

Flag march across Rawalpindi to maintain peace

RAWALPINDI: Police have conducted flag march across the district to demonstrate their preparedness for maintaining law and order and ensuring foolproof security. The march was organised on the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani and was led by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Malik Tariq Mehboob. According to a police spokesperson, the flag march began from Police Lines Headquarters and passed through various areas. Divisional Superintendents of Police (SPs) Sub-Divisional Police Officers (SDPOs), Station House Officers (SHOs), as well as personnel of the Dolphin Squad and Elite Force also participated in the march.—APP

4 dacoits in handcuffs

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police continued its crackdown against criminal elements and organised gangs, arresting four dacoits belonging to two robbery gangs involved in multiple street crime incidents. An official told APP on Sunday that police teams of Sabzi Mandi and Phulgran police stations conducted separate operations and apprehended four members of two organised gangs involved in robbery and snatching incidents. He said the police recovered four snatched motorcycles, cash and valuable mobile phones from the possession of the arrested accused. The official said weapons along with ammunition used in the crimes were also recovered from the suspects. During the initial investigation, the accused confessed to their involvement in multiple incidents of snatching motorcycles, cash and other valuables at gunpoint. DIG Muhammad Jawad Tariq said all legal requirements would be fulfilled to ensure strict punishment for the arrested suspects. He said indiscriminate action would continue against criminals depriving citizens of their valuable belongings.—APP

Parliamentarians stress Muslim countries' unity

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentarians on Sunday called for solidarity among Muslim nations and proactive measures, cautioning that any conflict would undermine regional economies and aid opponents, while reaffirming Pakistan's readiness to respond decisively and the strength of its foreign policy. While speaking exclusively with a local news channel, MNAs from multiple political parties voiced confidence in Pakistan's ability to respond decisively to any threat, praised the government's strong foreign policy and strengthened ties with neighboring countries and called for unity to protect the nation's sovereignty and interests. Dr. Shahida Rehmani, Member of the National Assembly, stated that Pakistan is fully prepared with contingency plans to address regional

challenges, emphasizing the country's strengthened diplomatic relations and lauding the strategic policies of the Prime Minister, President and Field Marshal Asim Munir, while affirming Pakistan's capability to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity. MQM MNA Syed Hafeezuddin also stated that Islamic countries need to understand the importance of standing together on a single platform, demonstrating unity to defend Islam and their nations, warning that failure to do so would allow adversaries to benefit, with potentially dangerous consequences if the conflict continues. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, MNA, further highlighted that the conflict could negatively impact the economy, weaken the Pakistani rupee and reduce remittances from overseas Pakistanis,

stressing that maintaining national unity is crucial to protect the country's financial stability and prevent the economic fallout of war. He appreciated Pakistan's robust and well-coordinated ability to defend its land and sovereignty, highlighting the country's strategic preparedness, strong military capabilities and the leadership's commitment to ensuring national security against any external threat. In conclusion, parliamentarians and leaders across parties emphasized Pakistan's preparedness, the importance of national unity, strong foreign policy and regional cooperation, while highlighting the country's capability to defend its sovereignty, safeguard economic stability and protect Islam and national interests against any external threats.—APP

Govt committed to defend nation

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Khel Das Kohistani reiterated government's resolve under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir to defend the nation and powerful action against forces threatening Islam, humanity, and national unity and sovereignty. Talking to a local news channel, the minister stated that Pakistan will defend the nation while promoting regional peace, supporting dialogue and responding firmly to any threats against its sovereignty or dignity. He warned that Pakistan, as the only Islamic nuclear power will respond decisively to any aggression, particularly targeting India, whose actions threaten regional peace and undermine Pakistan's sovereignty and dignity. He added that any miscalculation by India and Afghanistan will be met with a strong and proportional response, sending a clear message that Pakistan will not tolerate intimidation or provocations. The minister also criticized Afghanistan for allowing its soil to be used against Pakistan, saying such actions cannot be ignored and that Pakistan reserves the right to take strict measures to protect its borders and citizens. He reiterated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, Pakistan's foreign policy is firmly focused on safeguarding national security while maintaining strategic vigilance against hostile neighbors.—APP

Chinese AI gains ground

ISLAMABAD, March 7 (): InferVision's products have reached roughly 40 countries and over 2,000 institutions globally, with a significant share of deployments in public health screening in developing regions, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Saturday. Chinese solutions bundle software, hardware, and training together, and these packages are comparatively much more cost-effective," said Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz, president of the China-Pakistan Medical Association, who has been involved in advancing multiple Chinese medical technology partnerships in Pakistan. In Pakistan, integrated with a battery-operated ultra-portable X-ray unit, the product helped screen over 8,000 individuals among miners and people in remote areas in 2023. The picture is not limited to TB. In Pakistan, a Chinese company, Landing Med, established an AI medical diagnosis laboratory with Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital that began operating in 2023, providing free cervical cancer screening to 10,000 women in its first phase. The lab uses AI-assisted cytology to analyse samples that would otherwise require a specialist pathologist — a resource Pakistan's public health system has in limited supply outside major cities. In a remote mining community in northeast Nigeria, tuberculosis screening no longer begins in a hospital. It begins outdoors, where workers line up beside an ultra-portable X-ray machine and health staff read the images with the help of artificial intelligence. The device was supplied by a Chinese medical AI company. This is one instance of a wider pattern. Chinese medical AI is becoming visible in parts of the global south. It is screening: sorting large populations for probable disease, flagging who needs further testing, operating at volumes no human workforce can match on the budgets that public-health programmes in developing countries actually have. Why screening comes first: Screening is one of the few areas of medical AI that can scale relatively quickly in lower-resource settings because the task is narrow, repeatable and high-volume. Unlike more complex clinical applications, screening does not require AI to make a final diagnosis. It flags likely abnormalities, sorts patients by risk and identifies who needs confirmatory testing. That makes it easier to insert into existing workflows — and it is where Chinese companies have found their opening. The underlying need is acute. There is severe brain drain in low- and middle-income countries: trained specialists leave, or too few graduate each year. AI systems can be trained on the expertise of the best medical specialists and then perform on par with them in specific tasks — effectively bringing expert judgment to places those experts will not go. The numbers bear this out. WHO estimates that 10.7 million people fell ill with TB in 2024, but only 8.3 million were newly diagnosed and treated. 87% of new cases were concentrated in 30 countries, including Pakistan and Nigeria. Yet radiologist density in low-income countries stands at roughly 1 per million people, against 93 per million in high-income countries. Films are often read by general clinicians, not specialists. Echoing that logic, some deputies to China's National People's Congress have argued in recent media reports that AI's most immediate value in healthcare lies in supporting grassroots doctors and expanding access in under-served areas.—DNA

Kashmir's women in IIOJK suffer decades of horror

As the world observes International Women's Day on Sunday (today), Kashmiri women continue to endure relentless pain and suffering under the actions of Indian troops and police in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: As the world observes International Women's Day on Sunday (today), Kashmiri women continue to endure relentless pain and suffering under the actions of Indian troops and police in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). A report of the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service, issued on the occasion of International Women's Day, states that Kashmiri women in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir continue to face hardships and victimization at the hands of Indian forces, including the army, Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, Special Operations Group and police. The report also recalls that during the 1947 Jammu massacres, widespread violence was committed against the Muslim population. It states that thousands of Muslim women were abducted and subjected to brutal treatment in areas such as Jammu, Rajouri, Poonch and Kathua, describing the incidents as part of a systematic campaign carried out during that turbulent period under the

rule of Maharaja Hari Singh. Since the 1988 popular uprising in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), scholars and human rights organizations have documented serious allegations of sexual violence by Indian state forces, including the Indian Army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Border Security Force (BSF). Reports have highlighted that such incidents occurred during military operations, reflecting the deep human rights concerns surrounding the conflict in the territory. After 1989, various reports alleged that Kashmiri civilians faced widespread abuses, including torture, killings and destruction of homes and businesses. A 1993 Human Rights Watch report stated that rape was used by Indian forces as a method of retaliation against civilians, with many cases reportedly occurring during cordon-and-search operations carried out in different areas of the region. In October 1992, representatives from the Asia Watch group and Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) traveled

to Kashmir to document rape and other human rights abuses and violations of the laws of war by Indian forces. Later they released a book titled "Rape in Kashmir" on May 9, 1993. The report revealed that since January 1989, Indian state terrorism has rendered 22,991 women widowed, while 11,275 women were molested by Indian forces' personnel. The report also reveals the devastating impact of Indian state terrorism on women in IIOJK. Since January 2001, at least 690 women have been martyred by Indian forces' personnel. The report further pointed out that the majority of Kashmiris suffering from multiple psychological problems are women, adding, the most heinous crimes committed against Kashmiri women, including the mass rape in Kunan-Poshpora, the rape and murder of Aasiya Jan and her sister-in-law Neelofar Jan in Shopian, and the rape and murder of 8-year-old Aasiya Bano in Kathua, each exposing the culture of impunity granted to the Indian forces establishment in the territory.—DNA

Briefs

Police conduct grand combing operations

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police conducted grand combing and search operations in various areas of the federal capital against criminal elements and illegal residents, checking 670 individuals, 258 households and dozens of vehicles during the drive. An official told on Sunday that the operations were conducted under the supervision of zonal SPs in the areas of Lohi Bher, Ramna, Aabpara, Koral, Shahzad Town, Noon and Sumbal police stations. He said lady police officials also participated in the search operations. During the operations, police teams checked 55 shops and 22 hotels as part of efforts to ensure law and order in the area. The official said 229 motorcycles and 82 vehicles were also inspected during the operations. He said 32 suspected individuals and 31 motorcycles were shifted to the respective police stations for further verification. The official said the grand search operations were conducted on the special directions of the IGP Islamabad to curb criminal activities and ensure the protection of citizens. He urged citizens to cooperate with police during checking and immediately report any suspicious activity. He added that Islamabad Police were utilizing all available resources to ensure the safety of citizens and maintain peace in the federal capital.—APP

IGP chairs Commanders' conference

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired an Operational Commanders' Conference to review the law and order situation in the federal capital and issued directions to ensure foolproof security during the last ten days of Ramadan, including Aitkaf and the sacred nights, besides ordering action against transporters overcharging passengers. An official told APP on Sunday that the conference was attended by all DIGs, AIGs, SSPs and other senior officers of Islamabad Police. He said the meeting reviewed in detail the overall law and order and security situation in the federal capital. The IGP Rizvi directed officers to ensure foolproof security arrangements during the last ten days of Ramadan, particularly during Aitkaf and the sacred nights, and ordered that security at Masjid and Imambargahs across the city be further strengthened. He also instructed officials to ensure effective security and proper parking arrangements in markets and commercial centres to facilitate citizens during the busy Ramadan period. The IGP further directed that security at all bus terminals be tightened and a crackdown be launched against transporters overcharging passengers. IGP Rizvi reiterated that Islamabad Police were utilizing all available resources to ensure the protection of citizens' lives and property and maintain peace and order in the federal capital.—APP

Zardari commends security forces

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Sunday, commended the security forces for eliminating 13 terrorists of Indian proxy Fitna al Khwarizj during different operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The president lauded the professional capabilities of the security forces manifested during different operations in Bajaur, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber and South Waziristan districts. President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release. The president underlined that operations against Indian backed Fitna al Khwarizj terrorists were significant for securing peace in the country.—APP

CDA, MCI launch special bazar for women traders

CDA administration further said that the establishment of such a Bazar for women in the Federal Capital, Islamabad, will prove to be a milestone for the economic well-being of women



DNA

ISLAMABAD: A special event was held on Saturday at the Women's Ramadan Sahulat Bazar established in Sector G-11 of the Federal Capital, Islamabad, to mark International Women's Day. This special event was organized in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) and the Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry. City & Local Guides The objective of this event is to highlight the business capabilities of women and provide them with opportunities to embark on the path to economic independence and empowerment. A large number of women customers, in addition to women traders and business women, participated in this

special event organized on the occasion of International Women's Day. On this occasion, in accordance with the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi, a completely cashless system was implemented in the Women's Ramadan Sahulat Bazar. Special arrangements were made in this event to encourage women traders. Women are displaying their products at various stalls designated for women in the Women's Ramadan Sahulat Bazar. In collaboration with the Women Chamber of Commerce, the Ramadan Sahulat Bazar has been specially organized for women in Sector G-11 till the Eid-ul-Fitr. Pakistan travel guides Women traders and business personalities appreciated this initiative by the CDA and the MCI, said that such opportunities play a vital role in making women

economically independent. They said that the sale of goods at very reasonable prices for women is being ensured in the Women's Bazar. Business woman Ms. Shazia Imran, said that organic, natural, chemical-free, fresh, and healthy food items and other products are also specially available in the Women's Bazar.

Vice President of the Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Rabia Farhan, said that this special Bazar, organized in collaboration with the CDA and MCI, is nothing less than a gift for us women on this International Women's Day, and there are immense business opportunities for women in this Bazar. She further said that we are extremely grateful to the CDA and MCI for organizing this special Bazar on the occasion of International Women's Day. Customers expressed hope that the

CDA will continue to regularly organize such events in the future for the independence and empowerment of women. CDA administration said that, like other Ramadan Sahulat Bazaars, a strict monitoring system for price control has been put in place in the Women's Ramadan Bazar as well. CDA administration said that, in line with the direction of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the Women's Ramadan Bazar established in Sector G-11 is equipped with modern facilities for women consumers and traders where food items and other essential commodities are available at reasonable rates. CDA administration further said that the establishment of such a Bazar for women in the Federal Capital, Islamabad, will prove to be a milestone for the economic well-being of women.

Fuel price spike to trigger new wave of inflation: ICCI President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The leadership of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has expressed strong concern over the Rs. 55 per litre increase in petroleum prices, terming the decision highly detrimental to trade and industry and warning that it may trigger a fresh wave of inflation across the country. President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that such a sharp increase in petroleum prices would directly raise production costs, transportation charges, and overall operational expenses for businesses, making it increasingly difficult for indus-

tries and traders to sustain their activities. He added that Pakistan's economy is already facing multiple economic challenges and pressures, and the latest hike in fuel prices would further aggravate the situation. He stated that placing the entire burden of rising international oil prices on the public and the business community is unjustified and unfair. He urged the government to provide relief by reducing petroleum levy and other taxes instead of passing the full impact of global price fluctuations onto consumers. Sardar Tahir Mehmood further pointed out that the increase in petroleum prices would lead to higher transportation fares, which would ultimately push up the prices of

essential commodities and daily-use items, thereby intensifying inflationary pressures on the general public. Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub noted that the industrial sector is already struggling due to high energy costs and rising operational expenses. If petroleum prices continue to increase at such a pace, it could result in higher production costs, slowdown in business activities, and potential job losses, further affecting economic growth. Vice President Irfan Chaudhry called upon the government to adopt business-friendly policies, reduce the tax burden on petroleum products, and take practical measures to stabilize the economy and facilitate the business community.

Medical AI needs tighter safeguards

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China needs stronger oversight, better data transparency and more specialised talent as artificial intelligence (AI) moves further into healthcare, national political adviser Wang Jian'an said, while adding that international cooperation, including with the United States, remains important in medical AI. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of China's annual Two Sessions meetings, Wang, a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee and president of the Second Affiliated Hospital of Zhejiang University School of Medicine, said his proposals this year focus on two areas: advancing brain-computer interface technology from research into hospital use, and address-

ing the ethical and safety risks of AI in healthcare, according to China Economic Net (CEN) on Sunday. Asked about the biggest bottlenecks facing medical AI in clinical use, he said one concern was the quality and safety of data, and that other problems include limited model transparency and weak post-deployment oversight. On international cooperation, he said China and the United States are both competitors and partners in medical AI, but added that cooperation could outweigh competition. He said different countries had different strengths. Some Western countries have advantages in chips and materials, while China has moved faster in some open-source areas and has strengths in disease diversity and clinical application scenarios. In areas such as disease screening, imaging assistance and chronic disease management, he said international collaboration could help combine knowledge, population data and biological information from different groups, giving researchers a fuller basis to answer scientific questions. Asked about China's advantages over international peers, he cited policy support, broader public uptake of AI, growing experience in clinical applications and stronger integration between medicine and engineering. He also said China's large patient volumes and broad range of disease cases provide hospitals with extensive clinical data to support research and development. He said the growing use of Chinese medical AI solutions in developing countries reflects China's technological progress, adding that such collaboration gives developing countries access to advances they would otherwise struggle to afford.

Short Spring break by FDE sparks disappointment among teachers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) has announced four days of spring vacation for educational institutions under its administrative control from March 24 to March 27, 2026. Since March 28 and March 29 fall on Saturday and Sunday, institutions will reopen on March 30. However, the decision has triggered disappointment among teachers who believe the short break undermines the very purpose of spring vacations and reflects a continuing pattern of curtailing teachers' relief periods. Many teachers say the FDE has once again effectively merged the spring break with upcoming Eid holidays, reducing the independent respite traditionally given to teachers and students. According to them, such

measures amount to a gradual encroachment upon teachers' right to rest and recovery, which they say is essential for maintaining the quality of teaching. "Break from extensive teaching work is integral to educational performance," said a teacher. "Without adequate rest, it becomes difficult for teachers to maintain the level of dedication and energy expected from them." Teachers pointed out that spring vacations traditionally span around three days, usually from April 1 to April 10, providing sufficient time for both teachers and students to recover from the pressures of the academic session and examinations. They believe the break plays an important role in reenergising the academic community before the next phase of the academic year begins. A senior faculty member at a college in Islamabad's H-8

sector termed the decision disappointing. "Such measures appear like an ambush on the relief mechanisms for the teaching community," he said. Teachers also recalled that in previous years winter and summer breaks have similarly been curtailed. Some said that teachers were even assigned academic duties during summer vacations, yet the period was never acknowledged as earned leave. According to educators, teaching is a vocational profession that demands dedication and mental engagement, but the spirit of the profession is gradually being undermined by such administrative decisions. Teachers have urged the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training to review the policy and ensure that adequate breaks are provided to maintain both educational quality and teachers' well-being.

NCSW calls for accelerated action for Women's rights

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of International Women's Day, the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) called for renewed national commitment and concrete action to advance the rights, dignity, and equal opportunities of women and girls across Pakistan. Chairperson emphasised that while important progress has been made in strengthening protections for women, sustained institutional and societal efforts are required to ensure that these rights translate into real change in the lives of women throughout the country. Over the past year, NCSW has actively contributed to legislative reform, policy development, and evidence-based advocacy aimed at advancing gender equality. The Commission has played an important role in supporting initiatives to end child marriage and strengthen legal protections for girls. The passage of the Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Act, followed by legislative progress in Balochistan and Punjab, represents a significant step forward in safeguarding the rights and future of girls. NCSW urges all provinces, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to adopt similar legislation and calls for strict and effective implementation of child marriage laws across the country. The Commission has also led the development of Pakistan's first National Gender Parity Report, an important national assessment that will soon be launched. The report provides a comprehensive, evidence-based overview of gender disparities in key sectors including economic participation, governance, education, health, and access to justice. It is intended to guide policy reforms and institutional action toward closing persistent gender gaps in Pakistan. Throughout the past year, NCSW has continued to engage with federal and provincial institutions, parliamentarians, civil society organisations, and community leaders to promote women's access to justice, protection from violence, economic empowerment, and meaningful participation in public life. The Commission remains committed to ensuring that women's voices and rights remain central to national policymaking and governance. "International Women's Day is not only a moment to recognise the contributions and resilience of women across Pakistan, but also a call to action," said Chairperson Ms Azhar. "We must collectively strengthen the implementation of laws, remove structural barriers, and ensure that every woman and girl can live with dignity.—APP

100 women riders training completed

ISLAMABAD: The graduation ceremony of the first batch of the Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) Uraan Scooty and Motor Riding School was held at the Islamabad Traffic Police Headquarters in Faizabad, where 100 women successfully completed their training. An ITP official told on Sunday that Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad Captain (R) Hamza Humayun attended the ceremony as the chief guest, while other police officers were also present on the occasion. He said in the first batch of the ITP Uraan Scooty and Motor Riding School, 100 women completed their training in driving cars and riding scooters. During the training course, the participants were taught practical skills for driving vehicles and riding scooters. They were also trained in basic vehicle maintenance and tyre changing. During the ceremony, CTO Hamzah distributed driving licences and certificates among the women who successfully completed the training. Addressing the ceremony, Hamzah said the ITP Uraan School was a revolutionary step toward empowering women under the vision of IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi. He said the school not only provides driving training to women but also promotes confidence and independence among them. The CTO added that the initiative was an important milestone for ensuring safe and independent mobility for women, enabling them to travel freely and safely.—DNA

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Pakistan's fuel price debacle: a ruthless assault on the poor

In a move that has ignited widespread fury across Pakistan, the government has hiked petroleum prices by a staggering Rs 55 per liter, pushing petrol to Rs 321.17 and diesel to Rs 335.86 effective March 7, 2026. This abnormal surge, amid escalating Middle East tensions involving Iran, Israel, and the US, has been slammed by citizens as profoundly unfair, exacerbating the economic hardships of the common man while the elite remain insulated. The decision comes at a time when global oil prices have spiked due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and broader geopolitical instability, with crude hitting levels that could soon breach \$100 per barrel. Yet, the government's rationale rings hollow to many. Officials, including Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik, have claimed the increase is "under compulsion" due to international market volatility. But critics point out that Pakistan's existing fuel stocks, purchased at pre-surge prices, are sufficient until the end of March—roughly four weeks from the hike's announcement.

If the reserves were bought cheaply, why pass on the pain now? This premature adjustment feels like a calculated betrayal, designed to fleece the populace before necessity demands it. Adding fuel to the fire is the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) role. The lender, in ongoing virtual negotiations, has demanded immediate price alignments to boost revenue and eliminate subsidies, tying these measures to Pakistan's bailout program. With inflation already at a 16-month high and the government struggling to meet fiscal targets, this seemed like the "right time" to burden the poor. Instead of exploring alternative austerity measures—such as trimming bloated administrative costs or reforming inefficient state enterprises—the regime opted for the easiest path: slaughtering the vulnerable through higher fuel costs. This shortsighted strategy ignores the ripple effects, from inflated transport fares to rising prices of essentials, which disproportionately hammer low-income households. What's particularly galling is the government's hypocrisy on expenses. While ordinary Pakistanis grapple with this "inflation bomb," as opposition leaders have dubbed it, there's no cut in the lavish perks enjoyed by politicians, bureaucrats, and military officers. Free petrol allocations for these elites remain untouched, symbolizing a system where



the powerful thrive at the expense of the powerless. The petroleum development levy has been jacked up to Rs 82 per liter on petrol, ostensibly to offset subsidies elsewhere, but this cross-subsidization from car and bike owners to diesel users in agriculture and transport does little to address core inequities. The regime knows full well that mass protests are unlikely. Pakistan, in this view, isn't a unified nation but a "huddle of people"—fragmented by ethnic, sectarian, and economic divides, making collective action rare. Social media is ablaze with outrage, with users decrying the move as economic terrorism, but street demonstrations remain sparse.

This complacency stems from decades of disillusionment; governments come and go, but the cycle of exploitation persists. Looking ahead, the pattern is predictable. Next week, the government might lower prices by a token few rupees to placate the masses, only to spike them again when new, costlier stocks arrive.

This yo-yo pricing isn't new—fortnightly adjustments have long been manipulated for political optics. Governments worldwide engage in similar tactics during crises, but Pakistan's example is uniquely insidious. Here, authorities seize every opportunity to hoodwink and fleece their own, often under the guise of external pressures like IMF dictates or global events.

A populace so alienated that when political regimes are ousted—frequently by military intervention—no one sheds a tear. Consider the late 1990s: Nawaz Sharif enjoyed a two-thirds majority in parliament, wielding immense power. Yet, when the military decided to send him packing in 1999, not a single person took to the streets in his defense. The reason? During his tenure, he did little for ordinary people, prioritizing cronyism over public welfare. History is repeating itself today. The current administration, much like Sharif's, appears indifferent to the plight of the masses, focusing instead on survival amid economic woes and geopolitical storms. This is the real pity: a cycle of governance that breeds apathy and instability. With fuel stocks dwindling and no alternative pipelines—blocked by US sanctions—the future looks bleak.

Unless the government pivots to genuine reforms, like slashing elite privileges and investing in sustainable energy, Pakistan risks deeper divisions. The Rs 55 hike isn't just a price tag; it's a symptom of systemic failure, where the poor pay the price for the powerful's incompetence.

Iran War: The Energy Trap for China and Russia

Qamar Bashir



A nation under siege is not expected to dominate the skies, but merely to survive, retaliate, and deny its enemies a clean triumph. That denial carries military, political, and moral weight. Both sides choose facts that flatter their case. Both highlight only those developments that fit their desired conclusion. Yet when the smoke of propaganda begins to clear, a deeper question emerges: what, in truth, is this war really about? The official Western justifications do not fully satisfy the scale of the conflict

THIS war may be presented as a fight over nuclear fear, missiles, or regime behavior, but beneath the headlines lies a far larger strategic contest: who will command the chokepoints through which the lifeblood of the global economy flows.

Wars are often sold to the world in moral language, but fought for strategic outcomes. The ongoing confrontation centered on Iran is no exception. To the United States, Israel, Britain, France, and much of the Western media, the war is projected as a campaign of necessity: a preemptive effort to stop an alleged nuclear threat, weaken Iranian missile power, and restore security to a volatile region. In that narrative, Western force is disciplined, purposeful, and increasingly successful, while Iran is portrayed as cornered, degraded, and losing ground. But from Tehran, and from those across the world who reject the Western reading of the conflict, the war appears entirely different. There, it is seen as a story of one nation, battered yet unbowed, resisting the most powerful military coalition on earth and still retaining the capacity to impose pain, uncertainty, and strategic cost. In this second narrative, Iran's endurance itself becomes a kind of victory. A nation under siege is not expected to dominate the skies, but merely to survive, retaliate, and deny its enemies a clean triumph. That denial carries military, political, and moral weight. Both sides choose facts that flatter their case. Both highlight only those developments that fit their desired conclusion. Yet when the smoke of propaganda begins to clear, a deeper question emerges: what, in truth, is this war really about? The official Western justifications do not fully satisfy the scale of the conflict. Iran has long been accused of standing only days or weeks away from weaponization, yet no public evidence has shown an actual nuclear test, a declared bomb, or the unmistakable operationalization of such a weapon. If Tehran had already crossed that threshold, the world would likely have seen far clearer proof by now. The gap between nuclear capability and an actual deliverable bomb is vast, and it is precisely within that gap that political narratives are often built. The second argument, that Iran must be attacked because of its ballistic missile capability, has greater strategic logic but also exposes a double standard. Yes, Iran's missiles threaten U.S. bases, allied infrastructure, shipping routes, and Israel. But many states possess missile capabilities without becoming targets of such an overwhelming multinational military design. North Korea, for example, is more isolated, more repressive, and openly nuclear-armed, yet it has not been subjected to this kind of sustained Western-Israeli military pressure. Why? The answer is not found in moral principle. It is found in geography. Iran sits beside the Strait of Hormuz, one of the most critical energy chokepoints in human history. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration data you provided, about 20.9 million barrels per day of oil moved through Hormuz in the first half of 2025. That amounts to roughly one-fifth of global petroleum liquids consumption and about one-quarter of globally traded maritime oil. In the same period, around 11.4 billion cubic feet per

day of LNG also transited the strait, representing more than one-fifth of global LNG trade. These are not marginal figures. They are the circulatory system of the industrial world. That is what makes Iran categorically different from North Korea. Iran does not merely possess missiles, a controversial nuclear program, or an adversarial ideology. Iran sits astride a waterway through which the economic oxygen of Asia and much of the wider world must pass. China, India, Japan, and South Korea together accounted for nearly three-quarters of Hormuz crude and condensate flows in the first half of 2025. In other words, the great Asian engines of growth remain heavily dependent on the uninterrupted movement of Gulf energy through waters adjoining Iran. Now consider the wider maritime map. The Strait of Malacca handled 23.2 million barrels per day in the first half of 2025, even more than Hormuz, making it the largest oil chokepoint in the world by volume. It is the shortest and most efficient route connecting Middle Eastern energy suppliers with East and Southeast Asia. China alone accounted for 48% of the import volumes passing through Malacca in that period. Meanwhile, the Cape of Good Hope, though not a chokepoint, carried 9.1 million barrels per day as rerouted shipping avoided attacks and instability around the Red Sea. Bab el-Mandeb and the Suez-SUMED route, once central arteries to Europe, saw their flows nearly halved from 2023 levels due to insecurity and rerouting. The global energy system is therefore not merely about production; it is about maritime passage, route vulnerability, insurance cost, naval reach, and the ability to protect or disrupt the channels through which supply moves. If the United States, through military presence, alliance architecture, naval supremacy, and regional basing, were able to dominate the security environment around Hormuz while retaining influence across the broader chain of maritime corridors stretching toward Bab el-Mandeb, the Red Sea, the Cape route, and onward to Asia's receiving lanes, then Washington would possess extraordinary leverage over the global energy order. It would not legally "own" these waterways, nor permanently command every vessel that crosses them, but it could shape the conditions under which oil moves, slows, detours, becomes more expensive, or becomes politically hostage to security calculations. And that leverage would be immense. The United States today is itself a top oil producer and far less dependent on Gulf imports than in previous decades. By contrast, Asia remains far more exposed to disruptions in Gulf exports. This asymmetry matters. A power less dependent on a chokepoint but more capable of militarily policing it enjoys a structural advantage over powers whose economies rely heavily on its uninterrupted use. Such an arrangement would allow Washington to pressure adversaries not necessarily by stopping every cargo physically, but by raising risk, insurance, delay, and uncertainty to levels that alter trade behavior. In global energy markets, fear itself is a weapon. Venezuela adds another layer to this picture. It possesses the world's largest proven

crude reserves, and while sanctions, infrastructure decay, and underinvestment have kept production far below its potential, the country remains a massive latent energy asset in the Western Hemisphere. If Washington can tighten its grip over western supply sources while also exerting naval and strategic influence over eastern chokepoints, then it is not difficult to imagine a future in which energy becomes an even sharper geopolitical instrument. That would not mean total American control of global oil, but it would mean an ability to influence supply routes, pricing pressure, and economic vulnerability in ways few empires in history have ever possessed.

Such a scenario would place China in particular under long-term strategic stress. Its factories, transport networks, petrochemical industries, and export machines all depend on steady access to imported energy. Russia too would face increasing pressure if maritime and sanctioned routes became narrower, longer, costlier, or more politically constrained. Even U.S. allies would not be immune. Any state that disobeyed Washington on key matters could face indirect coercion through a security system that determines how safely and cheaply energy reaches world markets. That, then, is the terrifying possibility hidden beneath the daily headlines. The war on Iran may not simply be about uranium enrichment, missiles, democracy, or the suffering of the Iranian people. It may be about who commands the valves of the global economy. It may be about transforming maritime geography into a mechanism of strategic obedience. It may be about giving one power the ability, in moments of crisis, to squeeze rivals, discipline allies, and bend energy-dependent economies toward submission.

And that is why this conflict is so dangerous. If Russia and China conclude that Iran is not merely a regional partner but the front line of a broader struggle over the future control of Eurasia's energy lifelines, then the war may not remain confined to Iran at all. It could widen not because anyone desires world war, but because the consequences of inaction may appear even more catastrophic than the risks of confrontation.

The world therefore stands before a historic choice. Either the major powers step back and preserve a plural, negotiated, and open energy order, or they continue down a path in which chokepoints become instruments of domination and commerce becomes a hostage of force. If the second path prevails, then the attack on Iran will be remembered not as a regional war, but as the opening move in a far larger campaign to place the world's economic bloodstream under strategic command. And if that day comes, nations will discover too late that oil was never just a commodity. It was power, mobility, sovereignty, and survival. Whoever controls its pathways does not merely influence the market. They hold a hand on the throat of the modern world.

— The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC | Macomb, Michigan

The Presidency and the Politics of Global Intervention

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The history of the presidency of the United States offers an illuminating reflection of this enduring tension between power and restraint. Since the independence of the United States in 1776, forty-seven individuals have occupied the office of president. In the early decades of the republic, American leaders were primarily preoccupied with the consolidation of their young nation. But as the country gradually emerged from internal struggles and global conflicts

POWER has always tested the character of those who possess it. When authority falls into the hands of an individual, the desires rooted deep within human nature often grow stronger. Yet history also bears witness to personalities who restrained their ambitions, controlled their impulses, and earned respect not through the display of power but through its careful limitation. The exercise of authority, therefore, has long remained a measure of moral discipline as much as political capability. The history of the presidency of the United States offers an illuminating reflection of this enduring tension between power and restraint. Since the independence of the United States in 1776, forty-seven individuals have occupied the office of president. In the early decades of the republic, American leaders were primarily preoccupied with the consolidation of their young nation. But as the country gradually emerged from internal struggles and global conflicts with increasing economic and military strength, a profound transformation occurred. The United States began to perceive itself not merely as a sovereign state but as a power with global responsibilities and influence. With this transformation came a new dimension to presidential authority. American presidents increasingly found themselves shaping not only domestic policy but also the political and military affairs of distant regions. As the twentieth century unfolded, many of them began to act with the conviction that global stability and international order could be influenced—or even directed—through American leadership. In certain moments this sense of responsibility inspired constructive engagement, but in other instances it encouraged the use of military power in ways that critics later questioned both politically and morally. Historically, the United States has formally declared war only eleven times, all of them concentrated within five major conflicts. The authority to declare war constitutionally rests with Congress, yet the decisions leading to those declarations were shaped by presidential leadership. The first such declaration occurred during the presidency of James Madison, when the War of 1812 was declared against the United Kingdom. Decades later, President James K. Polk led the nation into the Mexican-American War in 1846, a conflict that ultimately ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and dramatically expanded American territory. At the close of the nineteenth century, President William McKinley presided over the Spanish-American War, which marked the beginning of America's emergence as an overseas power. The early twentieth century brought even larger responsibilities when President Woodrow Wilson led the United States into the First World War in 1917, declaring war on Germany and later on Austria-Hungary. The final and most expansive declarations of war came under President Franklin D. Roosevelt following the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, drawing the United States fully into

the Second World War against Japan, Germany, and Italy, along with several allied states of the Axis powers. Yet formal declarations of war represent only a fraction of the military engagements undertaken by the United States. Over the course of its history, the country has participated in dozens of armed conflicts without issuing an official declaration. Particularly after the Second World War, the pattern of military involvement changed significantly. Presidents increasingly relied on congressional resolutions, international mandates, or executive authority to deploy American forces abroad. President Harry S. Truman's decision to intervene in the Korean War in 1950 stands as a notable example. The conflict was described not as a war but as a "police action" conducted under the auspices of the United Nations, yet it involved large-scale combat against North Korean forces. His successor, Dwight D. Eisenhower, oversaw the conclusion of that conflict while also initiating early American involvement in Vietnam. The Vietnam War later expanded dramatically under President Lyndon B. Johnson following the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964, which authorized extensive military operations against North Vietnam. President Richard Nixon continued the war until the Paris Peace Accords of 1973 brought an end to direct American involvement. These years illustrated how military engagements could evolve into prolonged conflicts even without formal declarations of war. Later decades witnessed further examples of presidential military authority. President George H. W. Bush led the international coalition during the Persian Gulf War of 1990–1991 against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait. His son, President George W. Bush, launched the war in Afghanistan in 2001 after the attacks of September 11 and later initiated the Iraq War in 2003. President Barack Obama continued military operations in both countries while authorizing intervention in Libya in 2011 against the forces of Muammar Gaddafi. Beyond these major conflicts, numerous smaller-scale interventions have occurred. President Ronald Reagan ordered the invasion of Grenada in 1983 and conducted airstrikes against Libya in 1986. President Bill Clinton authorized NATO's bombing campaign in Kosovo in 1999 and several operations against Iraq. President Donald Trump later ordered missile strikes against Syrian government targets in 2017 and 2018. These actions, often described as interventions rather than wars, nonetheless demonstrated the expanding scope of presidential authority in military affairs. The pattern of engagement has continued into the present era. A significant escalation occurred on February 28, 2026, when the United States, alongside Israel, initiated large-scale military operations against Iran. The campaign, known as Operation Epic Fury by the United States and Operation Roaring Lion by Israel, followed weeks of mounting tensions, stalled nuclear negotiations, and allegations concerning Iran's regional military activities. Coordinated

airstrikes employing advanced weaponry—including cruise missiles, stealth aircraft, strategic bombers, and drones—targeted Iranian leadership compounds, missile installations, air defense systems, naval assets, and military infrastructure across several regions, including the capital, Tehran. The military campaign soon ignited an intense constitutional debate in Washington. Several members of Congress argued that the United States Constitution grants the authority to declare war exclusively to Congress and that sustained military operations required explicit legislative approval. In response, a bipartisan group of lawmakers introduced resolutions under the War Powers framework seeking to restrict the continuation of the conflict unless formally authorized by Congress. However, both chambers of Congress ultimately rejected these efforts. The United States Senate voted by a margin of 53 to 47 against a resolution intended to limit the president's authority to continue military operations against Iran, effectively allowing the campaign to proceed. Shortly afterward, the House of Representatives also rejected a similar war powers measure by a narrow vote of 219 to 212, declining to compel the administration to halt military action. These decisions reflected the deep political divisions within American politics over questions of war powers, national security, and presidential authority. Supporters of the administration argued that restricting military action during an ongoing confrontation could weaken American deterrence and endanger allied forces in the region. Critics, however, warned that bypassing Congress risked eroding constitutional safeguards designed to prevent unilateral decisions that might draw the nation into prolonged conflict.

Meanwhile, the military confrontation itself has already widened. Iran responded with missile and drone attacks against American military facilities and regional partners across the Gulf, including installations in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, while also directing strikes toward Israel. The cycle of action and retaliation has heightened fears that a regional crisis could gradually evolve into a broader and more destructive conflict. Such developments once again revive enduring questions about the relationship between power and restraint. The presidency of the United States remains one of the most influential political offices in the modern world. Decisions taken in the Oval Office can alter the strategic balance of entire regions and shape the fate of millions far beyond American shores. History suggests that while power may tempt leaders toward decisive action, the true test of leadership lies in the wisdom to distinguish between necessity and ambition. The legacy of any statesman is ultimately measured not merely by the wars he wages, but by the peace he preserves.

Briefs

Second Pakistani killed in Dubai as...

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Tehran, since then, has responded to the US-Israeli war on Iran by hitting Israel and Gulf Arab states hosting US military installations. Israel has also launched fresh attacks in Lebanon after Hezbollah fired across the border. The US-Israeli attacks have killed at least 1,332 Iranian civilians and wounded thousands, according to Iran's UN ambassador, Amir Saeid Iravani. But Trump, without citing evidence, told reporters on Saturday that Iran was responsible. Meanwhile, Iranian attacks have killed 10 people in Israel. At least six US service members have been killed. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, President Trump said the air campaign could make negotiations a moot point if all potential leaders of Iran are killed and the Iranian military is destroyed. "At some point, I don't think there will be anybody left maybe to say 'We surrender,'" Trump said. In Iran, local news agencies, citing an Iranian Oil Ministry source, said its fuel depots were hit

US pressing Sri Lanka not to...

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maritime boundary. President Anura Kumara Dissanayake said his South Asian island nation had a "humanitarian responsibility" to take in the crew. About 20 of the 32 Dena survivors were moved to a Sri Lankan air force camp in Kogala after being discharged from the Galle hospital, some 15 km (10 miles) away, two military sources and one hospital source told Reuters. The torpedoing of the Dena, which US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth described as "quiet death," was the first such action by the United States since World War Two and a clear sign of the Iran conflict's widening geographic scope. The internal State Department cable, dated Friday and not previously reported, says Jayne Howell, the charge d'affaires at the US embassy in Colombo, had emphasised to Sri Lanka's government that neither the Booshehr crew nor the 32 Dena survivors should be repatriated to Iran. "Sri Lankan authorities should minimise Iranian attempts to use the detainees for propaganda," the cable says. A State Department spokesperson, speaking on the condition of anonymity, appeared to suggest that Washington was not trying to dictate Sri Lanka's decision on the issue.

India overpower NZ to win title for...

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for the second wicket off just 47 deliveries before both fell victim to James Neesham in the 16th over. Samson remained the top-scorer for India with 89 off 46 deliveries, studded with eight sixes and five fours, while Kishan smashed eight boundaries, including four sixes, on his way to a 25-ball 54. Neesham inflicted another blow to India's batting expedition in the same over as he dismissed their captain Suryakumar Yadav for a golden duck, reducing the home side to 204/4 in 16 overs. Following the brief collapse, all-rounder Hardik Pandya (18) and Tilak Varma joined forces for a 22-run partnership for the fifth wicket, which culminated with the former's dismissal in the penultimate over. Pandya's dismissal paved the way for Shivam Dube to walk out and add valuable runs at the backend with an unbeaten 26-run cameo, coming off just eight deliveries and featured three fours and two sixes. Neesham was the standout bowler for New Zealand, taking three wickets for 46 runs in his four overs, while Ravindra and Matt Henry could pick up one apiece.

WPC and UN Women Unveil Pakistan Women's Parliamentary Leaders Portal

"International Women's Day reminds us that women's political participation is essential for inclusive governance. This portal represents more than a digital platform; it is a collective commitment to strengthening women's leadership across assemblies and ensuring that pro-women laws are informed by evidence, coordination and shared learning," she stated

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahead of the International Women's Day 2026, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), with financial support from the European Union (EU) and in partnership with UN Women Pakistan, unveiled the Pakistan Women's Parliamentary Leaders (PWL) Portal in Islamabad. Launched under the EU-funded Pakistan Women Leaders (PWL) project, the portal will strengthen coordination between the National and Provincial Assemblies and serve as a centralised digital repository of pro-women legislation and related data, enabling more informed, evidence-based and gender-responsive lawmaking across Pakistan. The event commenced with welcome remarks by Dr. Shahida Rehmani, Secretary Women's Parliamentary Caucus, who underscored the importance of institutionalising knowledge and collaboration among women legislators. "International Women's Day reminds us that women's political participation is essential for inclusive governance. This portal represents more than a digital platform; it is a collective commitment to strengthening women's leadership across assemblies and ensuring that pro-women laws are informed by evidence, coordination and shared learning," she stated. In his remarks, H.E. Philipp Oliver Gross, Deputy Chief of



Mission, the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, reaffirmed the EU's long-standing commitment to gender equality and democratic governance. "International Women's Day is a powerful reminder that democracy is strongest when women participate fully in decision-making. The European Union remains a steadfast partner in supporting women's political leadership in Pakistan, and the Pakistan Women's Parliamentary Leaders Portal is an important step towards strengthening democratic institutions and inclusive policymaking," he stated. Delivering

opening remarks at the event, Mohamed Yahya, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, emphasized the global significance of International Women's Day in advancing gender equality. "On International Women's Day, we recognize that strengthening women's participation in political and legislative processes is central to achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Initiatives such as the Pakistan Women's Parliamentary Leaders Portal demonstrate how digital innovation can support accountability, transparency and gender-responsive policymaking," he noted.

Addressing the gathering as the Honorable Chief Guest, Hon. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, emphasized the importance of strengthening institutional systems that support women's leadership in politics. "International Women's Day reminds us that women's representation is fundamental to the strength of democracy. Strengthening the systems that enable women to enter, remain and lead in politics is critical for Pakistan's democratic future. The Pakistan Women's Parliamentary Leaders Portal is a forward-looking step that will

institutionalize knowledge, enhance transparency and support evidence-based decision-making across assemblies," he stated. The event included a High-Level Panel Discussion on Strengthening Women's Political Participation in Pakistan, which brought together parliamentarians and policy experts to reflect on practical pathways for reform. The discussion drew on findings from recent national consultations that identified gaps in the current quota framework and oversight mechanisms related to reserved seats. The conversation centered on bridging imple-

mentation gaps, strengthening accountability within political parties and establishing clearer benchmarks for women's effective representation in parliament. Participants underscored that women's political participation is not only a constitutional guarantee but also a critical pillar for strong, credible and inclusive democratic institutions. Representatives from provincial assemblies and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus were also present at the event, including Ms. Ghazala Gola Begum, Deputy Speaker and Chairperson of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, Balochistan; Ms. Tanzila Umi Habiba, MPA and Convener of WPC Sindh; Ms. Farah Sohail, MPA and General Secretary of WPC Sindh; Ms. Suriya Bibi, Deputy Speaker from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; and Ms. Ishrat Arshraf, Convener of WPC Punjab. The Pakistan Women Leaders (PWL) project, funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), continues to support efforts to advance women's political participation in Pakistan by addressing structural barriers that limit women's leadership in public life. Through institutional partnerships, capacity strengthening, policy dialogue and support to women leaders across federal and provincial levels, the initiative promotes more inclusive, accountable and gender-responsive governance.

Pacer Bumrah only 'human', says Phillips

AHMEDABAD: New Zealand will be ready to pounce if India's bowling star Jasprit Bumrah falters in the T20 World Cup final said all-rounder Glenn Phillips on Friday. Defending champions India and New Zealand clash in Ahmedabad on a blockbuster Sunday after the co-hosts edged out a spirited England team in the second semi-final. A brilliant 105 from Jacob Bethell on Thursday kept England in the hunt during a record chase of 254 before Bumrah bowled a near-perfect 18th over. A succession of precise yorkers and length balls yielded just six runs and England were behind the chase. New Zealand, who thrashed South Africa in the first semi-final, are eyeing their maiden title in their second final appearance and Phillips said the team are ready for Bumrah. "He [Bumrah] is a human as well," Phillips told reporters. "He is allowed to have a bad day, as are the rest of us. So hopefully we have a good day against him." Bumrah's accuracy and his ability to bowl yorkers has choked opposition teams. Against England, his four overs returned figures of 1-33 in a match where 499 runs were scored in 40 overs. However, he fared less well against the Kiwis in a five-match T20 series at the start of the year. India won 4-1 but Bumrah, who played in four of the matches, took just four wickets, conceding 9.46 runs an over. Phillips acknowledged Bumrah's class but said the tactics against any bowler are never the same. - Agencies

PHF President lauds national team

ISLAMABAD: President of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani on Sunday paid glowing tribute to the national hockey team for their impressive performance in the World Cup Qualifiers, saying that qualifying for the mega event after an eight-year gap was a remarkable achievement. In a statement issued here, Wani congratulated the players and team management for their outstanding efforts, adding that the achievement had revived hopes for the resurgence of Pakistan hockey on the international stage. "If the players continue to demonstrate this level of performance and commitment, the national team will soon regain its lost glory," he said. "The federation will provide every possible support to these national heroes so they can maintain their momentum and achieve success in upcoming international events." - APP

Raptors Win Pakistan-China Exhibition Basketball Match

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Raptors defeated the Chinese Club in a thrilling encounter, winning 19-16 in an exhibition match held at the Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad. The exhibition match was organized during the ongoing Pak-China Friendship Cup 3x3 Basketball Championship to celebrate 75 years of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. The championship is being held under the auspices of the Federal Basketball Association (FBBAA) in collaboration with the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB). In an exciting contest, the Islamabad

Raptors displayed impressive teamwork and determination to overcome the Chinese Club and secure a 19-16 victory. Mavia scored 6 points for the winning side, while Wang Chenghu contributed 5 points for the Chinese Club. The match was witnessed by officials from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan, Intiaz Rafi Butt (Senior Vice President, Pakistan Basketball Federation), Uj-e-Zahoor (Secretary, Federal Basketball Association), Nasarullah Rana (Director, Pakistan Sports Board), Prof. Siragul Haq Qureshi (Secretary, Pakistan Basketball Referee Board), Malik Riaz (National Basketball Coach) and Muhammad

Azam Dar, among others. Speaking on the occasion, Liu Yonggang, CEO of China Three Gorges South Asia Investment (CSAIL), said the ongoing Pak-China Friendship Cup Basketball Championship is not only showcasing exciting competition on the court but also highlighting the true spirit of sportsmanship and the strong friendship between Pakistan and China. Meanwhile, the semifinal lineup in the women's category was completed after the quarterfinal round. WAPDA Black defeated Lycans B 21-9, Army Red outclassed Army White 28-22, LCWU Eagles Club edged Royal Club 25-24 in a close contest, while Garrisonians beat Lycans C 21-11 to book their places in the semifinals.



PM to announce austerity plan...

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oil prices and therefore measures are being taken to provide maximum relief to the people," the prime minister said. Earlier this week, the government had decided in principle to start weekly revisions for petroleum prices effective from March 8 and to implement measures such as distance learning and work-from-home for the conservation of fuel amid possible oil supply disruptions due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Pak army thwarts cross-border infiltration

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During the ensuing exchange of fire, one militant was killed while others managed to flee the scene in an injured condition, they said. Security sources further stated that four to five improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and equipment used to cut the border fence were recovered from the militants.

World Cup Hockey qualifiers: England beat Pakistan in final

They opened the scoring in the second quarter through Henry Croft's field goal, leading 1-0 at halftime. England extended their advantage in the third quarter, reaching 3-1, before sealing the victory with a fourth goal in the final stages via Ben Fox



DNA

CAIRO: In a highly anticipated clash at the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers in Ismailia, Egypt, England defeated Pakistan 4-1 in the final match on March 7, 2026. England, ranked No. 4 in the world, lived up to expectations by overpowering Pakistan, who sit at No. 12, securing the tournament's gold medal and capping a dominant run. The match, played at the Suez Canal Authority Hockey Stadium, saw England assert control progressively. They opened the scoring in the second quarter through Henry Croft's field goal, leading 1-0 at halftime. England extended their advantage in the third quarter, reaching 3-1, before sealing the victory with a fourth goal in the final stages via Ben Fox. Pakistan managed a consolation goal but struggled to convert chances against England's disciplined defense and clinical finishing.

Sam Hooper of England earned Player of the Match honors for his brace, highlighting their superior execution. While the result aligned with pre-match predictions—given England's higher ranking and consistent form—the defeat marked Pakistan's first loss in the tournament after an otherwise impressive campaign. Pakistan had already qualified for the main FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, set to take place in August 2026 in the Netherlands and Belgium (co-hosted in Wavre and Amstelveen), by reaching the final. Qualification was secured earlier through their semi-final win over Japan (4-

3), alongside England's emphatic 7-1 victory over Malaysia. Throughout the qualifiers, Pakistan demonstrated strong performances, winning four matches and showing resilience. Their victories, including key wins over China and Malaysia, propelled them up the FIH world rankings from No. 14 to No. 12, boosting their points from 2,033 to 2,326.

This climb reflects improved consistency and competitiveness on the global stage, even as they faced a tougher opponent in the final. Pakistan's journey in Ismailia underscored their revival under pressure. Despite the final setback, the team played well overall, creating opportunities and competing fiercely against higher-ranked sides. Fans and analysts noted Pakistan's defensive solidity in parts of the tournament, though attacking conversion remained a challenge against top teams like England—a trend persisting since their last win over England in 2012. England's triumph completed an unbeaten campaign, showcasing their depth and tactical prowess. As both nations now turn their focus to the World Cup proper, Pakistan will aim to build on this ranking improvement and qualifier momentum. With the main event featuring 16 top teams, including hosts Belgium and Netherlands, Pakistan's qualification ensures they remain part of hockey's elite showcase. This qualifier final highlights the growing competitiveness in men's field hockey, where ranked disparities don't always guarantee easy wins, but execution often does. Pakistan's solid showing bodes well for their World Cup aspirations in August.

Briefs

RCCI for tax reduction to revive construction industry

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), led by President Usman Shaukat along with Group Leader Sohail Altaf, met with the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan, in Islamabad.

During the meeting, the RCCI delegation emphasized that to ensure economic benefits reach the grassroots level, the policy rate should be brought down to single digits. The Chamber also recommended reducing corporate and individual tax rates to stimulate industrial activity, encourage investment, and boost exports.

The RCCI leadership further urged the government to immediately announce a comprehensive construction package to revive industrial activity. They highlighted that more than forty allied industries are directly linked with the construction and real estate sector, which provides employment to millions of people across the country. President Usman Shaukat also briefed the Special Assistant about RCCI's recent trade delegation visit to the United States. He presented proposals aimed at protecting foreign investment in Pakistan through special arbitration mechanisms and enhanced security arrangements. In response, Haroon Akhtar Khan informed the delegation that the necessary legal provisions have already been incorporated into the forthcoming Industrial Policy, which will be announced soon.

The meeting also included discussions on the evolving global economic landscape, prevailing geopolitical tensions, and Pakistan's economic policies, along with the challenges currently being faced by the business community. The RCCI delegation presented several recommendations to support economic growth and industrial revival.

Matters related to the development of industrial zones, particularly around the Rawalpindi Ring Road, also came under discussion. Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar Khan assured the delegation that RCCI's recommendations regarding the construction package would be given due consideration. He also stated that a high-level meeting regarding the Rawalpindi Ring Road project would soon be convened. He appreciated RCCI's proposals for industrial development and termed them constructive and commendable. The delegation included Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Executive Member Imran Ali and others.—DNA

As Iran conflict spills over, Kurds say 'this war is not mine'

SORAN, Iraq: On a deserted road not too far from the border between Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan, Satar Barsirini looked up at the sky, now streaked with jets and drones. Iraq's Kurdish region has found itself caught in the crossfire of a regional war triggered by US and Israeli attacks on the Islamic republic. Dressed like the Kurdish fighters he once served alongside, Barsirini still wears the khaki shalwar, fitted jacket and scarf wrapped around his waist. Though recently retired, he refuses to give up his peshmerga uniform as he tills his small plot of land. The rumble of jets and hum of drones "come from everywhere. Especially at night," he told AFP in the hamlet of Barsirini, dozens of kilometers from the border. He described the "shiver in flesh" as the drones hit the ground outside. "I feel bad for the people, because we have paid a lot in blood to liberate Kurdistan... We just want to live." Irbil, the autonomous region's capital, and the valleys leading to the border have been targeted by Tehran and the Iraqi armed groups it supports. American bases there have come under fire, as have positions held by Iranian Kurdish parties — the same ones US President Donald Trump said it would be "wonderful" to see storm Iran.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of dolphin models displayed on a green belt along Constitution Avenue, in the Federal Capital.

UAE says Iran fired 16 ballistic missiles, 117 drones in new attacks

"As a result of the blatant Iranian aggression, 3 people were injured and material damage was inflicted on a university building in the Muharraq area after missile fragments fell," the ministry said in a statement, referring to an island area northwest of Manama

KUWAIT: The UAE's defense ministry said on Sunday that Iran fired 17 ballistic missiles, of which 16 were intercepted while one fell into the sea, as well as 117 drones of which 113 were intercepted and destroyed while four fell within the country's territory. The missile barrage resulted into death for four individuals, the defense ministry said on a statement on X Emirati forces have detected 238 ballistic missiles and 1,342 drones in UAE territory since the start of Iranian attacks; 221 projectiles were destroyed, 15 fell into the sea and two landed within the country. Meanwhile, 1,342 drones were intercepted, while 80 fell within the country's territory. Eight cruise missiles were also detected and destroyed, the ministry said. In Bahrain, the country's interior ministry said on Sunday an Iranian drone attack had damaged a water desalination plant as the Islamic

republic presses an air campaign against its Gulf neighbors. "The Iranian aggression randomly bombs civilian targets and causes material damage to a water desalination plant following an attack by a drone," the ministry said in a statement, after Tehran earlier accused the US of striking one of its own desalination plants from a base in Bahrain. Falling missile debris also injured three people and damaged a university building on Sunday, the interior ministry said. "As a result of the blatant Iranian aggression, 3 people were injured and material damage was inflicted on a university building in the Muharraq area after missile fragments fell," the ministry said in a statement, referring to an island area northwest of Manama. Meanwhile, a fire at Kuwait international airport's fuel tanks that were targeted in a drone attack was brought under control, official Kuwait News

Agency said, reporting no "significant injuries". The military called the drone attack "a direct targeting of vital infrastructure". A separate statement said "some civilian facilities sustained material damage as a result of falling fragments and debris from interception operations". The Kuwaiti interior ministry said two border guards "were martyred ... while performing their national duty", without elaborating. It was not clear whether their deaths were the result of an Iranian attack. Kuwait's national oil company announced a "precautionary" cut to its crude production, as the country's military said Sunday it had responded "to a wave of hostile drones that penetrated the country's airspace". KUNA said Kuwait's Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) was damaged after it was hit in a drone attack. Firefighters continue to battle against the fire there, KUNA re-

ported. Smoke rises from a building on fire after a drone attack in Kuwait City, Kuwait on March 8, 2026 in this screengrab taken from a social media video. (Social media via Reuters) Gulf nations on Sunday reported new missile and drone attacks, while Iran vowed to press on with strikes against neighboring countries as the war entered its second week. Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Defense reported a wave of drone attacks, saying 21 unmanned aerial vehicles were intercepted and destroyed in the last four hours. Major General Turki Al-Maliki, spokesman for the Defense Ministry, said in separate posts on X that 13 drones were intercepted and destroyed east of the national capital, Riyadh city, while eight drones were shot down just after entering Saudi air space. Qatar's defense ministry said on Sunday that the country was targeted a day earlier by 10 ballistic missiles

and two cruise missiles fired from Iran, but most of them were intercepted and caused no casualties. Before midnight on Saturday, loud explosions were heard in Dubai, the Qatari capital Doha and Bahrain's Manama, with attacks reported in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait, where the national oil company announced a "precautionary" cut to production. The attacks came despite Iran's president earlier apologizing to Gulf countries for earlier strikes. He had said they would no longer be targeted unless strikes were launched from their territory first. Hours later, Iran said it would continue conducting strikes on sites in Gulf countries which were "at the disposal of the enemy." UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan said in a rare televised address that the Emirates were in "a period of war" and "will emerge stronger" from it.—DNA

Sri Lanka hospital releases 22 rescued Iranian sailors

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka discharged from hospital 22 Iranian sailors who were plucked from life rafts after their warship was sunk by a US submarine, officials said Sunday. The sailors were treated at Karapitiya Hospital in the southern port city of Galle since Wednesday after the IRIS Dena was torpedoed just outside Sri Lanka's territorial waters. "Another 10 are still undergoing treatment," a medical officer at the hospital told AFP. He said the bodies of 84 Iranians retrieved from the Indian Ocean were also at the hospital. Those discharged from hospital overnight had been taken to a beach resort in the same district. Sri Lankan authorities said the survivors from the Dena were being handled according to international humanitarian law, and the government had contacted the International Committee of the Red Cross for assistance. The island is also providing safe haven for another 219 Iranian sailors from a second ship, the IRIS Bushehr, that was allowed to berth a day after the Dena was sunk. Sailors from the Bushehr have been moved to a Sri Lanka Navy camp at Welisara, just north of the capital Colombo, and their ship taken over by Sri Lanka's navy. Sri Lanka announced it was taking the Bushehr to the north-eastern port of Trincomalee, but an engine failure and other technical and administrative issues had delayed the movement, a navy spokesman said. Sri Lanka has denied claims that it was under pressure from Washington not to allow the Iranians to return home, and said Colombo will be guided solely by international law and its own domestic legislation. A US State Department spokesperson said the disposition of the Bushehr crew and Iranian sailors rescued at sea was up to Sri Lanka. "The United States, of course, respects and recognizes Sri Lanka's sovereignty in the handling of this situation," the spokesperson told AFP in Washington. India, meanwhile, said Saturday that it had allowed a third Iranian warship, the IRIS Lavan, to dock in one of its ports on "humane" grounds after it too reported engine problems.—APP

Call for alignment of textile recycling industry

FAISALABAD: The leading industry experts, academics and sustainability stakeholders have stressed for alignment of Pakistan's rapidly expanding textile recycling sector with emerging global compliance requirements in addition to strengthen its visibility in international markets for exploiting its full potential. They were addressing a major stakeholder dialogue titled "Recycling in Textiles: Way Forward for Pakistan" held at Satiana Industrial Association, where more than 100 delegates from industry, academia and allied sectors deliberated on strategies to strengthen textile circularity, improve compliance readiness and integrate Pakistan's recycling ecosystem with evolving global regulatory frameworks. National Textile University Faisalabad (NTUF) under its Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution (SMEP) Program organized the dialogue in collaboration with Satiana Industrial Association, the University of Kamalia, Reverse Resources and KnowTex. The event received institutional support from UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UK International Development, World Wide Fund (WWF), Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), All Pakistan Bed-Sheets & Upholstery Manufacturers Association (APBUMA), Institute of Engineers Pakistan (IEP), MB Recycling and Closed Loop Fashion. The delegations representing major recycling clusters including Satiana, Dajkot and Tata Bazaar participated in the session while the stakeholders involved in waste-handling operations from Ganesh Mill and Muridke clusters also attended. The speakers highlighted that Satiana alone hosts more than 106 textile recycling units, reflecting the scale, economic significance and employment potential of the recycling industry within Pakistan's textile value chain. The dialogue focused on interpreting global regulatory and market signals shaping textile recycling, assessing the commercial scale of existing recycling practices in Pakistan and identifying key gaps in data availability, standardization and compliance readiness. A panel discussion moderated by Dr. Muzzamal Hussain of NTUF served as central feature of the event and brought together prominent voices from academia and the textile industry. The panel included Vice Chancellor University of Kamalia Prof. Dr. Yasir Nawab, GM Marketing Beacon Impex Iftikhar-ul-Hassan, GM Corporate Sustainability and Chemical Management Interloop Limited Muhammad Fauz-ul-Azeem, GM Spinning and Recycling Sadaqat Textiles Limited Rao Zia-ur-Rehman, Convener Council of Textiles FCCI and former APBUMA chairman Arif Ehsan Malik, Information Secretary Satiana Industrial Association Muzamal Saeed Bajwa and Program Manager Reverse Resources Pakistan Manzoor Hashmi. The panelists observed that international brands and export markets are rapidly moving towards strict and non-negotiable compliance frameworks, particularly in areas such as traceability, environmental reporting and responsible production systems. They emphasized that Pakistani manufacturers and recyclers must accelerate progress in digital traceability systems, chemical management protocols, wastewater treatment technologies and worker safety standards to remain competitive in global supply chains. The experts also highlighted technical challenges faced by the recycling and spinning sectors including contamination in raw material, limitations in fiber length and variability in blended textile waste, factors that significantly influence product quality and its acceptance in international markets. The participants stressed that digitization of operations and the development of reliable cluster-level data systems could significantly enhance international recognition of Pakistan's recycling ecosystem. They warned that inadequate documentation and weak data infrastructure may keep Pakistan's recycling value chain largely invisible to global buyers despite its large-scale operations. The dialogue concluded with a shared commitment by stakeholders to collectively promote Faisalabad's recycling capabilities at the international level and position Pakistan as a credible player in the evolving global circular economy.—DNA

US-Israel attacks on Iran breach int'l law: Swiss minister

"The Federal Council is of the opinion that the attack on Iran constitutes a violation of international law," Pfister told SonntagsZeitung, referring to the Swiss cabinet

ZURICH/FRANKFURT: The United States and Israel have broken international law with their attacks on Iran, Swiss Defense Minister Martin Pfister said in an interview published on Sunday, the latest European leader to raise concerns about the conflict. Legal experts have said many countries will consider the attacks unjustified under the United Nations Charter, under which member countries must refrain from using force or the threat of force without UN authorization or unless acting in self-defense. "The Federal Council is of the opinion that the attack on

Iran constitutes a violation of international law," Pfister told SonntagsZeitung, referring to the Swiss cabinet. "In our view it constitutes a violation of the prohibition of violence," he added, calling on all parties involved to halt the fighting to protect the civilian population.

Pfister said he was referring to all the countries not complying with the prohibition on violence, including the United States and Israel. "The Americans and Israel have attacked Iran from the air. In doing so, they, like Iran, violated international law," Pfister said. The comments chime with those of German Vice Chancellor and Finance Minister

Lars Klingbeil, who told the RND newspaper network that he had "serious doubts that this war is legitimate under international law." Klingbeil also came out strongly against the idea of any potential German participation in the war: "I say clearly: this is not our war. We will not participate in this war." He said there was a "great danger that we are sliding ever deeper into a world where there are no longer any rules. We do not want to live in a world where only the law of the strongest applies."

Spain has also denounced the US and Israeli bombings of Iran as reckless and illegal.—Agencies

Wang blasts ME war, urges US to manage ties

BEIJING: China's top diplomat condemned on Sunday the war in the Middle East and urged the United States to iron out its differences with Beijing. Foreign Minister Wang Yi told a press conference in the Chinese capital that the war, which was sparked by US and Israeli strikes on Iran, "should never have happened." "A strong fist does not mean strong reason. The world cannot return to the law of the jungle," he told reporters. He was speaking during China's annual political gathering, which began this week, known as the "Two Sessions." The parallel meetings of China's parliament and political consultative body are closely watched for clues as to the priorities of top leaders, in the face of a precarious geopolitical landscape. Wang addressed a range of issues, including a trade war with the United States, regional tensions in the South China Sea, as well as wars in the Middle East and Ukraine.—APP

New hunt for flight MH370 ends with no clues

KUALA LUMPUR: The latest search for Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, which went missing 12 years ago in one of aviation's greatest enduring mysteries, concluded in January without yielding any findings, Malaysia's transport ministry said on Sunday. The Boeing 777 carrying 239 people vanished from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. Two-thirds of the passengers were Chinese, while the others included Malaysians, Indonesians and Australians, as well as Indian, American, Dutch and French nationals. Despite multiple searches, including the largest in aviation history, neither the aircraft, passengers nor black boxes have ever been found. The latest search, which began in December, scoured an area of around 15,000 square kilometers but efforts "have not yielded any findings that confirm the location of the aircraft wreckage," Malaysia's transport ministry said in a statement. Exploration firm Ocean Infinity, based in Britain and the United States, led the search which concluded on January 23. Families of the Chinese passengers published an open letter on Sunday — the 12th anniversary of the flight's disappearance — criticizing the lack of information they received during the latest search. "We understand the difficulties of the search," the relatives said in a joint open letter to Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, in which they thanked him for the initiative. "However, since 15 January this year, families have received no further search briefings whatsoever.—APP

Protests across globe mark one week of Iran war

PARIS: France: Lion-embalozed flags of pre-revolution Iran fluttered in cities across the world on Saturday as demonstrators took to the streets a week after the start of the war in the Middle East. Europe, Africa and the Americas saw demonstrations, with some protesting against Iran's Islamic regime, others railing against the war, and some in support of Iran's late supreme leader Ali Khamenei, who was killed in the first US-Israeli strikes of the conflict. Paris saw two demonstrations: one supporting the US-based Reza Pahlavi, the son of the late shah, to head up a transition, and another denouncing that scenario. "I support Pahlavi who is calling for a revolution," Masoud Ghanaatian, 35, a student, told AFP at a protest in southern Paris, where participants carried photos of the late shah's son and waved US, Israeli and pre-revolution Iran flags. "He's a democrat. He can oversee a transition and promises to organize elections." Hundreds of pro-Pahlavi demonstrations also gathered in Stockholm, holding up pictures of him and his late father. But further north, protesters wearing yellow vests reading "Free Iran" showed off stickers on their hands that read "No Shah, no Mullah.—APP

Briefs

Miftah says govt petrol hike benefits oil firms

DNA

KARACHI: Former finance minister Miftah Ismail has slammed the PML-N-led government's move to hike the price of petrol and diesel, saying that it has only benefited oil firms.

In a post on X, Miftah, who served as the finance czar during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's previous tenure, said that the government raised the prices, but in doing so, it also gave Rs 35 per litre extra profit to oil companies on petrol and Rs70 per litre on diesel. The federal government raised petrol and diesel prices by Rs55 per litre as surging global oil prices, fuelled by the US-Israel war with Iran, put pressure on domestic energy costs.

Effective from March 6, the new price of petrol is Rs321.17 per litre from Rs266.17; whereas, the diesel rate is Rs335.86 per litre from Rs280.86 after the review. Explaining it further, the Awam Pakistan Party (APP) leader said that the government decided to increase petrol and diesel prices by Rs 55 per litre each, which is both the highest single increase ever and the highest price level for both petrol and diesel. "And it will, of course, bring in a huge increase in inflation."

Miftah said that in Pakistan, petrol and diesel prices are set every 15 days. The last price increase came on February 28 for the period of March 1-15, which is set according to the prices in Singapore's Platt index.

US embassy in Oslo hit by explosion

DNA

OSLO: The US embassy in Oslo has been hit by an explosion in the early hours of the morning, Norway's police say. "Large resources" were sent to the area in the Norwegian capital at about 01:00 local time on Sunday (00:00 GMT), police said. "The police are in dialogue with the embassy and no injuries have been reported," a statement said.

It added that there was currently "no information about exactly what happened or who may be involved". The embassy sustained minor damage. The diplomatic mission's US employees have not commented. EPA/Shutterstock Damaged glass doors at the site of incident at the US embassy in Oslo/EPA/Shutterstock Damaged to the glass doors and what appears to be burn marks could be seen at the embassy Michael Dellemyr, who is leading the police response, told Norway's public broadcaster NRK the explosion was at the public entrance to the building. He said police officers had conducted searches in the area around the embassy in the Morgedalsvegen district of Oslo, about 7km (4 miles) outside the city centre.

Serena Hotels celebrates Women Day under RAABTA

CEO of Serena Hotels Global Aziz Boolani lauded the extraordinary resilience and leadership of women, citing numerous success stories of Pakistani women making impactful contributions worldwide



ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels Global Aziz Boolani in a photo with the participants of RAABTA initiative organized to celebrate the World Women Day. - DNA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels marked International Women's Day with a vibrant celebration under its flagship public diplomacy platform,

Raabta, highlighting the pivotal contributions of women to Pakistan's progress and global standing. The event, held at a Serena venue in Islamabad, drew a distinguished gathering of diplomats, civil society leaders, influencers, and community members. Renowned

broadcast journalist and Raabta curator Sidra Iqbal skillfully moderated the session, steering insightful discussions on gender equality, empowerment, and inclusion.

Speakers emphasized the indispensable role of women in national development,

from driving economic growth and social reform to fostering innovation across sectors. They spotlighted inspiring Pakistani women who have excelled in diverse fields, including diplomacy, science, business, media, and public service. Examples included trailblazing female diplomats who have represented Pakistan on international stages, alongside achievers in STEM, entrepreneurship, and activism who continue to break barriers and inspire future generations.

In his keynote address, the CEO of Serena Hotels Global Aziz Boolani lauded the extraordinary resilience and leadership of women, citing numerous success stories of Pakistani women making impactful contributions worldwide. He underscored Raabta's value as a vital platform for meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and positive change. "Raabta serves as an important bridge for public diplomacy and societal progress," he stated, reaffirming Serena Hotels' commitment to sustaining and expanding such initiatives. He pledged ongoing support for programs that promote gender parity, empower women, and celebrate their achievements, aligning with the company's broader ethos of equality and community investment.

Industry questions fuel price surge despite 'old stocks'

NEWS DESK

KARACHI: Though Pakistan is not part of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, it is the first victim in the region as the government raised oil prices while the high-cost oil is still at sea; the 28-day stocks are being sold at prices yet to reach consumers. India kept

petrol and diesel prices stable despite global price spikes, but LPG prices were increased. The Indian government has so far managed high import costs for crude. Trade and business people were disappointed with the sudden jump in oil and diesel prices by Rs55 per litre, while ordinary citizens were highly concerned about the ripple effects of this oil price hike. "The easiest way to extract money is to bomb the common citizens and destroy the already ailing economy," said Syed Shakil, a textile industry worker. He said the textile industry was facing tough times and

could face the most difficult times in the wake of the Middle East war.

Industry people were looking at several major impacts as a result of this war: unexpected high inflation, increases in interest rates, a larger fiscal gap, a wider current account deficit, imbalances in the exchange rate, and higher federal government debts to deal with rising spending in the wake of inflation spikes. "We are already working at the lowest profits for our products. If the inflation hits as it looks imminent, we will not be able to produce cheaper products and compete in international market," said Amir Aziz, an exporter of textile products to EU countries. He said there was no hindrance for exports to Europe, but shipping companies had already increased costs, which meant our next consignments would be more expensive. He added that buyers had to pay shipping charges, which meant that they would demand even lower prices for our products.

Police probe man for throwing 'ignited' devices in front of Mamdani's house

DNA

NEW YORK: New York counterterrorism police said they were carrying out an investigation on Saturday after a man threw "ignited devices" near far-right protesters demonstrating outside the mayor's home.

New York Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said the devices contained nuts, bolts and screws as well as a fuse — but it was not yet clear if they were functional improvised explosive devices, or hoax imitations.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation said in an X post that its Joint Terrorism Task Force was "actively investigating" the matter along with New York City Police.

There was no indication the incident was related to the ongoing hostilities in Iran, Tisch added. Police arrested six people over unrest at the protest, she said, including two suspects in connection with the devices. Far-right influencer Jake Lang was demonstrating against alleged

"Islamification" and calling for an end to "public Muslim prayer" in New York in front of Gracie Mansion, the residence of Mayor Zohran Mamdani.

His protest drew around 20 people, police said, while counter-protesters numbered about 125. A man wearing a dark hooded sweatshirt and beige cargo pants was handed a device wrapped in tape and billowing smoke by a fellow activist. He dropped it near a line of police before vaulting a crash barrier. The man also threw a similar device near Lang's group of protesters.

"Witnesses reported seeing flames and smoke as it travelled through the air before it struck a barrier a few feet from police officers," Tisch told a briefing, naming the suspect as Amir Balat, 18.

"Mr Balat then ... gets a second device from a man. "Mr Balat lights the device and starts running with it. He then drops the device." Moments later, he and the other man were detained by police, who were heavily deployed to the protest.

Jemima Goldsmith fined

LONDON: Television producer Jemima Goldsmith has been convicted and fined £1,000 after a car registered in her name was caught speeding in north London. The 52-year-old failed to respond to Metropolitan Police letters after a Mini Clubman was caught travelling at 46mph on a 40mph stretch of the A1 in Hampstead on 25 August last year.

Goldsmith offered up the name of the guilty driver who had been using her car, but missed the deadline to respond to avoid court proceedings. She was convicted of failing to give information relating to the identification of the driver of a vehicle when required.

Goldsmith blamed major renovation work on her £10m Kensington home for her delayed response.

'Fully accept fine' "Due to ongoing construction works at the property where my car is registered, which made access tricky, the original letter was mislaid by builders and I was unaware of its existence until October," she wrote in a note to Westminster Magistrates' Court.

"As soon as it was received, I completed and returned the form immediately."

Court papers showed Goldsmith named a man called Anthony Reilly, who lives in Switzerland, as the person who was driving the Mini. - Agencies

Pope urges end to bombings

NEWS DESK

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo said on Sunday that deeply troubling news continued to arrive from Iran and across the Middle East, urging an end to the violence and renewed efforts to open space for dialogue. Speaking at the Angelus prayer in St. Peter's Square, the pope said the conflict was fueling fear and hatred and raised concerns that it could spread further, dragging other countries, including "dear Lebanon." "Let us raise our humble prayer to the Lord that the roar of bombs may cease, that weapons may fall silent, and that space may be opened for dialogue in which the voices of peoples can be heard," Pope Leo said.

Aurat march activists detained by police

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Several women's rights activists, including Aurat March members, were detained by police in Islamabad ahead of a rally they planned to hold on the occasion of International Women's Day on Sunday. Police sources told Dawn that they were detained from Super Market in Sector F-6, where they were gathering to begin the march. The marchers reached outside the National Press Club, but a huge contingent of police was already present there. They arrested the marchers and shifted them to Women Police Station. Those detained include prominent activist

Dr Farzana Bari, along with other Aurat March organisers and participants, police sources confirmed. They added that the activists were picked up as Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) remained imposed in the federal capital.

Section 144 of the CrPC is a legal provision that empowers district administrations to prohibit an assembly of four or more people in an area for a limited period. Aurat March Islamabad also shared a video on their official Instagram account, showing Bari and other women sitting inside what appeared to be a police vehicle. According to police sources, the district administration had denied a no-objection certificate (NOC) to Aurat March, so the gathering was an "illegal activity".

UN chief warns of situation spinning out of control

UNITED NATIONS: The escalating war in the Middle East, now in its 8th day, has heightened growing concerns about further civilian suffering and displacement in the region and far beyond, according to UN agencies said. Eight days since Israeli and US bombing in Iran prompted ongoing counter-strikes across the Middle East, humanitarians confirmed massive upheaval in Lebanon, with hundreds of shelters now full, as whole suburbs of Beirut have emptied. "Israel's military ground incursions into southern Lebanon, blanket displacement orders for the population in Beirut's southern suburbs, the Bekka region and the full area to the south of the Latani River, and its continued airstrikes on different parts of the country are bringing more misery, more suffering to an already weary civilian population," Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the UN human rights office, OHCHR, said in Geneva on Friday.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a statement warning that, "All the unlawful attacks in the Middle East and beyond are causing tremendous suffering and harm to civilians throughout the region — and pose a grave risk to the global economy, particularly to the most vulnerable people. "The situation could spiral beyond anyone's control. "It is time to stop the fighting and get to serious diplomatic negotiations. The stakes could not be higher," the UN chief added. On the other hand, US President Donald Trump said he will only accept "unconditional surrender" from Iran as the US and Israel continue to strike that country, prompting continued Iranian retaliation. "There will be no deal with Iran except unconditional surrender!" the US

president said on his Truth Social platform. "After that, and the selection of a great & acceptable leader (s), we, and many of our wonderful and very brave allies and partners, will work tirelessly to bring Iran back from the brink of destruction, making it economically bigger, better, and stronger than ever before. Iran will have a great future," he added. From the UN migration agency, IOM, Chief of Mission Lebanon Mathieu Luciano described the dramatic deterioration in the country on Thursday evening as the Israeli army carried out "multiple air strikes on the southern suburb of Beirut overnight". He added that many collective shelters are at full capacity, especially in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, "so, people are just redirected to other shelters, especially in the north, in Al Qaa, in safe places in the Bekka as well."

The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, has declared the escalating crisis a major humanitarian emergency requiring an immediate regional response. UNHCR Director for Emergencies Ayaki Ito told journalists in Geneva that the conflict is triggering significant population movements across the region and into Southwest Asia. Nearly 25 million people in the affected areas are already refugees, internally displaced or recent returnees, placing additional strain on fragile host countries. The major commercial shipping crisis caused by the war which has practically halted all vessel movement in the Strait of Hormuz south of Iran is already impacting UN agencies and partners seeking to dispatch lifesaving relief to Gaza and Sudan, among other emergencies. - Agencies





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