

Islamabad POST

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Will respond to terror threats from Afghanistan

Detailed News On Page-08

US war minister faces test of impeachment

Detailed News On Page-08



Pakistan eyes biggest China swap: Aurangzeb

Detailed News On Page-08



Austerity drive

Govt orders shops and malls to close by 9pm

Single-dish rule imposed at marriage functions under austerity measures for Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has notified sweeping austerity and fuel conservation measures to conserve energy as fuel prices spike due to the Middle East conflict, with all shops, markets, and shopping malls in Islamabad closing at 9pm throughout the week. The new austerity measures are initially limited to Islamabad, with the federal government encouraging provincial and regional governments to consider adopting similar measures.

Fuel prices recorded a sharp increase in the country amid heightened volatility in global oil markets triggered by renewed hostilities in the Middle East and closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for oil and gas shipping.

The further escalation followed the collapse of a fragile ceasefire reached in June between Tehran and Washington and the Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia's civilian and economic infrastructure, renewing fears of a wider regional conflict and raising concerns over disruptions to energy shipments. Following the increase announced on Friday, petrol is now being sold at Rs291.22 per litre, while the price of highspeed diesel has risen to Rs421.45 per litre, following hikes of Rs6.88 and Rs5.62 per litre, respectively. Key measures

- Shops, markets and stores must close by 9pm.
- New austerity measures initially limited to Islamabad.
- Marriage halls and marquees must close by 10pm.
- Restaurants and eateries must close by 11pm, except takeaways.
- Marriage functions restricted to serving only a single dish.
- Pharmacies, hospitals and other essential services remain fully exempt.
- Government vehicle fuel allocations cut by 50% for three months.

- Foreign travel completely banned for government officials for three months.
- Government vehicle and durable goods purchases completely prohibited.
- Non-essential recurring government expenditure reduced by 5% during 26-27.

According to the notification – a copy of which is available with Geo News, shops, markets, shopping malls, bazaars, departmental stores, grocery, general and kirana stores must close by 9pm.

Meanwhile, the notification said that marriage halls, marquees and all commercial venues hosting festive events must close by 10pm. Restaurants, cafes, eateries and food outlets must close by 11pm, though takeaway and home delivery services are exempt.

Only a single dish shall be served at all marriage-related functions and events.

On the other hand, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, medical laboratories, standalone bakeries, tandoors, milk and dairy shops, fuel and CNG pumps, electric vehicle charging stations, gyms, sports facilities, IT companies and call centres are fully exempt from closing time restrictions.

Separately, the government slashed official vehicle fuel by 50%, banned all foreign travel for three months and also imposed a complete ban on vehicle and durable goods purchases, restricting business closing timings across the country. The measures also limit government spending through a 5% cut in the non-essential recurring expenditure budget for the entire fiscal year 2026-27. Official vehicles will receive only half their usual fuel allocation for three months. The measure excludes operational

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Bushra Bibi moves FCC

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Bushra Bibi, the spouse of incarcerated former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan, on Thursday moved an urgent application before the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC), seeking an early hearing of her appeal for the suspension of her sentence in the \$190 million Aqadir Trust case. The former first lady was handed a a seven-year sentence in the case in January last year, and is currently imprisoned at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail. In the case, the court found Imran and Bushra guilty of giving undue favours to property tycoon Malik Riaz in receiving his laundered money from the United Kingdom. Bushra, along with Imran, had initially moved the Islamabad High Court (IHC) for the suspension of her sentence in July last year.

'United States committed war crimes in Iran'

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: A United Nations fact-finding mission on Iran said on Thursday it had reasonable grounds to believe the United States was behind two military strikes on a school and sports facility in Iran in February, and that these constituted war crimes. It also said that Iranian authorities committed crimes against humanity during their deadly crackdown on antigovernment protests before the war. The findings in a new report by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran, to be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, examined the US's conduct during the Iran war that began in February and the Iranian government's response to nationwide unrest that began in late December.

PM Shehbaz to lead Pakistan's delegation to UNGA, says FO

Pakistan has expressed concerns over the situation in Bab al-Mandab – one of the busiest and most contested global maritime chokepoints

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will lead Pakistan's delegation to the high-level segment of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York next week, Foreign Office spokesperson Sajid Haidar Khan confirmed on Thursday. Addressing a weekly press briefing in Islamabad, the spokesperson said the prime minister would highlight Pakistan's perspective on regional and global developments, reaffirming the importance of dialogue, diplomacy, restraint and peaceful resolution of disputes. The official theme of the 81st session is 'Restoring Trust, Managing Transformation: A United Nations That Delivers for All', while the UNGA debate is scheduled to take place from September 22 to 26, with a final sitting on September 28. The FO spokesperson said the prime minister

will be accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers and senior officials. "In his UNGA address, the prime minister will outline Pakistan's priorities on sustainable development, climate change, counterterrorism, Islamophobia, global economic challenges, UN reforms and issues confronting the Global South," he said.

The FO spokesperson said the premier would also draw attention to the situation in India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and Palestine. During the visit, PM Shehbaz will participate in high-level events and hold bilateral meetings with world leaders and the UN Secretary-General to highlight Pakistan's commitment to multilateralism, the UN Charter, regional peace and international cooperation, the spokesperson added. Pakistan has expressed concerns over the situation in

Continued on Page 06

Petroleum dealers begin fuel sales under relief scheme

People to get relief as fuel subsidy mechanism issues resolved between two sides

NAZIR SYAL

KARACHI: Petroleum dealers have started implementing the government's fuel relief package following successful negotiations between the two sides, confirmed the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) on Thursday. A day earlier, the petroleum dealers had refused to sell petrol under the government's newly launched Rs100-per-litre relief scheme for motorcyclists, rickshaw owners and drivers of vehicles up to 800cc, citing concerns over its implementation mechanism and financial burden.

Talking to journalists following successful negotiations with the government, All Pakistan Petrol Pump Owners Association Vice Chairman Nadeem Butt also confirmed that the authorities had addressed all their concerns regarding the fuel subsidy scheme. He said petrol pump owners had no objection to the subsidy scheme, but had concerns over the mechanism for receiving the subsidy payments. Following talks with the government, these concerns have now been resolved, he added.

The vice chairman said that the government assured the association that the subsidy amount will be reimbursed within 24 hours, adding that payments would

be made through the State Bank of Pakistan and the funds had already reached the central bank.

Earlier in the day, the SMS for registration in the petrol subsidy scheme has been made completely free of cost on the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. According to a post shared by the Prime Minister's Office on X, the premier has announced further facilitation for low and middle-income groups under the fuel subsidy scheme. Relief under the Prime Minister Fuel Subsidy Scheme is being extended to people across the country, including Asad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

To register, applicants need to send an SMS by typing REG, followed by a space, their CNIC number, vehicle number plate, the first letter of the province where the vehicle is registered, and the vehicle registration date to 9771.

The federal government on September 13 launched a special relief scheme providing Rs100 per litre discount on petrol for motorcyclists, rickshaw owners and drivers of vehicles up to 800cc, as the government moved to cushion the public from rising fuel prices driven by tensions in the Middle East. Announcing the scheme, PM Shehbaz said the government was fully aware of the burden rising oil prices had placed on the public and that the people would not be left alone in these difficult times.

SC suspends Mazari, husband's sentences

Top court grants bail to lawyer couple against surety bonds worth Rs 200,000

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday suspended the sentences of lawyer and rights activist Iman Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chhattha, in a case related to controversial arrests. In January, a district and sessions court in the federal capital sentenced the couple to a total of 17 years in prison on charges of different sections of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Pea) – just a day after their arrest in another case. The court then moved the IHC against their sentence in early February. Mazari and Chhattha were booked in a case registered by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA)

Continued on Page 06

Security forces kill three terrorists

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have killed three terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) carried out in the Badargang area of Balochistan's Awaran district, security sources said on Thursday. According to the security sources, the latest IBO was conducted as part of the ongoing series of intelligence-based operations under Red-ol-Pink-1, a sustained counterterrorism campaign aimed at eliminating Indian proxies. A large quantity of weapons and ammunition was also recovered from the militants, they said. The latest IBO comes days after security forces killed at least three

Continued on Page 06

Amid Houthi attacks

Kh Asif says time has come to enforce Makkah agreement

Khawaja Asif says Pakistan remains committed to protecting Saudi Arabia and the holy sites

MEHTAB PRIZADA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Wednesday said he believed the situation had reached a point where the Makkah agreement had to be implemented, following an attempted drone attack near the holy city. "Makkah Agreement applies to us, and we will fulfil our duty," Asif said while speaking on Geo News programme 'Aaj Shabab Khanzada Kay Sath', adding that Pakistan was bound by the agreement but he could not go into its details. He said Pakistan did not need an agreement to protect the holy sites, stressing that safeguarding them was a duty even in the absence of the Makkah Agreement. "If Makkah is attacked, there is no need for an agreement to protect it," Asif said. His remarks came after Saudi Arabia said its air defences intercepted and destroyed a Houthi drone south of Makkah before it entered prohibited airspace over the holy city.

Continued on Page 06

Iran stresses avoiding 'politicisation' of holy sites' security

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Bagheri has commented on Saudi Arabia's stance that Houthi targeted Makkah. "Any aggression against Islamic holy sites, particularly Makkah al-Mukarramah, Madina al-Munawwarah, and Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as threats to their pilgrims and neighbours, is a condemned act," he wrote on X. "At the same time, a mere claim of intercepting a drone en route to Makkah al-Mukarramah cannot constitute grounds for accusing a specific party, especially since the Yemeni Government of Change and Construction has explicitly denied this claim."

Continued on Page 06

Chief minister's trips are never personal: Maryam

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Thursday shut back at criticism over her use of an official aircraft to attend a family event in London, claiming that a chief minister's trips "are never personal" and insisting she had borne all trip-related expenses. CM Maryam came under scrutiny when it emerged that she used the provincial government jet to make a private visit to London, with opposition leaders questioning the use of an official aircraft for a family event.

However, Punjab Information Minister Aasma Bokhari has denied the allegation, also insisting that the trip was paid for "out of her own pocket". Addressing a ceremony in Multan, the chief minister addressed the issue, noting criticism "directed at Maryam Nawaz's plane". "It is not Maryam Nawaz's plane; it is the chief minister's plane. Maryam Nawaz is not going to take it to London [.] all four chief ministers have this facility," she said. She said she had served Punjab for two-and-a-half years. "I wake up, I go to work and come back in the evening [.] sometimes, I am working till so late that I fall asleep with my iPad or phone in my hand."

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Training workshop held to raise awareness on child protection

FESHAWAR: A two-day child protection training for frontline workers was organized by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Pakistan to raise awareness among media representatives, school teachers, officials from relevant government institutions, and social workers about child protection, violence, exploitation, and the best interests of the child. The training program was held in collaboration with the Child Protection and Welfare Commission, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Participants received detailed briefings on the Child Protection Act 2010, establishment of the Commission, its operational procedures, scope of work, and case management protocols. Training on various aspects of child protection was provided by Dr. Akhtar Munir, Child Protection Officer, Dr. Naveed Ali and Hameed Ahmed. Social Case Workers from the Child Protection Unit and Saad-ud-Din, Protection Officer from Helvetas. The sessions emphasized that timely identification, proper guidance, and effective reporting of cases to relevant institutions are essential to safeguard children from violence, abuse, exploitation, child labor, and other risks. Participants were also apprised of the principles regarding confidentiality, the best interests of the child, and appropriate case management in sensitive cases involving children. —APP

Legal edu progress report presented to CJF

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), led by its Vice Chairman, Mr. Muhammad Masood Chaudhry, on Thursday called on Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yousaf Iqbal at the Supreme Court and presented the Biannual Progress Report (2024-2025) of the Council's Directorate of Legal Education. The delegation briefed the Chief Justice on the Directorate's efforts to improve the quality of legal education and strengthen professional standards. The discussion covered oversight of law teaching institutions, curriculum development, continuing legal education and opportunities for practical training for lawyers. Justice Yousaf Iqbal observed that sound legal education was essential for developing a capable legal profession and ensuring effective administration of justice. He emphasized the importance of special skills, professional ethics and sustained cooperation among the Bar, legal education institutions and other stakeholders in preparing future members of the legal profession. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to continued engagement on measures aimed at improving legal education in Pakistan. —APP

Malaysian embassy, Serena Hotels celebrate Malaysia's 69th National Day

Addressing the media at the opening of the festival, Ambassador Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia, highlighted the importance of cultural exchange in strengthening the longstanding relationship between Malaysia and Pakistan; Christoph Hoeflich, General Manager of Islamabad Serena Hotel, welcomed the collaboration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The High Commission of Malaysia, in collaboration with Serena Hotels, is celebrating Malaysia's 69th National Day with the "Visit Malaysia 2026: Tourism and Gastronomy Festival", a week-long celebration of Malaysian cuisine and culture at Zaman Restaurant, Islamabad Serena Hotel, from 17 to 23 September 2026. Apart from promoting Malaysia as a tourist destination, the festival brings the distinctive flavors and culinary traditions of Malaysia to Islamabad, offering guests an opportunity to experience a selection of authentic Malaysian dishes prepared by specially chefs from Serena Hotels and the Malaysian High Commission. Addressing the media at the opening of the festival, H.E. Ambassador Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia, highlighted the importance of cultural exchange in strengthening the longstanding relationship between Malaysia and Pakistan. He noted that culture serves as one of the most meaningful ways to introduce people to a country's unique heritage and traditions. Christoph Hoeflich, General Manager of Islamabad Serena Hotel, welcomed the collaboration and reaffirmed Serena Hotels' commitment to promoting cultural engagement through hospitality, cuisine and shared experiences. The culinary programme is being led by Chef Puthman, a Malaysian specialist representing Serena Hotels, together with the Chef from the High Commission of Malaysia. The menu has been specially curated to showcase the diversity of Malaysian cuisine, bringing together traditional recipes, distinctive ingredients and flavors that reflect the Malaysian's rich culinary heritage. Complementing the culinary experience, the festival also features special cultural performances by performers specially flown from Malaysia, adding a further dimension to the experience and giving guests a glimpse of Malaysia's vibrant traditions beyond its cuisine. The festival will continue at Zaman Restaurant, Islamabad Serena Hotel, until 23 September 2026, and is being held under Serena Hotels' Cultural Diplomacy initiative, which seeks to foster greater understanding and stronger connections through culture, cuisine and shared experiences.



ISLAMABAD: Dato Azhar bin Mazlan High Commissioner of Malaysia, Global CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani and others cutting cake to celebrate Malaysia's 69th National Day with the "Visit Malaysia 2026: Tourism and Gastronomy Festival. DNA

Khichi inaugurates first Deaf Reach Centre in Quetta

QUETTA: In a landmark step toward advancing inclusive education and equal opportunities for children and youth with disabilities, Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Muhammad Aurangzeb Khichi inaugurated the first Deaf Reach Centre in Quetta on Thursday. Addressing the ceremony, Minister Aurangzeb Khichi lauded the collaborative efforts behind the project, calling it a timely and commendable initiative to develop their abilities, confidence, and skills to contribute positively to society. He also visited the facility, reviewed the learning environment, and interacted with students, appreciating the efforts to provide a supportive, accessible, and inclusive educational environment. Aurangzeb Khichi extended full support from the federal government for Balochistan's welfare programs and development initiatives. Parliamentary Secretary for Social Welfare Haji Wali Muhammad Noorani announced that new schools for special children will be established across Balochistan. He stressed that providing

opportunities to participate meaningfully in society, he appreciated the collaborative efforts of Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), Paralympic Educational Foundation (PEF) and the Social Welfare Department in establishing the Centre and underscored the need for continued partnerships to expand inclusive education and support services across Balochistan. He highlighted the importance of creating an enabling environment where children with disabilities can develop their abilities, confidence, and skills to contribute positively to society. He also visited the facility, reviewed the learning environment, and interacted with students, appreciating the efforts to provide a supportive, accessible, and inclusive educational environment. Aurangzeb Khichi extended full support from the federal government for Balochistan's welfare programs and development initiatives. Parliamentary Secretary for Social Welfare Haji Wali Muhammad Noorani announced that new schools for special children will be established across Balochistan. He stressed that providing

Karachi Industrial Park lease nearing finalisation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Division Senator Akhter Chaudhry on Thursday reviewed the proposed land lease and incentive framework for Karachi Industrial Park, which is nearing finalisation ahead of its planned early launch to attract export-oriented industries and boost industrial investment. The Minister expressed the government's commitment to expediting the development of Karachi Industrial Park and ensuring that industrial units become operational at the earliest. He stressed that the proposed framework must promote export-oriented industries, with land allocation and associated concessions linked to clearly defined export commitments to ensure that the project contributes meaningfully to Pakistan's export growth. The meeting reviewed various development and investment models, including a proposed land lease package offering competitive incentives linked to clearly defined export commitments. Senator Akhter Chaudhry said Karachi Industrial Park should support the country's broader economic objectives, particularly export enhancement, industrialisation and productive utilisation of land. —APP

KP lawmakers briefed on cervical cancer prevention

FESHAWAR: A high-level orientation session on cervical cancer prevention and HPV vaccination was held by Country Director, Dr. Amna Khan. The session brought together Provincial Ministers of KP, Advisors, Special Assistants to the Chief Minister, and Members of the Provincial Assembly, providing a high-level platform for policymakers to hear directly from technical experts on the burden of cervical cancer, evidence-based prevention, and the critical role of HPV vaccination in protecting adolescent girls. An engaging and interactive question-and-answer session allowed parliamentarians to raise questions and exchange perspectives on vaccine confidence, community awareness and campaign im-

plementation, while exploring how political leadership and community influence can help build confidence and support the successful rollout of the HPV vaccination campaign across KP. Parliamentarians expressed support for the upcoming HPV vaccination campaign and reaffirmed commitment to using their leadership and influence to promote awareness and support implementation across the province. In addition to mention here that globally and in Pakistan, HPV works hand in hand with governments, providing technical assistance, evidence-based knowledge transfer, and capacity strengthening to help build stronger health systems and improve the quality of care. —DNA

Aurangzeb for shift to sustainable, productive growth model

LIIBS concludes with framework on next move for economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 9th edition of the LEADERS IN ISLAMABAD BUSINESS SUMMIT (LIIBS) 2026, themed "The Next Move," concluded at Islamabad with a firm commitment from policy makers, global business heads, and thought leaders for decision action to convert Pakistan's economic potential into sustained advantage. In his inaugural ministerial keynote, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, said, "We had about 3.7% GDP growth last fiscal year, and the momentum is continuing into this fiscal year. Large-scale manufacturing has turned around, while strong remittance inflows and IT exports are supporting the external account. The direction of travel is clear that we need to move beyond a consumption-led growth model and build an economy supported by sustainable and productive growth." Muhammad Ali, Federal Min-

ister & Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatization, in his ministerial address, said, "Pakistan cannot just be a consumer of technology; we need to be the creator. Our ambition is to have productive businesses at a scale that compete with global entities. We need strong education and equal workforce participation. We need to extend talent to manufacturing, defense, and other technologies of the future. We need to build a Pakistan where cities are more productive than countries, and with young people possessing the skills to participate in the eco-

nomic future." Bilal Ahsan Kayani, Minister of State for Finance and Railways, added, "We have good people and we should do better for them. We need structural reforms with better governance. Federal and provincial government alignment is crucial. We need to break away from the cycle of spending unguided and then turning towards IMF loans. We need to increase exports to develop. We cannot do effective policymaking without coordinating with the private sector, which is why expert teams were released by the government last year. We are making sure that our

agricultural sector and SMEs are getting finances. We are reforming entities like SME-DA." In the closing Session, Senator Amna-Han Khan, Caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan (2023-24), said, "Pakistan's security challenges must be addressed, but the deeper question is structural. Other countries facing serious violence have continued to build large export economies. The lesson, therefore, should be on understanding and fixing the underlying economic constraints rather than simply attacking weak growth to free export taxes were reduced by the government last year. We are making sure that our

environmental Coordination, stressed on the need for continuity and remained, "Policies based on elite capture always result in exploitation. With a consensus, a level playing field based on skills and merit-based policies should be created. If we have great universities, let their students do something without creating hurdles in their path. We have to change the elite capture and we should keep trying." Addressed around the context of de-leveraging Pakistan's future strategy, the Summit examined the country's inflation point across economic policy, technology.



MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES NOTICE OF TENDER

- Applications along with all credentials are invited by the GE (H) Main Ltd up to 28 Sep 2026 for prequalification of firms / contractors and issues of tenders for following work under GE (H) Main Ltd in the light of Clause-10, 15 and 16 of PPRA Rules 2004:-
 - Replacement of external electrical cable, bus bar and meter box / external water supply line at C type block no. 9, 10 & 11 street no. 20-A.
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 - Misc Repair / Main works in different location under B&R-I, B&R-II, E&M Sub Division.
 - Misc Minor works in different location under B&R-I, B&R-II, E&M Sub Division.
 - Term Contracts of different Zere in different location under B&R-I, B&R-II, E&M Sub Division.
 - Repair / Maint of u/s furniture items in different location under F&S Sub Division.
 - Provision of furniture items in different location under F&S Sub Division.
 - DC Work in different location under B&R-I, B&R-II Sub Division.
 - Repair / Replacement of rock wall outer sides of DRI location at Islamabad.
 - Repair / Replacement Works at NRC Islamabad.
- Firms / contractors who are enlisted with MES in category 'D' or higher OR with other Govt. Departments, having experience of this type of work may only apply.
- Applicants not providing the following information / documents will not be considered for prequalification / issued tenders:-

Sr	Description of similar nature of work executed during last two years and in hand	Sponsoring agency / client	Amount of work (Rupees in Million)	Completion period (Months)	Date of Physical completion	Percentage progress of work in hand	Performance report on each work by the sponsoring agency / client
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- The contractors will also furnish List of Movable & Immovable assets. Personnel (skilled/unskilled), Machinery/equipment, Bank Statement, General Sales Tax (GST) Registration, NTN Certificate etc.
- Firms / contractors not registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (Renewal of Registration for the year 2026-27) will not be considered for issuance of tender documents.
- Pre-qualification documents can be obtained from GE (H) Main Ltd, Sector E-8 Islamabad.
- The applications will be scrutinized and tenders will be issued to the pre-qualified firms / contractors. The tenders required to be received in GE (H) Main Ltd Sector E-8 Islamabad by 1130 hours on 06 Oct 2026 and will be opened on the same date at 1200 hours.
- Contractors who desire may witness the opening of tenders.
- The Accepting Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the applications in the light of para-33 of PPRA rules-2004. Incomplete application shall not be entertained.

Briefs

Centre, KP to strengthen coop for public welfare

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Energy and Power Nazir Ahmed Abbasi on Thursday agreed to strengthen coordination on strategic energy issues, oil and gas supplies, security of exploration and production (E&P) activities and energy challenges faced by the province.

During a meeting, Ali Pervaiz Malik briefed the KP minister on the prevailing oil supply situation and volatility in international petroleum markets. He highlighted the pressures faced by the domestic energy sector due to developments in international markets and reiterated the federal government's commitment to ensuring stable and uninterrupted energy supplies. The federal minister said the government, in coordination with security forces, was working on a comprehensive plan to ensure the security of E&P activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He emphasised that a secure operating environment was essential for sustaining and expanding exploration activities in the province. KP Minister Nazir Ahmed Abbasi acknowledged that the security issue needed to be addressed to facilitate E&P operations and assured full support and cooperation from the provincial government in this regard. Both sides agreed that enhanced coordination among the federal government, security forces and the provincial government was essential for creating a secure environment for E&P activities. They also agreed that increased exploration and production activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would strengthen Pakistan's domestic energy security and increase royalty revenues for the province. The KP minister highlighted that the success ratio of wells in the province was higher than the global average, underscoring its potential for further exploration and investment. Discussing the gas challenges faced by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Pervaiz Malik said the ongoing war and resulting disruptions in international energy markets were placing pressure on gas supplies.—APP

Musadik for youth participation in country's progress

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik on Thursday stressed the need to provide greater opportunities to the youth to enable them to play an active and meaningful role in the country's development. Addressing the Leaders in Islamabad Summit – Sixth Session, titled from Strategic Relevance to National Advantage, the minister said Pakistan's future depended on creating an environment where young people could contribute their ideas, skills and energy to national progress. He said the country needed to focus on people-centric development and ensure that citizens had access to basic facilities necessary for a dignified life. Dr Musadik Malik emphasised that improving the quality of life of the people should remain at the centre of development policies.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Tourism Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan and President ICCI Sardar Tahir Mahmood with newly elected office bearers in the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections.

PEIRA launches digital services for private schools

ISLAMABAD: The Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (ICT-PEIRA) on Thursday launched its "PEIRA Digital Services" initiative in Islamabad to digitise regulatory services for private schools, improve transparency and efficiency, reduce paperwork and facilitate citizens and educational institutions through online access to key services. The launching ceremony was held at the auditorium of the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), with Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui as chief guest. Senior government officials, educationalists, representatives of private educational institutions and other stakeholders attended the event. Addressing the ceremony, the federal minister appreciated ICT-PEIRA for introducing comprehensive digital services and said technology is an effective means of promoting transparency, accountability and public confidence in government institutions. He said transparency is a fundamental pillar of good governance and democracy, adding that digital transformation could make regulatory processes more accessible, efficient and citizen-friendly. Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui emphasised that services such as online registration and renewal, e-counselling, complaint redressal, attestation and migration were necessities of a modern regulatory system rather than optional facilities. He said citizens and educational institutions should be able to access essential regulatory services conveniently without unnecessary paperwork, delays and repeated visits to government offices. Chairman ICT-PEIRA Dr Ghulam Ali Malik appreciated the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training for its continued support, guidance and encouragement for the Authority's reform and digital transformation agenda. He said the role of a modern regulator should not be confined to enforcement, but should also include facilitation

of educational institutions while ensuring quality education, institutional accountability and implementation of government policies. "Regulators must also be facilitators. Our responsibility is to facilitate educational institutions while ensuring quality education, institutional accountability and implementation of government policies," he said. Dr Malik highlighted the significant role of private educational institutions in Islamabad, saying they account for around 60 per cent of total student enrolment in the federal capital. Given the sector's substantial contribution to education, he said constructive engagement with private institutions, coupled with effective regulation and quality assurance, was essential for strengthening Islamabad's education system. He said the digital transformation of PEIRA was not merely a technological upgrade but an institutional reform aimed at making regulatory services faster, simpler, more transparent and accessible. The initiative is expected to reduce

reliance on paperwork, minimise unnecessary physical visits to government offices and provide educational institutions and citizens with a more responsive regulatory environment. The launch of PEIRA Digital Services also reflects the Authority's broader focus on digital governance, transparency, ease of doing business, quality assurance and citizen-centric service delivery. It is also in line with the government's efforts to use technology to modernise public institutions and make essential government services more accessible to citizens. The ceremony concluded with closing remarks and a vote of thanks by ICT-PEIRA Member Academics Initia Ali Qureshi, who acknowledged the support and guidance of the federal minister, the leadership of the PEIRA chairman, participating educational institutions, officials and other stakeholders who contributed to the successful launch of the initiative.—APP

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Abbasi greets RCCI, newly elected members

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI), where he met with the newly elected office-bearers and congratulated them on their success in the recent Chamber elections. RCCI President Usman Shankat, Group Leader and former Minister Sahil Ali, Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, former presidents, executive members and representatives of the business community warmly welcomed the Federal Minister at the Chamber House. During the meeting, Federal Minister Hanif Abbasi congratulated the newly elected office-bearers, including President Nausheen Khan, Senior Vice President Wasim Aslam and Vice President Ikram-ur-Rehman Abbasi, and expressed his best wishes for their tenure. Hanif Abbasi said that the success of the new team on all 20 seats reflected

ed the confidence of the Rawalpindi business community in the RCCI and

commercial activities and support development initiatives. He particularly

The newly elected office-bearers reaffirmed their commitment to serving the



the Mian Parvez Aslam Group. He congratulated the Chamber leadership on securing the mandate of the business community and expressed confidence that the newly elected office-bearers would actively work for the promotion of trade, industry and economic activity. The Federal Minister assured the newly elected leadership of his full cooperation and support from the Ministry of Railways. He said that all personnel and resources would be utilized to facilitate the business community, promote

encouraged the business community to make greater use of Pakistan Railways' freight services, highlighting the potential of rail-based transportation to facilitate the movement of goods, reduce logistics pressures and support trade and industrial activity. Speaking on the occasion, Group Leader Sohal Akht said that securing all 20 seats in the Chamber elections was not only an honour but also a significant responsibility. He said the results reflected the trust and confidence of the business community in the Chamber and its leadership.

business community with dedication and determination. They said the RCCI would continue to work for the promotion of trade and industry, strengthening business-government coordination and creating an enabling environment for economic growth in Rawalpindi and the wider region. The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest, particularly the role of Pakistan Railways in improving freight connectivity and supporting the business community.

Naqvi orders medicine containers release

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday took immediate notice of news reports about television channels regarding the stopping of medicine containers and contacted the Inspector General of Islamabad Police and the Chief Commissioner Islamabad to address the issue. Following the reports, Mohsin Naqvi spoke with the IG Islamabad Police and the Chief Commissioner Islamabad and directed them to ensure the immediate release of the containers that had been taken into custody. The Interior Minister issued clear instructions that medicine containers and vehicles carrying medicines should not be stopped under any circumstances. He emphasised that the movement of medicines must continue without interruption.—APP

SDPI, Verdantia Global sign MoU to boost ESG

ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Verdantia Global on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop synergies aimed at scaling up local capacities to enhance Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and sustainability reporting on carbon emissions for Pakistan's export sector, industry, and businesses. The MoU was signed by Dr Shafiq Munir, Deputy Executive Director (Research), SDPI, and Fatima Bajwa, CEO, Verdantia Global, on behalf of their respective organizations, said a press release. Stipulating on the occasion, Dr Shafiq Munir said the MoU was the outcome of repeated prior interactions and similar core areas of work such as sustainability and impacts of climate change. He said since Verdantia Global's mandate is sustainability for business, and SDPI's mandate is sustainability for development, the two organizations have common ground to collaborate on research, capacity building. He said sustainability and ESG reporting themes were gaining momentum among Pakistani businesses, which were increasingly looking for ESG reporting tools and capacity. He observed that the issue of ESG reporting differs for global players, who are among the largest polluters, compared to industries in the South that primarily affect their own local environment. He said Pakistan's emissions rate differs from that of developed nations. He said that existing ESG reporting software costs around \$20,000 annually, underlining the need for accessible and low-cost alternatives which could be developed through partnership between SDPI and Verdantia Global.

Fatima Bajwa, CEO, Verdantia Global, said the MoU materialised consistent engagement with SDPI's work, which she found to be an institution of considerable credibility and merit. She said several common areas of cooperation were identified during bilateral discussions. She said Verdantia Global is a sustainability consultancy firm that helps businesses establish ESG compliance and sustainability practices. She said businesses today require a complete framework and reporting structure to report their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, an area in which Pakistan lags behind. She said large companies increasingly require their suppliers to follow such frameworks, and that small suppliers need dedicated sustainability teams to manage reporting. She said Pakistan needs credible organizations to help businesses report on sustainability.—APP

Another flawed Mental Health Policy Framework in the making

SANAA KHETRAN

National Consultation on Mental Health Policy Framework for MH policy 2026-2035 was held at Ramada Hotel from 1st-2nd of September, 2026. It was arranged in assistance with GHID, Shifa Tamara Mirat, UNICEF and WHO by Ministry of Health, Pakistan. The basis of the consultation is conferences held abroad and findings incorporated in the inception report. They defined policy areas and that were descriptive in nature for an electronic survey for which groups were formed. Not align with the strat-

egy, the feasibility report based upon surveys conducted through NGOs in communities, teaching hospitals working on mental health, educational institutes would have been a better option. If we say that it was a platform for discussion to get feedback for the development of mental health policy, it is wrong as speakers were invited to inaugurate the session and though some questions were asked but there was no coherence between the policy points displayed in presentation mode, moderator's description and electronic survey. The groups were divided depicting provinces but as no one knew what was

happening in real, many said as per convenience and electronic survey could not tally provincial feedback. The question arises that while making policies, why we don't consider feedback from urban and rural communities for which by and large the policy is being developed. That's why we have seen lack in policy development and implementation. There is no single policy drafted that has inclusive growth model. Mental health issues have seen increased in Pakistan due to many factors that could be unemployment, inflation, lack of bonding and understanding in relationships, and now many other like children using

mobile phones, games AI and cyber insecurity. Addressing issues is prevention and building resilient approach through cognitive behavioral therapy starting from early childhood can bring down the accelerating trend in suicide. All stakeholders should be listed and invited for open dialogue. NGOs can collect data through survey from communities. Group sessions are to be held. This session went wrong and needs to be held again not to waste more time and budget as the policy drafted on these lines is happening in Islamabad will only rest in cover and there will be a huge gap remained in policy development and implementation.

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Why a UK ban on trade with Israeli settlements matters

CHRIS DOYLE

THE UK might be about to do something that should have been done during the days of David Cameron, Tony Blair or even Margaret Thatcher. How does one respond to a measure that is more than four decades overdue? According to media reports and my own government sources, the British government is finally about to impose some form of ban on trade with Israeli settlements. It will probably be announced in the second week of September after Parliament returns. Skeptics still doubt this will happen. They point to the pressure being exerted by Israel and its affiliated lobby groups, such as Labour Friends of Israel. But there are strong reasons why it will go ahead. Firstly, given Israel's record rate of settlement expansion, with 104 new settlements approved since 2022, the record levels of settler violence and the Aug. 18 tender for 1,234 homes in the E1 area – the settlement project that could sever the northern and southern West Bank – it is the bare minimum any self-respecting government should be doing in the face of such flagrant breaches of international law. It is clearly the correct move. Secondly, it has broad political support outside of the hard right of British politics. New Prime Minister Andy Burnham is convinced of the argument in favor of the ban, as is Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband, alongside most of the Cabinet. Miliband pledged a set of concrete measures in response to the E1 announcement. Gone are the days of the hesitant and vacillating Starmer administration. Almost 250 British MPs have publicly endorsed such a move. Government ministers have stated that they are in favor. The Conservative and Reform parties will oppose the move but it should be uncomfortable ground for the Tories. Every single Conservative foreign secretary has opposed E1 since it was first dreamed up in the time of Yitzhak Shamir in 1991. Thirdly, there is considerable public support. An opinion poll published last week showed that 50 percent of the British public supports a ban, while only 16 percent oppose it. Far from being just a Muslim issue, as settler champions claim, a ban would have broad public backing. The government knows this. Fourthly, other states are doing the same. Spain, Ireland and the Netherlands have gone or are going down this path,

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Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Phone: 051-8488394

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



while Norway has put forward proposals. Thirty US senators have also spoken out against E1. Britain will not be isolated at all. Will a ban make a difference? The Netanyahu government will largely ignore it, while asserting how the world hates Israel. It has already threatened to expel the UK, as it has the Netherlands, from the International Gaza Support Center that oversees the flows of aid into Gaza. The UK should jump before it is pushed, given that the center has utterly failed to provide essential aid. Even wheelchairs and crutches are banned by Israel. This Israeli government is more likely to exact its revenge not on Britain but on the Palestinians. If London was to go ahead with a trade ban, who would bet against more settlement announcements, more land confiscations and more invasions of refugee camps and towns? Far from being just a Muslim issue, as settler champions claim, a ban would have broad public backing. But some in Israel have taken note. When asked about advancing construction in the E1 area, Yisrael party leader Gadi Eisenkot stated: "Not now. This is a mistake that costs us an international price. A segment of Israeli society fears becoming a pariah state. Coordinated bans on trade with settlements could also hurt the Israeli economy. Given the ever-expanding scale of the settlement economy, sanctions will increasingly sting. The UK would be the most significant state to impose a ban so far. It would also encourage others to follow suit. Symbolically, the former mandatory power doing this matters. That said, it is unlikely to dent the \$5 billion (\$8.1 billion) in annual trade between the two countries. The impact will also depend on the strength of the ban. Will it include financial services as well as products? Banks, insurance companies and online services would then have to adhere to the restrictions. Speed matters too. The government could do this rapidly, like it did with banning goods from Crimea in 2014. Some believe it would require primary legislation, which would take far too long. There is also the enforcement mechanism. A ban requires teeth. What would be the penalties for companies caught violating the ban? More crucially, what would the UK do if the Israeli authorities violated the ban? The UK would be the most significant state to impose a ban so far. It would also encourage others to follow suit. Pessimists fear a last-minute reversal. This is unlikely. The only party that could shift the dial would be the American president. Only Donald Trump could send a chill through Downing Street with hyped-up threats of more tariffs and the cutting of intelligence cooperation. Yet all the signs are that he will not do this. He did not even intend to prevent other states from introducing such measures. He may be in the mood to make Benjamin Netanyahu sweat a bit. Is this a symbolic gesture or the beginning of a genuinely consequential sanctions policy? The signs are that this Burnham government, in contrast to the Starmer administration, is not scared of holding Israel to account. The statements have been more assertive. The pledge of action to come is more convincing.

Politics of Possession

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



This episode is no isolated curiosity of the past. The same spirit of dominion, driven by valuable resources, has found expression elsewhere. In the Persian Gulf, where vast reservoirs of oil lie beneath the sands of sovereign states, American policy has long sought to secure control over the flow of that vital commodity. From the mid-twentieth century onward, arrangements with local rulers, military presence, and interventions have ensured preferential access for Western companies and markets. When threats to that access have arisen—whether from regional powers or from internal upheavals—force has been employed...

THERE are certain facts buried deep within the annals of history that have been deliberately veiled, whether from motives of political expediency or to shield the interests of powerful parties, under such dense accumulations of silence that even the most diligent searcher after truth might labour long without bringing them fully to light. Yet time, that relentless uncoverer of hidden things, will not forever suffer such concealments to endure. Beneath these obscured realities often lie the misdeeds of individuals or of states—acts that were never meant for public scrutiny, or whose authors could not risk exposure. The history of Hawaii, that distant chain of islands now numbered among the American states, affords a striking illustration of this truth; a history little known to many, and until recently scarcely known even to myself. It reveals how an independent kingdom was wrested from its rightful sovereign, not by open purchase or free consent, but by calculated force and intrigue. And in our own day, the same expansive impulse appears undiminished, whether directed toward distant territories or toward the oil-rich shores of the Gulf and beyond. In the year 1893, Hawaii stood as a sovereign kingdom under the rule of Queen Liliuokalani, a monarch of exceptional accomplishment and deep affection among her people. She commanded five languages, possessed a keen intellect, and sought above all the welfare of her subjects. The islands, however, held treasures that stirred the appetites of distant powers: fertile soils yielding sugar and pineapples in abundance, and a strategic harbour in the Pacific of inestimable value. American missionaries had earlier arrived, bringing with them not only spiritual counsel but also a gradual acquisition of land under legal forms that favoured the newcomer. Their descendants, together with other businessmen of American and European stock, soon dominated the sugar industry, transforming the economy into one reliant upon plantation wealth. By the late nineteenth century these interests controlled vast tracts and wielded disproportionate influence in the kingdom's affairs. When Queen Liliuokalani sought to restore greater authority to the native monarchy and to restrict the franchise to Hawaiian subjects, thereby countering the Bayonet Constitution of 1887 that had been forced upon her predecessor,

the planter elite formed a Committee of Safety. In January of 1893, they armed themselves and surrounded the royal palace. The American minister, John L. Stevens, summoned Marines and sailors from the USS Boston, who landed under the pretext of protecting American lives and property, though their presence served chiefly to intimidate the queen's defenders. Faced with superior force and unwilling to risk the lives of her people, the queen yielded, writing that she did so "to the superior force of the United States of America," in the hope that justice might later restore her throne. A provisional government under Sanford B. Dole, himself the son of mission-aries, was promptly recognised by Stevens. President Grover Cleveland, upon investigating the matter through Commissioner James Blount, concluded that the constitutional government had been subverted with the active aid of American representatives and the intimidation of armed naval forces. He withdrew a pending treaty of annexation and sought the queen's reinstatement, yet the provisional authorities refused, and Congress declined to act. Native Hawaiians, for their part, gathered the Kū'e Petitions bearing more than twenty-one thousand signatures—representing a majority of the adult native population—pleading that Congress reject annexation. These were ignored. In 1898, amid the Spanish-American War and the strategic calculations it inspired, the islands were annexed by joint resolution. In 1959 they became the fiftieth state. A century after the overthrow, President Bill Clinton signed Apology Resolution on November 23, 1993 acknowledging that the act had been illegal and that the Native Hawaiian people had never relinquished their claims to sovereignty. This resolution, formally known as Public Law 103-150. The resolution was passed by both houses of Congress. Yet the kingdom was never restored. This episode is no isolated curiosity of the past. The same spirit of dominion, driven by valuable resources, has found expression elsewhere. In the Persian Gulf, where vast reservoirs of oil lie beneath the sands of sovereign states, American policy has long sought to secure control over the flow of that vital commodity. From the mid-twentieth century onward, arrangements with local rulers, military presence, and interventions have ensured preferential access for Western companies and markets. When

threats to that access have arisen—whether from regional powers or from internal upheavals—force has been employed, as in the liberation of Kuwait or the broader campaigns that followed, all framed as defence of vital interests yet serving the practical end of guaranteeing the oil itself. In more recent times the pattern has manifested with striking clarity in Venezuela, possessor of the world's largest proven oil reserves. In January of 2026, American special forces seized President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, conveying them to New York to face charges of narco-terrorism and related offences. An interim administration under Delcy Rodríguez was installed, and within months a sweeping agreement was announced whereby the United States secured majority control over some sixty-five billion barrels of Venezuelan oil reserves through a private partnership, together with rights of first refusal on production and oversight of revenues channelled through American institutions. The wealth of the land, long the foundation of Venezuelan sovereignty, thus passed under effective external direction, while the former president remained in custody awaiting trial. Nor has the appetite for territorial influence abated nearer home. Open declarations have expressed the desire to bring the Panama Canal once more under direct American administration, to draw Canada into closer subordination as a prospective fifty-first state, and to acquire Greenland for strategic command of the Arctic. These aspirations, voiced without concealment, echo the earlier seizure of Hawaii and the present dominion over Venezuelan petroleum: wherever resources or position promise advantage, the means of acquisition—whether by force, by pressure, or by arrangement under duress—are readily employed. Thus the pattern persists across the generations: territories or resources deemed indispensable are drawn into the American sphere by means that history later judges irregular or unjust. Hawaii's fertile lands and harbour once beckoned; the Gulf's petroleum and Venezuela's vast reservoirs continue to exert a similar pull, while neighbouring lands are contemplated for the same purpose. Time may yet reveal further layers of these transactions, but the essential character of the enterprise remains clear to those who examine the record without partiality.

To end global hunger, invest in rural communities

Esther Ngumbi

Unfortunately, recent studies suggest that agricultural productivity in hunger-affected regions remains severely constrained by extensive soil degradation despite decades of attempts to improve soil health. Recognizing that poor soil threatens food and nutrition security, rural livelihoods and environmental sustainability, African leaders endorsed the 10-year African Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan and the longer-term Soil Initiative for Africa Framework in 2024

THE UN recently released its "State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026" report, which, perhaps surprisingly, delivered some encouraging news. While roughly 645 million people experienced hunger in 2025, that was nearly 14 million fewer than in the previous year. For the first time in a decade, the number of hungry people in Africa also declined. But despite these positive developments, significant regional disparities persist. Most notably, the report found that food insecurity remains more prevalent in rural communities and disproportionately affects women. The key question facing governments and development organizations, then, is how to improve food security in those communities and accelerate progress toward eliminating hunger. Four priorities stand out. First, enhancing food security in rural communities requires boosting agricultural productivity on existing farmland in ways that are sustainable and minimize environmental impacts. As growing populations place increasing demands on agricultural systems, simply expanding farmland risks accelerating deforestation and environmental degradation. Producing more on existing farmland is thus essential to meet rising demand without further damaging natural ecosystems. Healthier soils are critical to efforts to boost agricultural productivity. Any strategy to strengthen food security in rural communities must therefore begin with a simple but fundamental question: Are soils healthy enough to support sustainable increases in crop production? Unfortunately, recent studies suggest that agricultural productivity in hunger-affected regions remains severely constrained by extensive soil degradation despite decades of attempts to improve soil health. Recognizing

that poor soil threatens food and nutrition security, rural livelihoods and environmental sustainability, African leaders endorsed the 10-year African Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan and the longer-term Soil Initiative for Africa Framework in 2024. Food insecurity remains more prevalent in rural communities and disproportionately affects women. The good news is that once the foundational questions about soil health and quality have been answered—using available soil health tests, as well as science-based indicators and assessments—corrective measures can be taken. There are numerous principles and practices for building soil health, including cover cropping, intercropping, crop rotation, reduced tillage, and the use of organic fertilizers and biofertilizers, as well as minimizing soil tillage, maximizing soil cover, increasing biodiversity and maintaining living roots. Second, efforts to improve soil health must be accompanied by investments in rural farming communities. Food producers need access to improved seed varieties, biofertilizers, water and emerging technologies such as precision agriculture. Together, these investments could further boost agricultural productivity and bolster food security. Third, stronger land tenure is crucial to improving food security in rural communities. Land tenure security has long been recognized as a fundamental pillar of agricultural production, enabling farmers to make long-term investments in restoring soil health and adopt other productivity-enhancing practices. The link between stronger land rights and agricultural productivity is well documented. This link is particularly important for women, who con-

tribute significantly to agricultural production yet remain disadvantaged in land ownership and tenure security. Although the effects of greater land tenure security vary across regions and policy contexts, ensuring women's ownership rights can advance gender equality, enhance agricultural productivity, support rural livelihoods and deliver lasting improvements in food security. Greater productivity will protect livelihoods and help rural communities move from hunger to abundance. Lastly, governments must invest in the infrastructure that connects rural producers to markets, including electricity, refrigerated transportation and roads. Better access to urban markets can help farmers generate additional income by enabling them to sell more of what they produce. Improved transport networks can also lower costs, enabling farmers to reinvest their savings in advanced technologies, thereby reducing postharvest losses while diversifying into a wider range of higher-input crops. With healthy soils, access to agricultural inputs and emerging technologies such as precision agriculture and artificial intelligence, robust land tenure rights and upgraded infrastructure, rural farmers around the world could sustainably increase agricultural productivity. Greater productivity would, in turn, protect livelihoods and help rural communities move from hunger to abundance. But time is of the essence. While the latest decline in global hunger is encouraging, sustaining and building on this progress will require continued investment in the rural communities where food insecurity is most entrenched, in Africa and beyond.

— Esther Ngumbi is Associate Professor of Entomology and African-American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. ©Project Syndicate

Briefs
Govt orders
shops and
malls to
close by 9pm

FROM PAGE 01
whistles of the Armed Forces, Civil Armed Forces, law enforcement agencies, essential services and FBR — though administrative and non-operational formations of these entities will still be subject to the curfew. Development projects are exempt from this measure. A complete ban has been imposed on the purchase of all types of vehicles and durable goods by government departments, with the exception of IT procurements. Development projects are also exempt from these bans. All foreign visits and travel have been completely banned for three months, including obligatory visits. Exceptions apply only to scholarships offered by international development partners and training or courses arranged through the Economic Affairs Division or under institutional agreements. In such unavoidable cases, Pakistan's ambassador or high commissioner will represent the country at obligatory and important events. Where foreign travel is absolutely unavoidable, all ministers, advisers, ministers of state, special assistants to the prime minister and parliamentary and government functionaries shall travel only in economy class. Meetings will preferably be held through teleconferencing, except for intra-city meetings. No official dinners will be hosted, except for visiting foreign delegations. All official seminars, trainings and conferences funded by the government are prohibited, though unavoidable events must be held at government venues such as auditoriums and committee rooms.

Security
forces...

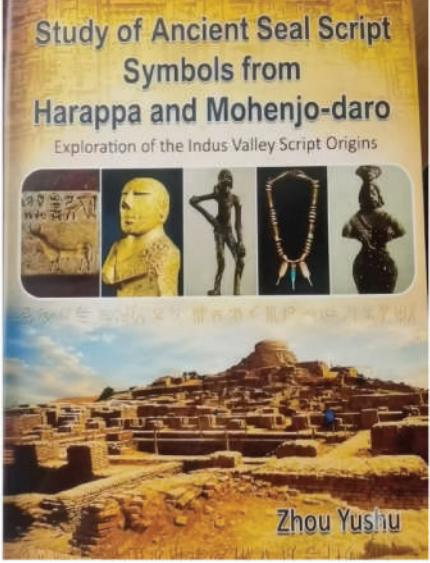
FROM PAGE 01
Fina al-Hindustan terrorists, including a militant commander, in Balochistan's Mastung. Three terrorists, including commander Nageeb, were killed and their vehicle was completely destroyed in the operation, security sources said. Pakistan witnessed a surge in terror activities, particularly in its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, since 2021, when the Afghan Taliban came into power. According to a report by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), the two provinces remained the country's main hotspots for violence during the second quarter of 2023, with KP emerging as the worst-affected region. The report stated that nearly 96% of all violence-related fatalities recorded during the quarter. Of the total deaths, more than 61% (475) were reported in KP, while Balochistan accounted for 34% (265). KP also recorded the highest number of violent incidents, with 151 cases, representing 57% of the nationwide total. Balochistan followed with 144 incidents, or 56%, and with 94 incidents, or 35%, underscoring the concentration of militant activity in the two provinces.

Iran
stresses
avoiding
'politicisation'
of...

FROM PAGE 01
he added, referring to the Houthis' administration. Baqaei said Iran "emphasises the necessity of preventing the politicisation of the issue of Islamic holy sites and their security, and of not using it as a tool to incite strife and escalate regional tensions". He called for "caution and vigilance", noting that the region "witnessed numerous instances of 'false flag' operations, particularly in recent months, aimed at diverting public opinion from the crimes committed by the Zionist entity and the United States in the region, and at sowing discord among Islamic countries".

New English book explores ancient links between Pakistan and China
The researchers also proposed possible connections between certain symbols and ancient clan names such as "Shang" and "Zhou"

BEIJING: A Chinese research project examining ancient seals and symbols from Pakistan's Harappa and Mohenjo-daro civilisations is reaching a wider international audience with the release of its English edition in Beijing, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday.
Launched at the Embassy of Pakistan in China, the English edition of Study of Ancient Seal Script Symbols from Harappa and Mohenjo-daro: Exploration of the Indus Valley Script Origins brings the research of Chinese scholar Zhou Yushu and his team to international readers, adding a new dimension to China-Pakistan academic and cultural exchanges.
The publication was unveiled by Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalid Hashmi and Zhou, president of Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences.
The Chinese edition was published in 2024 by China Overseas Chinese Publishing House, with funding from the Inner Mongolia Social Sciences Fund.
The new English edition is intended to make the research accessible to a wider group of scholars and readers interested in the Indus Valley civilization, one of the world's earliest urban civilizations.
For Pakistani researchers and readers, the publication also offers access to a Chinese research project focused on archaeological materials from Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, two of Pakistan's most important ancient sites. According to Zhou, his research team conducted a systematic study of 401 relatively complete seals from Harappa and Mohenjo-daro and interpreted 132 individual characters. The symbols were classified into 10 thematic categories, including ancestors, fertility, thunder gods and deity worship. The research also compares some



of the seal symbols with elements found in prehistoric cultures in China, including the Hongshan culture. Zhou said his team identified what it considers to be similarities between some of the symbols and traditional Chinese cultural motifs, including the dragon, phoenix and Xuanwu, a legendary bird in ancient Chinese tradition.
The researchers also proposed possible connections between certain symbols and ancient clan names such as "Shang" and "Zhou". According to the author, the findings indicate possible cultural exchanges around 5,000 years ago between prehistoric communities in the Liaohe and Yellow River regions of China and those in the Indus Valley region.
During the event, Hashmi congratulated Zhou and his research team on their achievements, noting that the book examines seals and symbols unearthed from Harappa and Mohenjo-daro and compares them with China's prehistoric Hongshan culture. The ambassador also highlighted the significance of the publication for China-Pakistan academic and cultural exchanges, saying it opens up the possibility of rethinking the ancient historical links between the two countries.
The launch comes during the 75th anniversary year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. Zhou said the English edition would help share the research with scholars overseas and encourage greater attention to the study of the Indus Valley civilization.
Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences has maintained educational and academic cooperation with Pakistani universities and institutions for more than a decade, covering areas including higher education, student and faculty exchanges, and academic research. The English edition adds another dimension to the college's long-standing academic exchanges with Pakistan.

'Go there and respond to notice':
LHC turns down Rizwan's
plea against NCCIA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday dismissed Pakistan wicket-keeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan's petition challenging notices issued to him by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA). LHC Chief Justice Ahsan Nadeem heard the petition, with Rizwan's lawyer Qazi Umar Ali appearing before the court.
The lawyer argued that the allegations against Rizwan were false and baseless. However, no matter how the cricketer was called to a hotel lobby after the Lord's Test and questioned without being served a notice.

He said Rizwan's mobile phone was taken into custody during the process after he was assured it would be returned within three hours. Ali told the court that the phone had still not been returned, arguing that the delay reflected bad faith.
He further contended that the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) report, which was the basis for the summons, was flawed. He said the ACU had not followed proper procedure for dealing with corruption-related allegations against cricketers.
However, no matter how the cricketer was called to a hotel lobby after the Lord's Test and questioned without being served a notice.

Nadeem expressed displeasure with the lawyer for failing to bring the case file to court. He observed that Rizwan had been called by the NCCIA on September 10 and had complied with the summons. "You were called on September 10 and you complied with it. What brings you to court now?" Justice Nadeem asked. He directed Ali to go to the agency, explain his position there and submit a response to the notices.
"Go there, tell them and respond to the notices," Justice Nadeem said. The court subsequently dismissed Rizwan's petition. What is the NCCIA investigating? The

Messi heads Inter
Miami to Campeones
Cup triumph

MIAMI: Lionel Messi headed a goal and provided an assist on Tuesday night as Inter Miami clinched the MLS Cup, beating Cruz Azul 2-0 in the annual clash between Major League Soccer and Mexican Liga MX champions. It was Inter Miami's first MLS Cup triumph and came thanks to the Argentine superstar's 100th goal for the reigning MLS Cup winners. A late Messi corner was headed home by Casemiro to seal the win. Victory gave Messi his first trophy of the year, two months after the heartbreak of losing the 2026 World Cup final to Spain with Argentina. The trophy came in a new league season, the "Golden Ball" Messi's first game in charge of Miami. Argentine manager Gonzalez was appointed last month, but due to visa delays only took his first training sessions this week. Cruz Azul had the game's first big chance, Jose Paredes' shot saved at the near post by Miami goalkeeper Dayne St Clair. Miami's opener came in the 24th minute. Though the goalscorer was no surprise, it was a rare Messi header that broke the deadlock. Luis Suarez crossed from the byline, and the 34-year-old Messi outjumped Willy Dierks with a diving header to give Miami the lead. Suarez nearly turned provider again in the 32nd minute. He received a symptomatic cross-field ball from Messi and scooped it up for German Bertram, whose flicked effort was cleared off the line. — DNA

PM Shehbaz
to lead...

FROM PAGE 01
Bab al-Mandab — one of the busiest and most contested global maritime chokepoints. Houthis last week seized effective control of Yemen's entire Red Sea coastline, including the historic port of Mocha, and Perim Island in the Bab al-Mandab strait, "the sea's mouth".
The situation in Bab al-Mandab is a matter of serious concern, said the Foreign Office spokesperson. The spokesperson urged Yemen's Houthis to stop their "activities", stressing the need for bringing peace to the entire region. He said Pakistan's discussions with relevant stakeholders "revolve around bringing peace and stability through dialogue and diplomacy and not through coercive measures". The FO spokesperson further said that Pakistan is closely and seriously monitoring the situation in the Middle East, while condemning a "heinous" Houthi attack that he said had hurt the sentiments of Muslims worldwide. "We strongly condemn attacks on holy sites," Khan said, praising the swift and heroic actions of Saudi Arabian forces in foiling the attack. "Pakistan stands shoulder to shoulder unflinchingly with the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the security and sanctity of Haramain." He said Pakistan is a responsible power that every Pakistani holds close to their heart, he added.

Kh Asif says
time has...

FROM PAGE 01
The drone was intercepted on Tuesday evening and was reportedly the second Houthi attempt to target Makkah, according to a spokesperson for the Saudi military coalition in Yemen. However, Houthi officials have denied targeting the holy city. "Our operations target [Saudi] oil facilities and military bases, which are the main threats to the sacred sites," Houthi spokesman Yahya Saree said. Earlier on Wednesday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated Pakistan's full support for Saudi Arabia's defence and said Islamabad stood "shoulder to shoulder" with Riyadh. The prime minister condemned what he described as a "dastardly and heinous attempt" of drone attack against the holy Site of Makkah. Al-Mukarramah. He urged all parties to exercise maximum restraint and avoid further escalation, saying the region had already suffered extensively from conflict and that dialogue and diplomacy remained the only sustainable path towards peace. Speaking during today's show, Asif said the pact provided for mutual defence if territorial integrity or geographical boundaries of any of the three countries were violated, adding that there was "absolutely no room for misinterpretation. He said Pakistan would not publicly discuss the details of any defence or military strategy, but reiterated the Islamabad would be bound by the agreement and would fulfil its obligations. Responding to a question, Asif said Pakistan would support Saudi Arabia's message to Iran amid concerns over attacks by Houthi forces against the kingdom. He said he did not believe Iran, as a state, would support the Houthis in a way that would lead to the opening of another front in the region. "I don't think Iran as a state will open another front," Asif said, adding that Tehran was already embroiled in a conflict in the region.

SC suspends
Mazari...

FROM PAGE 01
Under Sections 9, 10, 11 and 26 of the Peca and were subsequently indicted on October 20, 2019. A representation report (FIR) alleged that the couple attempted to incite divisions on linguistic grounds through social media posts. In the decision today, the top court granted bail to the lawyer couple against surety bonds worth Rs200,000. The Supreme Court said the bail was granted to the couple until the final decision on the case pending before the Islamabad High Court. During the proceedings, Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan remarked: "Both are lawyers; we are upholding their dignity."

GDA okays tender
for fishermen's
boat platforms

The development is being regarded as an important step toward resolving the difficulties fishermen face regarding ownership and the proper placement of their boats

GWADAR: The Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) has approved the tender for the construction of a paved platform for fishermen's boats on September 15 with the efforts of Gwadar MPA Maulana Hafizur-Rehman Baloch, paving the way for the construction work to begin soon. More than six local and national companies participated in tender process that continued for one month since August 15. Tender sought professional credentials from companies asking them to come up with prequalification criteria laid down by competent authority. Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. LIM firm, local company from Balochistan, was the tender meeting the standards. The development is being regarded as an important step toward resolving the difficulties fishermen face regarding ownership and the proper placement of their boats. Meanwhile, 32 fishermen received documents for green fibre boats through a balloting process. According to the scheme, 20 fishermen from Gwadar city, six from Surbandar and six from Pishawan were selected as beneficiaries through balloting. Addressing the gathering, Hidayatullah said the initiative reflected Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti's policy of strengthening the fisheries sector and improving economic opportunities for people dependent on fishing. — APP

Raphinha hat trick sparks Barcelona's
7-2 rout of Racing in La Liga,
Man United upset in League Cup

MADRID: Raphinha scored a hat trick as Barcelona earned yet another big win on Wednesday, routing Racing Santander 7-2 for its best-ever start to a season. The Catalan club had never won seven games in a row. It has won six straight in the league and another in the Champions League. Gabriel Jesus and Lamine Yamal also found the net for Barcelona, which has scored at least five goals in five of its seven matches across all competitions this season. In the English League Cup, Manchester United was stunned 3-1 by Brighton after squandering a two-goal lead to crash out in round three. In the Europa League, Benfica beat AC Milan 2-0 on the road in the first round of the league stage. With his hat trick, Raphinha took his league-leading tally to nine goals in six matches. The Brazil forward has scored a goal in all but one game this season. "Happy for the goals and for the victory, which is the most important thing," Raphinha said. "The players have the hunger to always want more. It's a mentality to always try to score more goals and to create more scoring opportunities." Joao Cancelo also scored for Barcelona, which was helped by an onswarm from Racing's Aitor Valtierra. Maguette Gueye and Yassir Zahiri scored for the visitors. Barcelona has only failed to score fewer than four goals this season in a 2-0 win against Athletic Bilbao. Barcelona had previously won six games in a row to start

the season — in 1928-29, 1960-61 and 2018-19, the club earned a goal disallowed for offside, missed a penalty and hit the post before finally scoring late for Barcelona. The La Liga champion has also crushed Elche, Rayo Vallecano and Valencia in the league, and Feyenoord in the Champions League. Hansi Flick's team has outscored opponents 33-7 in seven games across all competitions. Barcelona has a three-point league lead over Real Madrid, which won at Elche on Tuesday. Barcelona goalkeeper Joan Garcia was replaced by Wojciech Szczesny at halftime because of an apparent injury. Szczesny's blunder led to Racing goal after the goalkeeper tried to control the ball inside the area and was robbed in front of the net. Atletico Madrid routed visiting Osasuna 4-0 with goals by Jonathan David, Luis Kongli, Robin Le Normand and Alex Berena. It was the second win in a row for Diego Simeone's team, which moved to third. Osasuna has lost three in a row. Sevilla jumped to fourth by winning 1-0 at Deportivo La Corua with a second-half goal by Miguel Sierra. Sevilla has won two in a row. Deportivo stayed seventh. The game between Levante and Athletic Bilbao was postponed because of heavy rain in the city of Valencia. Manchester United was booed at Old Trafford after it fell to a third defeat of the season, and second in as many games following Sunday's loss to Manchester City. — DNA

Pakistan women survive Thailand scare
make Asian Games semi-finals

Nauremol Chaiwai smoked Nushra Sandhu for a six and a four before falling to her on the next ball, getting caught by Fatima

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan survived a serious scare to win the quarterfinal of the Asian Games Women's Cricket Competition against Thailand by three wickets at the Korak Sports Park in Nisibin, Japan on Thursday. Put in to bat by Pakistan, Thailand posted 101 runs in the designated 11 overs following rain delay before Pakistan won by six and a four only two balls to spare as they crossed the finish line. Fatima Sana's side had also lost seven wickets in the process and it was the captain's 21 off 13 after opener Shwari Zulfiqar's 25

off 14 that kept Pakistan in the game, despite the usually talismanic Fatima losing her wicket before finishing the job. Thailand had got off to a brisk start, scoring 41 runs in the powerplay on the back of a productive 24 off 22 balls from Nushra Koncharenkai. Fatima had drawn first blood with the ball, dismissing Nattakan Chantham for six runs. Koncharenkai took the attack to Tuba Hassan and Umme-Hani, hitting the latter for 14 runs off the bowling over, as she stretched a solid 65-run stand with Phannima Fatima. A dropped catch by wicket-keeper Gul Feranaz and lapses in the field added Thailand as they raced to 72 off 9 overs, when Maya was retired out on a 16-ball 15. Nauremol Chaiwai smoked Nushra Sandhu for a six and a four before falling to her on the next ball, getting caught by Fatima. It was the skipper who finally dismissed Koncharenkai in the last over of the shortened innings, the batter narrowly

missing out on a half-century as she was trapped low for a 38-ball 45; Fatima ended with figures of two for 22 in her three-over spell. Shwari, and fellow opener Gul Feranaz, gave Pakistan a strong start to the chase, scoring two boundaries in the first over. She followed it up with a six off Maya's bowling in the second. Both Gul and Shwari were dropped in the third and fourth overs respectively, but the opener kept the scoreboard ticking before Shwari was caught and bowled by Onnicha Kamchomphu, who took a well-judged catch. The first wicket triggered a collapse which saw Thailand's batting order reduced to Aysha Zafar came out to bat at one-drop, and was dismissed almost immediately, falling in the next over to Suleeporn Loani, with Thailand pulling back some control as Pakistan finished the fifth over at 39.2. Kamchomphu picked up her second wicket as Gul was stumped by keeper Koncharenkai, with Pakistan finding themselves in a

serious wobble at 43.3, which turned into 47.4 as the experienced Alaya Razi went boundary-and-out in the same over. Thailand conceded just one run in the seventh over, tightening their grip on the match as Pakistan ominously perched further. Fatima, batting at number four, then reeled back momentum by hitting Kamchomphu for three fours and a six in the ninth over, joined by a six from Sana. In the 10th over, the captain fell on the first ball of the following over, and was followed by Eynan in the next as Pakistan again found themselves in some bother at 76-4. A six and four off Sana's Chaturvedi's bowling by Tuba Hassan took the equation to less than a run-a-ball for Pakistan, and following her dismissal to the same bowler, Umme-Hani and Eman Nasser took Pakistan over the line in the last over. Both semi-finals will be held on Sept 20 at the same venue. Pakistan will take on the winners of tomorrow's quarterfinal clash between Malaysia and Sri Lanka. — APP

Briefs

Gold prices
fall by
Rs3,800 per
tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices in the country decreased by Rs3,800 per tola on Thursday, with the price of 24-karat gold reaching Rs 453,435 against Rs 457,235 recorded on the previous trading day, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Genu and Jewellers Association.

The price of 24-karat gold per 10 grams decreased by Rs 2,257 to Rs 388,749 from Rs 392,006, while that of 22-karat gold fell by Rs 2,887 to Rs 356,364 from Rs 359,251. In the international market, gold prices declined by \$38 to \$4,309 per ounce from \$4,347.

Meanwhile, silver prices also witnessed a downward trend, with 24-karat silver per tola falling by Rs73 to Rs6,869 from Rs 6,942.

The price of 24-karat silver per 10 grams decreased by Rs62 to Rs5,889 from Rs5,951, while international silver prices declined by \$0.73 to \$63.91 per ounce from \$64.64.—APP

PSX turns
bullish, gains
over 1,021
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 1,021.40 points, a positive change of 0.61 percent, to close at 168,632.20 points against 168,021.80 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 38.68 million shares, compared to 356.138 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value increased to Rs40,099 billion from Rs39,487 billion. Market capitalisation increased to Rs18,847 trillion from Rs18,721 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 500 companies that traded in the ready market, 296 posted gains, 152 suffered losses, while 52 remained unchanged, reflecting an overall bullish momentum in the market.

Meta Times Ltd led the volume chart with 42,159 million shares, followed by Energenic PK with 25,907 million shares and Naya Nazimabad with 15,725 million shares. Among the top gainers, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited surged by Rs758.17 to close at Rs24,800.00, while PIA Holding Company Limited gained Rs266.00 to settle at Rs16,266.00. On the losing side, Hecval Pakistan Limited fell by Rs88.76 to close at Rs3,481.54, while Budy Points Limited declined by Rs51.50 to Rs573.53. In the futures (FIC) market, turnover stood at 89,043 million shares with a traded value of Rs5,594 billion, compared with 92,834 million shares worth Rs1,172 billion in the previous session. Of the 299 companies traded in the FIC market, 228 advanced, 65 declined, and six remained unchanged.—APP

Rupee gains
01 paise
against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 01 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.26, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.27.

According to the Finance Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 278 and Rs 278.5, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 2.06 and closed at Rs38.06 against the previous day's closing of Rs 38.12, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.77, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 2.42 and closed at Rs 271.10 compared to the previous day's Rs 273.52.

The exchange rates of the Emirati Dirham went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs 75.49, while the Saudi Riyal came down by 01 paise to close at Rs 73.80.—APP



ISLAMABAD: The Diplomatic Corps gathered on Thursday to bid farewell to Amna Baloch, the outgoing Foreign Secretary of Pakistan. Amna has been appointed ambassador to Türkiye. DNA

Federal Reserve raises US rates to 3.75%-4%, signals more hikes

NEW YORK: The Federal Reserve raised interest rates on Wednesday and flagged more hikes in the coming months, with new US central bank chief Kevin Warsh joining a unanimous decision that effectively acknowledged the Trump administration's inability so far to control inflation that policymakers worry could worsen.

While President Donald Trump had promised to lower prices on his watch, the committee's impact of his global import tariffs, an energy shock following the start of the US-Israeli war with Iran, and capital spending from the artificial intelligence boom has kept price pressures intense enough that the Fed felt it needed to raise its benchmark overnight interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point to the 3.75%-4.00 percent range.

Updated quarterly economic projections showed 16 of 18 policymakers anticipate at least one more quarter-percentage-point hike by the end of this year, with only two of them seeing rates remaining stable from here. All but one in-

cluded they saw upside risks to inflation that they no longer described as "large" by arising from one-off supply shocks. Warsh, who again did not submit rate or other economic projections, attributed the need for tighter monetary policy in part to an economy he sees as picking up speed, with strong economic and job growth adding to price pressures that no longer seem rooted in oil costs or import tariffs alone.

There's been a pretty wide range of data, including the labour market, that the economy has strengthened," Warsh told reporters, listing the reasons that prompted him to support a rate hike after advocating that rates should remain on hold at the Fed's July 28-29 meeting. "Domestic spending has been resilient, productivity growth strong, and capital investment is robust." The rate increase was the first such move in three years and the first policy shift under the new Fed chief, who took office in late May after being selected by Trump with an expectation that he would cut rates. "In-

flation remains elevated. Today's policy action will support a timelier return to the committee's 2% goal," the central bank's Federal Open Market Committee said in its policy statement after the end of a two-day meeting. Warsh, speaking in his post-meeting press conference, called the rate hike the "right decision."

"I would be hard-pressed to describe broad financial conditions as restrictive," he said. "This view was widely shared by the committee, so we removed a dose of accommodation."

Trump responds Trump reacted quickly, repeating what has been a standing call since returning to office in January 2025 that interest rates in the US should be slashed to perhaps 1%, a level usually associated with Fed efforts to boost the economy out of a crisis and something that would likely be inflationary in normal times. "Interest Rates in the United States should be 1%, or less, because we are the Best Credit in the World"—BY FAR, Our Country is BOOMING with new investment! If we

stopped Trading with every country that we have a Deficit with, which is most of them, we would make, at least, 1.5 Trillion Dollars a year. The word 'Deficit' is nothing more than a fancy word for LOSS... LOWER THE INTEREST RATES FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND FAST! Trump said on his Truth Social platform in comments that, while not mentioning Warsh by name, were reminiscent of the sorts of words the president launched routinely at former Fed Chair Jerome Powell. The president's reaction highlighted the significance of the Fed's move under Warsh on Wednesday. In a truncated press conference, roughly 15 minutes shorter than what was typical under his predecessors, Warsh focused on the emerging evidence that convinced him inflation would not improve at an adequate pace without tighter monetary policy—a direct counter to administration officials' comments that inflation was no longer a problem or would fall on its own over time.—Agencies

Pakistan, S
Africa agree
to strengthen
bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday held a meeting with Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Angela Motshega, in Durban on the sidelines of the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Cape Town, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to strengthening parliamentary and bilateral relations. During the meeting, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq briefed his South African counterpart on Pakistan's parliamentary system and observed that the two countries had lost considerable time in developing their bilateral relationship. Recalling the visits of former South African President Nelson Mandela to Pakistan in 1992 and 1999, he stressed the need to build stronger and mutually beneficial ties, with parliaments playing a leading role. The National Assembly Speaker proposed enhanced parliamentary cooperation in areas including legislation, parliamentary committee systems, modernisation of parliamentary business and institutional experience-sharing. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also highlighted Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change, noting that despite contributing only 0.5 per cent of global carbon emissions, Pakistan remains among the countries most severely affected by climate-related disasters. He briefed the South African Speaker on Pakistan's Afghan war refugees and welcomed Pakistan's position that Afghanistan should not be used for terrorism against Pakistan. On regional peace and security, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reiterated Pakistan's principled position in favour of a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue and welcomed the South African bid on Pakistan's efforts to promote peace and stability amid tensions in the Gulf, stressing that any conflict in the region serves the interests of no one.—APP

Syria minister
defends fuel
price hike

DUBAI: Syria's Energy Minister Mohammed Al-Bashir said on Thursday that "exceptional and complex circumstances" had forced the government to adjust fuel prices, explaining that he had discussed several possible solutions with President Bashar al-Assad. Bashir's comments came after protests erupted across parts of Syria over the government's decision to raise fuel prices, with demonstrators blocking roads and calling for the increases to be reversed as the cost of living continues to rise. The minister said the government was facing higher costs to secure fuel supplies and had been forced to rely more heavily on imports to meet domestic demand. Bashir said he had discussed several options with Assad to address fuel prices, without providing details of the proposed measures. Syria produces around 102,000 barrels of oil per day, compared with domestic demand of about 325,000 barrels, leaving the country reliant on imports to cover the shortfall, according to figures previously provided by the minister. The government raised diesel prices by 40 percent and petrol prices by up to 28 percent on Sept. 13, describing the increases as temporary. It has attributed the move to higher international costs for refined petroleum products and a two-month overhaul of the Banqas Refinery, which has reduced domestic refining capacity and increased the need for imports. The Banqas refinery overhaul is expected to increase its capacity from around 85,000 barrels per day to 130,000 barrels once complete, according to the Energy Ministry. The price increases triggered demonstrations in several parts of the country. In the Aleppo countryside, protesters took to the streets in Aza and Al-Hab, chanting against the hikes and blocking roads. Protesters also blocked the M5 international highway near Maarat Al-Numan in southern Idlib countryside, with footage of burning tires circulating online.

Demonstrations also spread to parts of Darayya, Hama and Hark, where protesters blocked roads used by oil tankers, according to reports. Syria's People's Assembly was due to question Al-Bashir over the price increases on Thursday, but the session was postponed to Sept. 20 to give the ministry more time to prepare, according to Al Jazeera. The Energy Ministry said fuel prices would continue to be reviewed in response to changes in international markets and procurement costs while the government worked to expand domestic refining and storage capacity.—Agencies

Palestinians turn
rugged caves into homes

YATTA, Palestinian Territories: Palestinian herder Mohammed Emur has set up a fully functional home for his family where his daughters can even sing karaoke. Only it is inside a cave after the Israeli army demolished his two homes. In the occupied West Bank's al-Ban region of Masafer Yatta, Emur made a smooth concrete floor on two caves' rough limestone ground before applying a white limewash on the brittle stone walls. With time, electricity from solar panels and water from a well turned the grotto into a new home for the 32-year-old Emur, his two wives and 11 children, who nonetheless long for life above ground. "We once lived in a house above ground, where you could see the world. But today, we live in an underground cave that resembles a grave," Emur said. His children now play on the patio built out of the side of the hill in front of the cave, with his daughters singing Arabic songs on a karaoke machine and keeping an eye on the younger boys. The youngest son, Raz, short for Ramzes, is named after a Russian-Israeli man Emur met in a Tel Aviv jail during a one-year stint in Israeli custody after he was falsely accused of terrorism. Above the caves, some rubble from his two homes remains three years after the army demolished them. On a ridge roughly 200 metres away, Israeli flags, floodlights and fences signal the presence of the Israeli settlement of Avigdar, some of whose residents Emur says make life difficult for his family, with occasional theft and attacks. Masafer Yatta, in the West Bank's south, is known for frequent home demolitions and tensions between local Palestinians and Israeli settlers. The hillty semi-rural area, which is almost entirely under Israeli control according to the Oslo Agreements of the 1990s, was the subject of the Oscar-winning 2024 documentary "No Other Land." Despite an ever-shrinking living space, locals point to family and community as the reason for their capacity to remain on their land after home demolitions. "Ancient times" "We never own our homes to be demolished, neighbours and families come to help them build new shelters. The fact that we live close to each other helps," Emur said. Fatima Emur, Mohammed's wife, says that the family had originally erected tents after the houses they had built in 2023 were destroyed. "Now, we have sought refuge in the cave. Since it has existed since ancient times they cannot demolish it, and (the army) has allowed us to live there," she said. The army justifies home demolitions by saying that the construction is illegal in areas under Israeli control. Palestinians complain that their requests for permits are almost systematically denied. Although not the case with Emur, Israel also often destroys homes to punish the families of Palestinians involved in attacks. Emur says he hoped that the region's roughly 1,100 Palestinian residents could one day live safely in houses. "While the world moves forward, we here in Palestine, in Masafer Yatta, are moving backwards."—DNA

Heavy rain
lashes Spain,
leaving woman
missing

MADRID: Spanish rescuers were racing on Thursday to find a woman swept away by floods near Barcelona as torrential rain struck the country's Mediterranean coast, submerging streets and disrupting travel. The deluge struck as the country, rocked by climate change, emerged from its hottest summer on record and an exceptionally warm start to September. National weather agency AEMET issued warnings for heavy rain in coastal regions on Wednesday, briefly applying the highest red alert for Barcelona after a threat of flash floods. Joan Ramon Cabellu, prevention subdirector at Catalan Civil Protection, told regional broadcaster 3Cat that a woman was "swept away by water under about a stream" in the village of Gualada, around 40 kilometres (25 miles) west of Barcelona.

"She was in a wildlife and it seems she tried to get out," Cabellu said, confirming that regional police were searching for her. Authorities urged the public in the Catalonia and Valencia regions to avoid unnecessary travel and exercise extreme caution, with Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez warning of a "very complicated situation". Authorities sent mass telephone alerts to residents in parts of Catalonia, Valencia and the southeastern province of Almeria. In Barcelona, some metro stations were closed and buses were diverted while the streets were submerged. Regional trains also experienced disruption and flights were delayed or cancelled at Barcelona's El Prat airport, Spain's second-busiest. Catalan emergency services said they received more than 850 calls related to the downpours, which generated more than 500 incidents. In the neighbouring region of Valencia—scarred by 2022 floods that killed more than 230 people—weather monitor Aemet recorded more than 70 millimetres (2.75 inches) of rain in just half an hour in several municipalities. "Rarely have we seen such large rainfall accumulations in 30 minutes as the one we've had today in Valencia and nearby areas," Aemet wrote on X. The emergency services reported 478 incidents in the province of Valencia mostly caused by property damage, lands and traffic disruption. In the regional capital of the same name, all metro lines were suspended, while flooding shut the city's airport for hours, causing 12 flights to be diverted, operator Aena said.—Agencies

Meloni visits
Norway to
boost energy
ties

ROME: Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is making the first official visit by an Italian leader to Norway in nearly 15 years on Thursday, seeking to deepen cooperation in areas including energy, critical minerals and defense, Italian sources said. Meloni is due to meet Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre in Oslo and attend a dinner with business representatives from both countries aimed at promoting bilateral investment. The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Meloni and Støre would also discuss major international issues, including Ukraine and developments in the Arctic, which Rome sees as a "natural area" for closer cooperation.—APP

A two-day study visit
workshop for Tajikistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A two-day Study Visit Workshop for Tajikistan under the EU P2P Export Control Programme for Dual-Use Goods was held in Islamabad. The workshop, comprising five substantial and four procedural sessions, was facilitated by Additional Secretary (Europe), Ambassador Ayeshah Ali. The workshop has been jointly organised by the Strategic Export Control Division (SECDIV), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA). It brought together senior officials and experts from Pakistan, Tajikistan and BAFA to exchange experiences on national strategic trade control frameworks and promote international cooperation in the legitimate trade of dual-use goods and technologies, con-

sistent with relevant international obligations, including UN Security Council Resolution 1540. In her inaugural remarks, Ambassador Ayeshah Ali underscored the right of developing countries to access dual-use goods and technologies for peaceful purposes and socio-economic development. She emphasised the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between national security imperatives and the facilitation of legitimate trade. She reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fulfilling its international obligations relating to non-proliferation and disarmament and highlighted the country's responsible approach to the governance of sensitive technologies. In his welcome remarks, Director General SECDIV, Haroon Rashid, highlighted the growing importance of effective controls over the transnational trade of dual-use goods and technologies. He briefed participants

on Pakistan's comprehensive legislative, regulatory and administrative export control framework, designed to prevent the diversion of sensitive goods and technologies to non-peaceful uses. He also noted Pakistan's voluntary adherence to the relevant guidelines and control lists of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Australia Group (AG), reflecting its commitment to maintaining export control standards in line with international best practices. The workshop showcased Pakistan's national export control architecture, including its licensing and enforcement mechanisms, while providing a platform for the exchange of experiences and best practices. It also aims to strengthen cross-border cooperation on strategic trade controls and facilitate effective controls over the transnational trade of dual-use goods and technologies.—Agencies

Briefs

**Will respond
to terror
threats: Asim**

DNA

WASHINGTON: Pakistan told the UN Security Council on Wednesday that it would respond to terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan in self-defence as and when needed and in accordance with international law. The assertion by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Asim Iftikhar Ahmad came during a Security Council meeting on the situation in Afghanistan five years after the Taliban's takeover of Kabul. "Pakistan cannot sit idle in the face of this terrorist onslaught," Ahmad told the UNSC. "We will respond in self-defence, as and when needed and in accordance with international law. We will defend ourselves against any terrorist attempts to harm our citizens and our national security." He said that more than 4,700 Pakistanis had lost their lives to terrorism emanating from Afghanistan over the past three years and added that Kabul had failed to take concrete and verifiable action against terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil.

**Pak protests
Indian
warship's
incursion**

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday lodged a strong protest with India over what it described as a "highly provocative and unacceptable" action by an Indian Navy vessel in Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) on September 15, 2026. This is the first instance of overt military tension between the nuclear-armed neighbours since they engaged in a fierce, four-day military conflict last year that raised fears of a wider war before a ceasefire was reached.

**Pakistan jumps five
notches in global
gender gap index**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan climbed the gender gap and climbed five places in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2026 from 148th to 143rd out of 145 economies, suggesting that significant gender inequalities persist despite improvement. According to an announcement by Mishaal Pakistan, a partner institute of the World Economic Forum (WEF), Pakistan recorded its greatest year-on-year improvement in a decade. Its overall gender parity score increased by 2.8%, from 56.7% in 2025 to 59.5% in 2026. Although Pakistan remains among the lowest-ranked economies in the index, it has narrowed its gender gap by 5.2% since 2026, when its score stood at 54.3%. The 2026 report measures gender disparities across four pillars: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. Pakistan improved its ranking in all four pillars, with the most substantial gains recorded in Educational Attainment and Political Empowerment, where it advanced 11 positions. Economic Participation and Opportunity remains Pakistan's weakest-performing pillar and the principal constraint on overall gender parity. Pakistan scored 56.4%, ranking 144th globally and last in South Asia. — APP

**NASA spacecraft
discovers a huge new
crater on the moon**

CAPE CANAVERAL: Scientists have discovered a crater on the moon that's bigger than the Roman Colosseum and is the result of a powerful impact two years ago that initially went undetected. The steep-sided hole — about 728 feet (222 meters) across and up to 141 feet (43 meters) deep — is the solar system's biggest known impact crater carved out in recent times. Such a large-scale event is estimated to occur only once every 132 years, researchers said, making this a treasure trove of information as NASA prepares to build a base for astronauts on the moon. "This event constitutes a statistically rare, effectively once-in-a-lifetime observation," the scientists wrote in one of two studies appearing on the subject Wednesday in the journal Science Advances. NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter spotted the crater on the moon's near side in May 2024 soon after it was formed by an incoming fragment of an asteroid or comet. The moon strike escaped real-time detection by telescopes on Earth and in space. LRO's wide-angle images were not identified in the crush of data until August 2025. The spacecraft gathered more detailed pictures last fall, followed by confirmation of the discovery early this year. The crater — named for the late Thomas McGeechin, a former director of Houston's Lunar and Planetary Institute — is three times bigger than the previous recordholder found by the LRO a decade ago. Pockmarked since ancient times, the moon bears some of the solar system's largest impact craters, including one that stretches more than 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers) across. This latest impact charmed the lunar surface for more than 66 miles (107 kilometers). Dust and rocky soil were hurled away at a higher angle than expected, according to Mark Robinson, chief scientist for the LRO's cameras who works at Intuitive Machines, Robinson was the lead author for one of the studies. A separate study identified a 4-mile-wide (7-kilometer-wide) cold spot around the new crater, consistent with a loosening of the moon's top soil. Co-author David Paige of the University of California, Los Angeles, likens it to gardening. — Agencies

**US House recess delays vote
on Hegseth impeachment**

Trump is also expected to meet GCC leaders on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, with discussions expected to include the conflict and its aftermath

DNA

DUBAI: The US House of Representatives has gone into an early recess without voting on a Republican lawmaker's bid to impeach Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth over the US' war on Iran. House Speaker Mike Johnson sent lawmakers home on Wednesday, ending the chamber's scheduled business a day early and delaying action on a resolution by Republican Rep. Thomas Massie that accuses Hegseth of conducting military operations against Iran without congressional authorization. The move comes as President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that the seven-month war on Iran was "hopefully" nearing its end and that Tehran wanted to reach a deal. Trump is also expected to meet GCC leaders on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, with discussions expected to include the conflict and its aftermath. Massie, a Kentucky Republican and longtime critic of the administration's Iran policy, introduced eight articles of impeachment against Hegseth on Tuesday.



He accused the defense secretary of violating the War Powers Resolution by continuing hostilities against Iran without congressional authorization, as well as other alleged abuses of power related to US military operations. Massie had sought to force a vote in the House within two legislative days. His resolution was therefore left pending after Johnson ended the House's session early. Johnson defended the decision, accusing Massie of avoiding a debate over the US military campaign. "I'm trying to stop a war," Massie said from the House floor on Wednesday, while criticizing the speaker for sending lawmakers home. Johnson defended the House's record and dismissed Massie's impeachment effort as a "stunt," saying the chamber had completed its legislative work.

The early recess to no comes after the House voted this week on a separate war powers measure concerning the Iran conflict, with several Republicans joining Democrats in backing efforts to rein in the administration's military authority. The House is now expected to return after the November midterm elections, leaving Massie's impeachment resolution and other pending legislation unresolved.

**Pakistan eyes bigger
China swap line**

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan will seek an expansion of its \$3 billion yuan swap line with China when the facility expires in 2027, Finance Minister Muhammad Aungherb said, adding he expects a US response on a proposed \$10bn exchange stabilisation facility within two months.

The country remains reliant on external financing to bolster foreign exchange reserves and meet debt repayments, making support from China, Gulf states and multilateral lenders key to maintaining economic stability and investor confidence. Aungherb said the entire 30bn yuan swap line from China had been fully drawn, adding that the government had yet to decide how much additional financing it would seek when the facility comes up for renewal. "They were open to it, but there is a process which has to be followed," said Aungherb, referring to recent meetings with his Chinese counterpart and the country's central bank governor. "We do plan to make a formal request at the time of the renewal."

Meanwhile, Aungherb said he expected a response within two months to Pakistan's request for a \$10bn exchange stabilisation facility from Washington, adding that the government was also in talks with the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) and the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC). EXIM financing could support aircraft purchases from Boeing by Pakistan International Airlines now that the national carrier is privatised, while DFC could help fund a planned \$5bn programme to upgrade the country's oil refineries. Asked whether there were any concerns about simultaneously seeking additional support from the US and China, Aungherb said it was an "and-and" discussion.

"China has been a longstanding strategic partner for us... and we have very good, at the leadership level now, understanding and relationship with the 'Trump administration,'" he said. "We are very fortunate to have this kind of relationship with both important economic and superpowers."

Iran seeking to militarize Bab al-Mandeb: Yemen

**Iran seeking to militarize
Bab al-Mandeb: Yemen**

SANAA: Yemen's Interior Minister Major General Ibrahim Haidan warned that Iran is seeking to establish long-term military influence over the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and its surrounding islands and coastlines by exporting to the Red Sea the model it developed to "militarize maritime corridors" in the Strait of Hormuz. Haidan said experts from Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) were helping the Houthis strengthen their capabilities and build fortifications, operations rooms and facilities for missiles, drones and remotely guided boats. "The danger is not limited to the threats that exist today, but extends to what is being built for the future," Haidan said. He warned that continued Houthi control of strategic areas could give Iran leverage over one of the world's most important shipping lanes and help it connect Yemen with the Horn of Africa through smuggling networks and armed groups.

His remarks followed sweeping government losses along Yemen's western coast. In an offensive from Sept. 3 to 11, the Houthis seized Hays, Al-Khokha, Mokha and its port before advancing to Bab al-Mandeb, Mayyan Island and the remaining Yemeni islands in the southern Red Sea. (Haidan said security readiness had been raised in Aden, Lahj and areas behind the frontlines following the developments in Mokha and along the western coast. The defense and interior ministries were coordinating through a joint operations room to prevent operatives and cells from infiltrating those areas or exploiting waves of displacement to carry out security breaches, he added. Haidan placed the latest developments in a broader context, saying Yemen was "part of a regional and international security system" and that events there quickly reverberated around the world because of the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. — DNA

**Minister highlights future
privatization road map**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation, Chairman Privatisation Commission and Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) speaking at the Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit 2026, on the theme "The Next Move: Pakistan's Next Phase of Growth, Investment and Competitiveness", emphasized the need for strategic shift from economic stabilisation toward generational growth, building market competitiveness through innovation, on-boarding the private sector and developing credible

public policy framework." Muhammad Ali highlighted recent macroeconomic gains and the stability achieved through tough decisions, and said this stability is merely a launchpad for a sustainable economic growth. In order to support a population projected to reach 300 million by 2050, the Adviser called for an altered state-private sector relationship. The state must lead, regulate, partner, enable, and strategically exit sectors where private enterprise can provide better value. He defined privatisation not simply as a transfer of ownership, but as a mechanism to unlock latent economic value constrained by traditional management. Lessons from the complex

PIA transaction will guide future privatisations and bankable PPP pipelines to deliver advanced infrastructure and services. The Adviser outlined three structural shifts required for Pakistan's economic renewal:

- Changing how we grow: Transitioning from consumption and external financing to investment, productivity, and private capital.
 - Building productive scale: Prioritising innovation in our industry, fostering industrialisation with modern technologies like AI, robotics, and electric vehicles while expanding workforce participation, particularly for women.
 - Competing with the world: Reorienting local businesses to build productive businesses at scale, with the capacity to compete internationally.
- Concluding his address, Ali warned that potential alone is not a strategy. He urged leaders to think across generations, capitalizing on the current stability window to build a highly competitive and productive Pakistan for 2050.

**3 security
personnel
killed
in Syria**

DARAA: Three members of Syria's Internal Security Forces were killed and others wounded on Thursday during an operation to arrest a wanted man in Al-Sanamiyah, in the Daraa countryside, state news agency SANA reported. Security forces said an armed group led by the wanted man opened fire on the patrol and dashed with officers during the operation. Authorities deployed additional forces across the city and imposed a temporary curfew while pursuing those involved in the attack. The Internal Security Forces said legal action would be taken against all those responsible. — APP

**Buckingham
Palace hits
back at claims
in Princess
Diana book**

LONDON: Buckingham Palace has hit back at claims by the late Princess Diana's brother that King Charles III acted insensitively following her death in a car crash almost 30 years ago. The palace issued an unusually strong statement after Charles Spencer claimed in his new memoir that the then-prince, Diana's former husband, said "I'm sorry, we'll forget her soon enough" days after she died in 1997. "While we do not comment on books as a matter of principle," a palace spokesperson said late Wednesday.

"His Majesty is mindful that the pain of fraternal grief can cloud reason, affect judgment and colour memory in ways others do not recognise, even many years after such a loss." "Sorrow, Diana, My Sister" is due to be published next week. In the book, serialised in the Daily Mail, Spencer claims that Charles subjected him to a "stream of anger" after he insisted Diana would not have wanted her sons, princes William and Harry, then aged 15 and 12, to walk in her funeral procession. "He unleashed down the phone what I have always taken to be his pent-up contempt for Diana, and his horror that the world was so loaded over by her death. 'Best assured,' he hissed, 'we'll forget her soon enough,'" Spencer writes. Diana, who was extremely popular in the UK, died in Paris at the age of 36 after the car she was travelling in crashed as it tried to get away from paparazzi photographers. — APP

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