



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, September 15, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

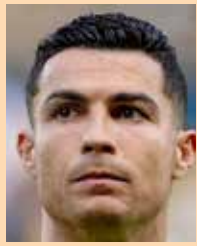
Price Rs. 40

PM wants quick relief for the low-income people

Detailed News On Page-08

Ronaldo calls for lifetime bans after 'Jota' chants

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Jemima marries A UK leading Businessman

Detailed News On Page-08



IHC directs provinces

No state resources for PTI's protest

No political party or political leader had the right to obstruct the free movement of citizens, the order stated, adding that provincial governments must ensure that government resources were not used for any march, procession or rally

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday disposed of a plea against the PTI's planned long march and protest in the federal capital on Sept 27, directing the chief ministers of all provinces to ensure that no government resources or official machinery were used in this regard. The PTI has announced a nationwide protest, including in Islamabad, on Sept 27 to demand the release of party founder Imran Khan and mobilise people for the supremacy of the Constitution. A citizen, Waqas Ahmed, had challenged the planned move on the grounds that the protest could disrupt routine life, traffic and business activities in the federal capital. A larger bench, headed by IHC Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar and including Justice Muhammad Azam Khan and Justice Muhammad Asif, took up the plea. The bench's short order, which was announced in the court, said that no political party or its leadership had the "lawful right to occupy public roads, highways, interchanges, toll plazas and buildings in Islamabad that would obstruct in any manner access to educational institutions and medical facilities". No political party or political leader had the right to obstruct the free movement of citizens, the order stated, adding that provincial governments must ensure that government resources were not used for any march, procession or rally. Chief ministers must ensure that public funds or government officials were not used for any protest, and official vehicles, machinery or other government equipment must not be used to facilitate any march, procession or rally, it said. Moreover, no public servant should be compelled to participate in any march, procession or rally, the court ruled. Any person, public office holder who undertook any activity against these instructions should be deemed to have violated the Constitution, it said. The court directed the Islamabad administration and the interior ministry to ensure protection of citizens' constitutional rights, and the chief secretaries and

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FCC issues notice to AG on Adiala inmates' pleas

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court on Monday issued notices to the Attorney General for Pakistan and other parties on appeals filed by three inmates of Adiala jail seeking treatment at private hospitals similar to the facilities granted to jailed PTI founding chairman Imran Khan. A three-member FCC bench, headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan and comprising Justice Aamir Farooq and Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, heard three separate petitions filed against the decision of the Islamabad High Court (IHC). A single-member IHC bench had dismissed their petitions on August 31. The high court held that a prisoner had no legal right to be transferred to a private hospital of his choice. During today's hearing, Justice Farooq asked why the prisoners should be treated at private hospitals. He also asked why treatment could not be provided at the Polyclinic or Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) hospitals. Justice Najafi questioned the implementation of the jail manual. "What is the benefit of the jail manual if they can do this?" he remarked. "If the jail manual is not to be followed, then what is the benefit of the jail manual?" he remarked. The court observed that the matter involved interpreting the law and adjourned the hearing until Tuesday.

Continued on Page 06

PM orders facilitation for public

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister has directed for provision of every possible guideline to people regarding registration and other necessary procedures to get fuel subsidy under PM Special Relief Scheme. He was chairing a review meeting regarding the PM Special Relief Scheme for motorcycles, rickshaws and 800cc cars in Islamabad today [Monday]. The Prime Minister directed that the SMS required for registration for the subsidy should be made free of cost. The fuel subsidy scheme will be launched for residents of Islamabad from tonight, while people across the country, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, will be able to avail

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US-Iran war Gulf states call off meeting with Iran

DNA

ABDU DHABI: Arab states in the Gulf called off a meeting with Iran planned for Monday, while Yemen's Houthis launched a new attack on Saudi Arabia after fighting that has extended the Middle East war to another theatre and further jeopardised global oil supplies. The Houthis in Yemen said they fired dozens of missiles and drones on Monday at a Saudi military airbase in Khamis Mushait, near the border, hitting aircraft hangars, radar systems, runways and ammunition depots. They described the attack as retaliation for hundreds of Saudi airstrikes on Yemen in recent days.

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ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

Farewell call

President all praise for the outgoing French ambassador

President Zardari said Pakistan greatly values its longstanding friendship with France and appreciated Ambassador Galey's constructive role in moving bilateral relations forward following a difficult phase

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey paid a farewell call on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr today. The President appreciated his contribution towards strengthening Pakistan-France relations during his tenure and expressed the hope that bilateral ties would continue to expand in all areas of mutual interest. President Zardari said Pakistan greatly values its longstanding friendship with France and appreciated Ambassador Galey's constructive role in moving bilateral relations forward following a difficult phase. He stressed the importance of regular high-level exchanges, stronger economic cooperation and greater interaction between the business communities of the two countries. He also conveyed sympathies to the Government and people of France over the devastating wildfires in the country, saying that Pakistan stands in solidarity with France. He appreciated France's acknowledgment of Pakistan's constructive medi-

ation role in the US-Iran conflict. The President welcomed further cooperation in areas of mutual benefit and appreciated the contribution of French companies and the French Agency for Development to development projects in Pakistan. The President congratulated Ambassador Galey on the completion of his assignment and conveyed his best wishes for his future endeavours. Ambassador Nicolas Galey expressed appreciation for the support extended to him during his tenure in Pakistan. He said he values the opportunity to contribute to strengthening relations between Pakistan and France. He reiterated that France recognises the State of Palestine and supports just movements around the world aimed at upholding human rights. Ambassador Galey appreciated Pakistan's role in the recent US-Iran conflict, saying that Pakistan had played an important role. He praised the manner in which Pakistan handled the situation, saying, "Whatever Pakistan did was done with mastery. You did great."

Briefs

MBS, Centcom chief talk on phone

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met US Central Command chief Admiral Brad Cooper on Monday and discussed the latest regional developments, Saudi state television reported, amid an escalation in attacks on the kingdom by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis. Meanwhile, Iran's Persian Gulf Strait Authority, set up by Iran to manage passage in the Strait of Hormuz, published on Monday an updated list of 77 vessels "violating Iranian protocols for the Strait of Hormuz". Vessels listed will face restrictions on future passage, including fines, detention or confiscation, said the body, set up by Iran to manage requests of passage in the strait, adding that vessels cooperating with them will be added to the list.

Scottish, N Irish parties mull leaving UK

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Leaders of the main Scottish, Northern Irish and Welsh nationalist parties on Monday declared their right to choose whether to remain in the UK or not at a rare meeting in the Welsh capital Cardiff. All three parties – the Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru in Wales and the pro-Irish unity Sinn Fein – want to break away from the UK. The meeting came just days after US President Donald Trump waded in, saying he would back a united Ireland, which Northern Ireland's Michelle O'Neill said showed "the unity debate is very much alive". "Our nations have the right to self-determination.

ATC orders blocking of 24 PTI leaders' passports in Nov case

The court observed that the accused face serious allegations, including attacks on state institutions and the promotion of terrorism. It also noted that the accused had failed to appear before the court, while those who had obtained interim bail had also not joined the investigation

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad has ordered the blocking of passports for 24 PTI leaders, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, Omar Ayub, and Asad Qaiser, in a case related to the violent protest on November 26, 2024. Several PTI leaders and workers were nominated in connection with the protest, which sought to put pressure on the government to release jailed party founder Imran Khan in November 2024. The 71-year-old cricketer-turned-politician has been behind bars since August 2023 after being booked in multiple cases, ranging from corruption to terrorism, following his ouster from power through the opposition's no-confidence motion in April 2022. During Monday's hearing, ATC Judge Abul Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain observed

that available records showed that the accused had been nominated in the case. The investigating officer told the court that the suspects could flee the country to evade legal proceedings. The court observed that the accused face serious allegations, including attacks on state institutions and the promotion of terrorism. It also noted that the accused had failed to appear before the court, while those who had obtained interim bail had also not joined the investigation. The court accepted the investigating officer's request to block the accused persons' passports and directed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to block them until further orders. The order also covered lawmakers Shehram Tarakai, Shah Ahmed, Sher Ali Arbab, Muhammad Iqbal Afridi, Dr Amjad Ali, Junaid Akbar, Shahid Khattak and Zubair Wazir.

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Militant commander among three terrorists killed in Mastung

Security forces destroy terrorists' vehicle using quadcopter during operation in Balochistan, say security sources

DNA

PESHAWAR: Security forces have killed at least three Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists, including a commander, in Balochistan, security sources said on Monday, as operations continue against militancy across the province. According to the security sources, the latest operation was conducted in Mastung district, with security forces targeting terrorists' vehicle using a quadcopter. Three terrorists, including commander Nageeb, were killed and their vehicle was completely destroyed in the operation, security sources said. Operations against the terrorists would continue until the last militant was eliminated, they added. The operation comes days after security forces eliminated at least 11 India-sponsored militants in separate intelligence-based operations in Kharan and Washuk districts. The operations were conducted on September 6 and 7 following re-

ports of the presence of terrorists belonging to the Indian proxy, Fitna al-Hindustan, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). 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 2026, with KP emerging as the worst-affected region. The report stated that KP and Balochistan together accounted for 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 94 incidents, or 35%, underscoring the concentration of militant activity in the two provinces.

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Pak committed to cement ties with Lebanon: CDF

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's contributions towards regional peace and stability and acknowledged the professionalism and sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Mr. Ahmad Al Hajjar, Lebanese Minister of Interior and Municipalities, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF) at GHQ, Rawal-

pindi, during his two-day visit to Pakistan. During the meeting, both dignitaries exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, the evolving regional security environment and prospects for further enhancing bilateral relations in security domain. The importance of strengthen-

ing institutional linkages and fostering greater cooperation between the two countries' security institutions was also emphasised. COAS & CDF reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Lebanon and expressed the desire to further expand

mutually beneficial co-operation in areas of shared interest. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's contributions towards regional peace and stability and acknowledged the professionalism and sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ hand shake with Lebanese Minister of Interior and Municipalities Mr. Ahmad Al Hajjar

War against terrorism in Balochistan enters decisive phase: Bugti

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has declared that the war against terrorism has entered a decisive phase, stressing that operations against militant elements will continue without discrimination until the last terrorist is eliminated. He praised the successful operation by security forces in Mastung against Fitna al-Hindustan, noting that the timely and effective action reflects the firm resolve and professional capability of state institutions. According to the Chief Minister, the operation resulted in the killing of commander Naeqeb and two other terrorists, with their vehicle successfully targeted through a quadcopter strike. Sarfraz Bugti commended the professionalism, courage, and effective strategy of the security forces, adding that such actions demonstrate the state's determination not to allow peace-destroying elements to achieve their nefarious designs in Balochistan. He emphasized that the people of Balochistan stand firmly with the security forces in this struggle, and the sacrifices of personnel for the restoration of peace are a source of pride for the nation. Reaffirming the government's commitment, Bugti said the fight against terrorism is at a decisive stage and vowed that operations against militant elements will continue relentlessly. He stressed that the resolve of the state will remain intact until the complete elimination of terrorism, ensuring that peace and stability prevail across the province.

Life imprisonment of wife's murderer upheld

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday upheld the life imprisonment of an accused, convicted of murdering his wife in Karachi, dismissing his appeal against the Sindh High Court judgment and maintaining the order to pay Rs500,000 compensation. A 10-page detailed judgment authored by Justice Hashim Kaka held that the chain of circumstantial evidence against the convict was complete, noting that he remained absconding for seven years after the incident. The court observed that domestic homicide was a crime often difficult to prove and that, in cases involving the unnatural death of a wife, the husband's explanation could assume significance. An unacceptable expla-

nation by the husband could form an important link in the chain of circumstantial evidence, it added. The Supreme Court, however, cautioned that no automatic presumption of guilt could be drawn against an accused. The presumption of innocence and all legal safeguards available to an accused must remain intact, the judgment emphasised. The court stressed the need for a 'gender-sensitive approach in the investigation of domestic killings', observing that the private nature of a matrimonial home should not become a shield for perpetrators. The judgment noted shortcomings in the investigation, observing that despite recovery of a blood-stained hammer and sheet, the articles were not produced be-

fore the trial court. The failure to present such evidence constituted serious negligence on the part of the police, it observed. The Supreme Court directed that police officers should be trained to address gender and patriarchal biases and that gender-sensitive investigation procedures should be adopted in cases involving crimes against women. It further emphasised accountability for negligence by investigating officers and called for consideration of a system for systematic review of every domestic homicide case. The court observed that attempts to attack the character of a deceased woman after her murder reflected a patriarchal mindset and stressed that fundamental changes were required in investigation.—APP

Mayor Karachi opens Shadman IT Park

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab inaugurated the major rehabilitation project of a park and IT centre in Shadman Town, District Central on Sunday. Members of the City Council, elected representatives and other concerned officials were also present on the occasion. Addressing the ceremony, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that development projects were being undertaken in different parts of the city to provide citizens with better recreational, educational

and basic facilities. He said the rehabilitation of Shadman Park had provided residents of the area with a clean, beautiful and improved recreational facility. The mayor said the park and IT centre rehabilitation project in Shadman Town had been completed at a cost of Rs14.5 million. Under the project, the 4,400-square-metre park had been equipped with modern facilities, including a play area and swings for children. He said the present era

was the era of artificial intelligence and information technology, and equipping young people with modern knowledge and skills was an essential requirement of the time. The mayor said the IT centre had also been made operational and the admissions process would begin from today. After completion of the admissions process, various courses in artificial intelligence and information technology would be offered free of cost to young people within the next 30 days.—APP

700 solar systems for needy families

SANGHAR: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Mir Hassan Mari Union Council has started distributing 700 solar systems, fans and other essential items among deserving and needy families in the area. More than 100 families received solar systems and other equipment during the first phase of the distribution at a ceremony held in village Mir Hassan Mari. The event was hosted by Union Council Chairman Rais Aqeel Ahmed Mari. Vice Chairman Mukhtiar Ali Jamali, District Council Member Rais Shakeel Ahmed Mari, councillors Abdul Karim Mari and Imran Brohi, Rais Ali Mardan Jamali, Rais Sikandar Ali Mari, Rais Akbar Ali Mari and Sikandar Ali Rajar were among those who attended the ceremony. Speaking to the media, Mr Aqeel Ahmed Mari, Mr Shakeel Ahmed Mari and other PPP representatives said the 700 solar systems were being distributed in phases to help deserving families meet their electricity needs. They said more beneficiaries would receive the systems in the coming days. They said the initiative was aimed at providing relief to low-income families facing electricity-related difficulties and helping improve their living conditions. The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the UC leadership and the PPP, saying the solar systems would help improve electricity access in their homes and make their daily lives easier.—APP

Workers' kids to get better opportunities for higher edu

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Labour and Human Resource Muhammad Manshaullah Butt has said providing better opportunities for higher education to the children of workers is among the government's top priorities, with the Punjab government taking measures under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to enable them to build a successful future through education. He was speaking during a meeting with children of workers studying at different campuses of COMSATS University, including Lahore, Abbottabad, Islamabad, Sahiwal, Attock, Wah and Vehari campuses. The minister distributed educational scholarship cheques worth more than Rs150 million among the

children of workers, providing financial assistance to help them pursue higher education. Manshaullah Butt said the scholarships were aimed at enabling the children of workers to utilize their educational abilities and play their role in the development and progress of the country. "Our commitment is to ensure that the child of a worker gets higher education, moves forward and achieves success," he said, adding that all possible support was being provided to workers' children for higher education and welfare initiatives would continue for the purpose. During the interaction, the minister discussed the students' academic performance, degree programmes

and future goals, and encouraged them to pursue their studies with hard work and dedication. He said quality education, hard work and commitment were the foundation of success, and expressed his best wishes for the students' bright future. Manshaullah Butt said the government was making every effort to ensure that workers' children did not face financial difficulties in pursuing higher education. Chairman Standing Committee on Labour and Human Resource Chaudhry Amjad Ali Javed, Labour Secretary Danish Afzal, Commissioner Social Security Zulfikar Ali Khari, Workers Welfare Secretary Mujtaba Bhurwana and other relevant officers were also present.—APP

PM's relief package for people welcomed

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has welcomed the Prime Minister's relief package for the people and thanked Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for his role in the initiative. In her statement, the CM said that the PML-N leadership's concern for the people during difficult times was highly commendable. She said the rising trend in global oil prices was creating difficulties for people, particularly in developing countries, adding that the increase in petroleum product prices was affecting all segments of society across the world. CM Maryam Nawaz said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had announced an excellent relief package on the directives of PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. She said the Prime Minister's relief package was a commendable step to provide support to the people despite difficult economic circumstances.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses an MoU signing ceremony between Pakistan and Lebanon on transfer of sentenced persons.

DNA

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Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) conferred upon Indonesian Navy Chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon Admiral Dr. Muhammad Ali, Chief of the Indonesian Navy, recognising his contribution to the promotion of relations between the two navies, at a Special Investiture Ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr today. The ceremony was attended among others by Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, members of Parliament and members of the diplomatic community. Admiral Dr. Muhammad Ali also called on the President, who congratulated him on the conferment of the prestigious award. Talking to him the President said Pakistan and Indonesia enjoy enduring and fraternal relations and stressed the need to further strengthen cooperation between the two navies. He said there is immense potential in the blue economy and mutual development of the maritime sector which needs to be harnessed. He appreciated the regular participation of the Indonesian Navy in exercises organised by the Pakistan Navy. Admiral Dr. Muhammad Ali was accompanied by Ambassador of Indonesia Lt Gen (Ret.) Chandra W. Sukotjo. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and Senator Saleem Mandiwala were also present during the meeting.



CJP renewes focus on improved service delivery

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan Monday opened the New Judicial Year 2026-27 with a renewed commitment to speedier justice, better case management, improved services and measurable institutional reform. The ceremony, held in Courtroom No. 1 of the Supreme Court of Pakistan here, was presided over by the Chief Justice of Pakistan, and attended by all Judges of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General for Pakistan, the Vice Chairman, Pakistan Bar Council, the President, Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan, and numbers of members of the legal fraternity. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Justice reviewed the Court's institutional reform agenda, structured around five key pillars: technology-enabled service delivery; access and transparency; strengthening of the legal and regulatory framework; leveraging national and international resources; and revitalisation of justice-sector institutions. He apprised the gathering that, out of 86 reform actions across eight functional areas, 65 have been completed, eight are on track, while 13 require further attention. He emphasised that the ultimate objective of reform is better justice, with judicial independence accompanied by institutional accountability. Highlighting the Court's digital trans-

formation, the Chief Justice referred to the digitisation and barcoding of pending and fresh cases, electronic transmission of orders and judgments, e-Office, paperless court systems and e-filing. He emphasised that the next phase of digital reform must move beyond digitisation towards an integrated and interoperable digital justice architecture, supported by stronger data infrastructure and robust cybersecurity. The Chief Justice also highlighted progress towards a National Standardised E-Filing Framework, aimed at bringing greater consistency to filing procedures across the Supreme Court, High Courts and District Judiciary and providing lawyers and litigants with a simpler and more predictable filing experience. Provincial Bar Councils and the Islamabad Bar Council have been engaged in the process, and the proposal has been placed before the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee. On access to justice and public facilitation, the Chief Justice highlighted the establishment and strengthening of the Public Facilitation Centre, digital communication mechanisms, structured feedback systems and improved facilities for litigants, overseas Pakistanis and the media. A Public Facilitation Centre at the Lahore Registry is targeted for completion by mid-

November. The Court is also completed compliance with ISO certification, reflecting its commitment to standardization and quality management Under the Access to Justice Development Fund, courts and Bar rooms across the country have been provided with uninterrupted power or solar energy, facilities for women, e-libraries, internet connectivity and clean drinking water. Implementation has been completed except in 12 districts of Balochistan, where security conditions continue to affect execution. Reviewing case management, the Chief Justice reported significant progress in the disposal of priority categories of cases. The Court has advanced death sentence appeals from 2015 to 2026, disposing of 613 appeals, with only 31 cases of 2026 remaining. In bail-before-arrest matters, the Court has progressed from 2016 to 2026, disposing of 2,972 petitions, with 115 cases of 2026 remaining. In bail-after-arrest matters, the Court has advanced from 2009 to 2026, deciding 2,926 petitions, leaving 185 cases of 2026. In family cases, the Court has advanced from 2010 to 2026, deciding 1,752 cases, with 369 remaining, of which 310 relate to 2026. In taxation matters, the Court has progressed from 2011 to 2021, deciding 691 cases, with 1,044 remaining, including 876 cases instituted during 2025 and 2026. Rent pendency has been reduced to 133 cases, comprising 23 cases of 2025 and 110 of 2026. In service matters, 4,302 cases have been decided, leaving 3,660, including 2,115 cases instituted during 2025 and 2026. The Chief Justice emphasised that effective case management requires close coordination among the Court Office, Bench and Bar, particularly in accurate categorisation, timely fixation, effective hearing management and avoidance of unnecessary adjournments.—DNA

JKDFP condemns arrests, raids in IIOJK

“Kashmiri political prisoners and thousands of detainees must not be forgotten. We appeal to the international community not to remain silent and to act urgently to protect their lives, health, human dignity and fundamental rights,” he said

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson of the Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) Advocate Arshad Iqbal has condemned recent arrests, raids on homes and seizure of properties in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, terming the actions an attempt to suppress the political voice of Kashmiris and create fear among the people. In a statement issued here on Monday, he said thousands of Kashmiris were imprisoned in different jails across India and were being kept far from their homes and families under difficult conditions. He named several political leaders and activists among the prisoners, including Shabir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Aasiya Andrabi, Masrat Alam Butt, Dr Hameed Fayaz, Muhammad Qasim

Fakto, Zafar Akbar Butt, Naeem Ahmad Khan and Advocate Mian Abdul Qayoom, former president of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association. Iqbal said Kashmiri prisoners held in Tihar, Agra and other jails were facing extreme heat, inadequate medical facilities, prolonged separation from their families and other hardships. He expressed particular concern over the condition of sick, elderly and long-term prisoners. He appealed to Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations and other international human rights organisations to take immediate notice of the situation and urge the Indian government to

ensure respect for the fundamental rights and dignity of Kashmiri prisoners. The JKDFP spokesperson specifically called for independent and unhindered access for the ICRC to Indian prisons to assess the medical and living conditions of Kashmiri prisoners and meet them privately. He also urged international human rights organisations to independently monitor and document arrests, raids and property seizures in Jammu and Kashmir. “Kashmiri political prisoners and thousands of detainees must not be forgotten. We appeal to the international community not to remain silent and to act urgently to protect their lives, health, human dignity and fundamental rights,” he said. —APP

DC reviews administrative operations across ICT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration held a detailed review meeting to assess the performance of Assistant Commissioners and magistrates across the federal capital. Deputy Commissioner Irfan Memon chaired the session, which was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Assistant Commissioners and magistrates from different areas. During the meeting, officials presented updates on price control measures and operations against encroachments in various parts of the city. The progress of the dengue prevention campaign was also reviewed, with a focus on enforcement measures and compliance with health guideline. The meeting also examined the district administration's anti-begging campaign and ongoing action against illegal sheesha cafés. Officials briefed the deputy commissioner on operations conducted in different sectors and areas of the capital. Judicial matters were another key item on the agenda. Assistant Commissioners provided updates on court-related cases and administrative proceedings. The deputy commissioner directed officers to expedite the disposal of pending cases and ensure timely handling of judicial matters. Performance reports of the Citizen Facilitation Centres in G-11 and Tarlai were also presented. The meeting reviewed public services being provided through these centres and discussed measures to improve service delivery and public access. Officials further briefed the meeting on enforcement actions against plastic bags, illegal LPG outlets and unauthorized petrol agencies. Progress on operations against illegal cattle farms, unauthorized construction activities and unlawful wall chalking was also reviewed. Deputy Commissioner Irfan Memon directed all officers to ensure strict implementation of the district administration's open-door policy so that citizens can easily access public services and seek assistance. He instructed Assistant Commissioners to continue daily operations against illegal sheesha cafés and maintain regular monitoring to ensure compliance with government directives. The deputy commissioner also called for a public awareness campaign to inform residents about the anti-begging initiative and encourage community cooperation. Regarding dengue prevention, he directed officials to take action against individuals and establishments violating dengue standard operating procedures.—APP

FGEHA auction in G-13, G-14 to kick off today

ISLAMABAD: The two-day auction of commercial plots in Sectors G-13 and G-14, being organised by the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA), will commence on Tuesday, September 15. Talking to media, an FGEHA spokesperson said all preparations for the auction had been finalised, while the Auction Management Committee had reviewed arrangements to ensure a transparent and well-organised process. The spokesperson said the responsibilities of the relevant departments had also been reviewed in detail, while the growing interest shown by investors and the business community in the commercial plots was taken into consideration. He said commercial plots in strategically located areas of G-13 and G-14 would be offered to investors, businesspersons, developers and individuals interested in commercial real estate. The spokesperson said FGEHA was offering flexible payment facilities to facilitate investors, including payment of the outstanding amount in easy instalments over a period of two years, along with a 10 per cent discount on lump-sum payment. He said investors could also avail themselves of the facility to pay the remaining amount in easy instalments after making an initial payment of 25 per cent.—APP

Heavy rain forecast for Potohar, KP

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Monday warned of heavy thunderstorms and intense rainfall across the Potohar region and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from September 14 to 17, with Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Murree, Galiyat and adjoining hilly areas among those likely to be affected, raising the risk of urban and localised flooding, flash floods, strong water flows in streams and landslides. According to an alert issued by the NDMA's National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), the anticipated weather system could produce intense rainfall over a short period, potentially triggering sudden flooding in low-lying and urban areas. The affected areas in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa include Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Shangla, Battagram, Kohistan, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Nowshera, Swabi, Mardan and Peshawar, along with adjoining areas. The NEOC's assessment models indicate the possibility of a rapidly developing weather system capable of generating heavy rainfall within a short duration, particularly in vulnerable areas. The authority cautioned that intense rainfall in mountainous regions could cause rapid rises in water levels in streams and nullahs, flash flooding and landslides, posing risks to communities, roads and other infrastructure. The NDMA advised citizens to remain vigilant during periods of heavy rain and avoid low-lying areas, streams, nullahs and water channels, besides refraining from unnecessary travel. People living in vulnerable areas have also been urged to take precautionary measures in view of the possible threat of flooding and landslides. The authority asked the public to follow the latest weather forecasts, advisories and emergency instructions issued by the local administration, Pakistan Meteorological Department and NDMA.—DNA

Briefs

DIG vows zero tolerance for corruption

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad Ali Waaseem held a meeting with his staff to discuss professional responsibilities, public service and measures to ensure effective and timely police services for citizens. An official told APP on Monday that during the meeting, the DIG Ali said all officers must work together to ensure rule of law, protection of citizens' lives and property and better service delivery to the public. He said a zero-tolerance policy against corruption would be strictly enforced across the force. "No one, including myself, is above the law," DIG Ali said, stressing that police personnel must perform their duties in accordance with the law and professional standards. He directed the staff to focus on their professional responsibilities and ensure that citizens receive effective and timely police services.—APP

Drug smuggling bid foiled on M-2

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) foiled an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics on M-2 motorway near Kallar Kahar, recovering 155 kilograms of opium and 88 kilograms of hashish, the police spokesperson said on Monday. According to the spokesperson, motorway police officials stopped two suspicious vehicles during an operation near Kallar Kahar. The suspects abandoned the vehicles and fled the scene. A search operation was launched to arrest them. The recovered narcotics and both vehicles were handed over to the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) for further legal action. The spokesperson said the drugs were allegedly being transported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab.—APP

MP assist to over 179,000 travellers

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) provided timely assistance to more than 179,000 travellers during August 2026. According to the spokesperson, the Motorway Police also recovered gold ornaments worth Rs1.6 million and valuable mobile phones worth Rs2.146 million and handed them over to their rightful owners. To promote road safety and awareness about traffic laws, 280 awareness programmes were organized across the country during the month, he added. More than 3.036 million citizens were also sensitized about traffic rules at various toll plazas, the spokesperson said. The Motorway Police also safely reunited 19 missing children with their parents during August. The NH&MP foiled 11 criminal incidents on national highways, arrested 12 suspects and handed them over to the relevant law-enforcement agencies for further legal action. The spokesperson further said that 300 kilograms of unhygienic meat was recovered and the accused involved in the case were arrested.—APP

Naqvi praises CTD Balochistan after operation

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday praised the Counter Terrorismism Department (CTD) Balochistan for carrying out a successful operation against militants linked to "Fitna al-Hindustan" in the Pishin area, where six militants were killed. In a statement, Mohsin Naqvi commended CTD Balochistan for its professional performance during the operation. He said the department acted in a timely manner and foiled the plans of militants through effective action. The interior minister said the operation reflected the capability of CTD Balochistan and acknowledged the efforts of the personnel involved. He appreciated the force for eliminating six militants during the operation and said their actions helped prevent the objectives of elements seeking to disrupt peace. Mohsin Naqvi stated that all institutions in Balochistan remain committed to maintaining peace and stability in the province.—APP

CDA, JICA secure Islamabad's water future

Under the Master Plan, existing and potential water resources including surface and groundwater will be assessed. Studies related to Tarbela, Chinot, Shahdara, Dotara and Chirah dams will also be reviewed to meet long-term water needs

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday to prepare an integrated Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Master Plan for Islamabad Capital Territory, with 2050 as the target year. CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Sohail Ashraf signed on behalf of CDA, while JICA Detailed Planning Survey Team Leader MIYAGAWA Masahito signed for JICA at a ceremony held at CDA Headquarters. The event was also attended by Director General Islamabad Water Sardar Khan Zimri, Joint Secretary Japan at Economic Affairs Division Fakhryia Anjum and other senior officials. The agreement follows a detailed JICA survey conducted from August 24 to September 14, during which consultations were held with CDA, Islamabad Water and relevant institutions to finalize the project framework. The 36-month technical cooperation project will primarily cover ICT Zones 1 to 5, with detailed facility planning for Zone 1 and strategic assessment for Zones 2 to 5. Under the Master Plan, existing and potential water resources including surface and groundwater will be assessed. Studies related to Tarbela, Chinot, Shahdara, Dotara and Chirah dams will also be reviewed to meet long-term water needs. The plan will focus on demand forecasting, treatment, transmission, storage, water quality, asset management and reducing non-revenue water. For sewerage and san-



itation, the study will address both sewerage and non-sewered areas, wastewater treatment, decentralized systems, fecal-sludge management and service responsibilities. On drainage, it will assess natural streams, stormwater networks and flood-risk zones to propose measures against urban flooding and extreme rainfall. Digital transformation will be a major part of the project to improve Islamabad Water's efficiency through smart metering, leakage detection, billing, customer management and

water quality monitoring. Pilot activities on metering, pressure monitoring and complaint systems are also planned, along with a review of a phased shift to metered tariffs keeping affordability in mind. Climate change adaptation will be built into the plan through source diversification, aquifer recharge, treated wastewater reuse and nature-based solutions. Energy efficiency and renewable energy options will be promoted as well. A Joint Coordination Committee

headed by the CDA Chairman will monitor progress. CDA and Islamabad Water will serve as implementing agencies with technical support from JICA. Staff will also receive on-the-job training and about three training programs in Japan. The Record of Discussions is expected to be signed in late November 2026, while project activities are tentatively set to begin in March 2027. Officials said the initiative aims to build a modern, climate-resilient water system for Islamabad.

Fahd, Feng discuss digital media landscape

ISLAMABAD: At the invitation of Acting Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Karachi, Feng Deheng, Minister of State/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media Fahd Haroon visited the Chinese Consulate in Karachi, where they had a warm and cordial interaction. Diplomats from the Chinese Consulate, members of the business community, among others, were also present on the occasion, said a release received here. The interaction included an exchange of views on the enduring Pakistan-China relationship and the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Discussions covered digital media, technology and digital transformation, including the growing role of digital platforms in communication, innovation and economic development. The occasion reflected the iron-brother relationship between Pakistan and China, built on deep trust, mutual respect and a shared commitment to a strong and prosperous future.—APP

IRSA releases 238,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 238,000 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 206,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1543.73 feet, which was 141.73 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 129,100 cusecs and 150,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1219.85 feet, which was 169.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 14,200 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 175,100, 138,200, 112,300, and 50,200 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 19,100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 16,700 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Hanif reaffirmed infrastructural development

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi affirmed that Pakistan stands as an invincible nuclear state, regional adversaries cannot undermine its national security while accusing Afghanistan of functioning as a hub for foreign-sponsored terrorism. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of the renovated auditorium at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR), here on Monday, Abbasi said that external elements are financing subversion in Azad Kashmir and Balochistan, emphasizing that national security institutions remain fully cognizant and vigilant to thwart hostile agendas. "Facilitators of terrorism are from within, but they can't hide themselves anywhere", he said pointing towards invisible local hands supporting notorious activities in the country. He also said that India is directly involved in sponsored terrorism in Pakistan. "Technical support by Israel and financial sponsorship by India to the terrorists from Afghanistan are trying to destabilising Pakistan", he said. He repeated that no one can dare to destabilise Pakistan as country's armed forces remain ready for befitting response to any aggressor or conspirator. On regional infrastructure progress, Abbasi expressed appreciation to CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, announcing that 50 new public transport buses will soon be deployed across Rawalpindi. "These buses will commute with in the city to further ease public travel", he said. Highlight achievements in local healthcare, he confirmed that two successful liver transplants were recently performed at the Rawalpindi Kidney Hospital, eliminating the need for patients to travel abroad for specialized treatment. The Minister added that two 300-bed hospitals have been completed in Rawalpindi, while a 400-bed pediatric hospital named Children Hospital is scheduled for completion ahead of June next year. "We are committed to complete construction work of the historic Children Hospital, Rawalpindi as soon as possible and we will get it inaugurated by the prime minister in June 2027", he announced. Abbasi also announced the renovation of sports complex, and construction of dedicated girls hostel for the university. "This is my duty to serve my daughters and I will do best to give them a separate hostel", he said adding that female students of the university belong to diverse culture and they deserve a standard living in university. Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR Prof. Dr. Qamar-uz-Zaman delivering the welcome address, extended gratitude to the Federal Minister for his support in renovating the university auditorium, upgrading sports facilities, and modernizing campus infrastructure. Following the address, Abbasi distributed mementos to officials recognized for their contributions to the campus renovation project. Earlier, the minister inaugurated recently renovated state of the art auditorium. University management and students gave a very warm welcome upon his arrival.—APP

Foolproof arrangements for MDCAT exam

RAWALPINDI: Municipal and administrative authorities have been directed to finalize foolproof arrangements to ensure the transparent and peaceful execution of the re-scheduled Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT)-2026, for the University of Health Sciences (UHS), Lahore. The directives were given by the Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Nadeem Nasir while chairing a meeting on Monday. According to a notification issued by Vice Chancellor UHS, the MDCAT examination originally scheduled for August 16 was rescheduled to be held on Sunday, September 20, in accordance with the PM&DC decision. Chairing a planning session attended by officials from the Police, Traffic Police, Res-

cue 1122, NADRA and other relevant departments, the deputy commissioner confirmed that 6,240 candidates will appear in the exam across Rawalpindi district. Officials briefed the session that three examination centers have been established for the exam, including Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR), Government Post Graduate College and Siddique Public School. The deputy commissioner instructed security agencies to ensure total security for all operational activities of the exam, and directed municipal departments to provide uninterrupted power supply, medical response teams, waiting areas for parents and dedicated parking management.—APP

Lebanese Interior Minister visits Pakistan Monument

Al-Hajjar lauds Martyrs' Memorial historical importance

ISLAMABAD: Lebanese Interior Minister Ahmad Al-Hajjar, accompanied by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Monday visited the Pakistan Monument and Islamabad Police Lines during his official visit to Pakistan. The visit included ceremonial events, briefings on national heritage, and an inspection of Islamabad Police personnel. Upon his arrival at the Pakistan Monument, the Lebanese interior minister was presented a guard of honour by a contingent of the Federal Constabulary. He later visited the Martyrs' Memorial, where he laid a floral wreath and offered prayers in tribute to those who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. During the visit, Ahmad Al-Hajjar was given a detailed briefing on the historical and national significance of the Pakistan Monument.

Officials informed him about the monument's role in representing the country's history, culture and national identity. The Lebanese minister appreciated the historical importance of the Pakistan Monument and the Martyrs' Memorial. He also acknowledged the architectural design of the national landmark. Later, a special parade was held in honour of the Lebanese interior minister at

Islamabad Police Lines. A special contingent of Islamabad Police presented a salute, while the national anthems of Pakistan and Lebanon were played during the ceremony. Ahmad Al-Hajjar inspected the parade and reviewed the contingent of Islamabad Police personnel. During the event, he appreciated the professional capabilities and discipline of the police force. The Lebanese interi-

or minister also distributed awards among Islamabad Police officers and personnel who had demonstrated outstanding performance in their duties. The ceremony was attended by Inspector General of the Federal Constabulary Riaz Nazir Gara, Inspector General of Islamabad Police Ali Nasir Rizvi, deputy inspectors general of Islamabad Police and other senior officials.—APP



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Democracy is in retreat and its adversaries on the rise

EYAD ABU SHAKRA

AMONG the most famous sayings of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the fourth caliph, is: “If you are in retreat and death is advancing, how swift the meeting must be.” I recalled this wise saying amid the clamor that accompanied the words of Jacob Coxon, the British researcher who resigned from the artificial intelligence company Anthropic – words I do not think he exaggerated. Coxon is anxious about the absence of legislation binding AI companies to a single set of safety and security standards. He warned that this advanced technology may, within a few years, put an end to the human race, particularly once its capacities develop to the point of surpassing the intelligence and abilities of its own developers. AI would thus slip its tether and begin a phase of taking its own decisions without reference to the human being, and indeed against his will. Coxon, it should be said, is no exceptional case among the minds that have known AI from the inside and then come to realize that man is dealing with a technological monster that will threaten humanity’s fate. The alarm bell has been ringing since this technology began to threaten a great many things in our lives: employment, politics – elections and governance specifically – the integrity of the judiciary and the curricula and methods of education. One of the pioneers of AI, the British-Canadian professor Geoffrey Hinton, voiced his apprehension about the speed of its development at the start of 2023. In the spring of that year, he resigned from his senior position at Google in order to devote himself to speaking about the dangers of AI, without failing to note that a part of him regrets his work in the field. Among the aspects Hinton addressed in media appearances was the danger of this advanced technology surpassing the human being’s cognitive capacity to keep up. He said the most alarming thing about it was the chatbot, the program that simulates human speech in voice and text. Over the following two years, his pessimism deepened regarding the misuse of AI and the escape of this technology from any controls. By the end of 2024, he was putting the probability of it causing the end of the human race at between 10 percent and 20 percent within three decades. But leaving aside the ivory tower in which

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scientific thinking may or may not reside, there are things happening on the ground. Coxon’s words provoked the trillionaire Elon Musk, one of the technology oligarchs most deeply tied to political movements and perhaps the most prominent financier of far-right parties across the Western democracies. Musk responded to Coxon forcefully, which drew an even sharper response from his ideological opposite, the left-wing Democratic Sen. Bernie Sanders, on X. The alarm bell has been ringing since AI technology began to threaten a great many things in our lives. Musk had counted Coxon’s words as a smear or a trap. Sanders replied in the manner of condemning a man with words from his own mouth: reminding Musk that he had said in 2014 that “with artificial intelligence we are summoning the demon.” Then, in 2018, he said: “Mark my words, AI is far more dangerous than nukes. Far. So why do we have no regulatory oversight? This is insane.” Even as recently as 2025, he said the Earth faced a possibility of “annihilation by killer robots” of between 10 percent and 20 percent. Sanders concluded by asking Musk what had changed and whether the shift in his position had anything to do with his investing billions of dollars in AI and planning to develop 10 million robots a year. Setting aside personal political positions, I believe the alarm gripping informed circles around the world is a positive development, in light of scientists’ fear of the lethal dangers of AI slipping its restraints. Here my memory returns to our forebears’ use, since ancient times, of the expression “releasing the genie from the bottle.” This is indeed what is happening now. But the difference is that the genie needed someone to release it, such as by rubbing a lamp, whereas the dangers of today and tomorrow may not need anyone to release them. They will act as they please. Add to this that modern and future technology, AI now included, has penetrated every aspect of our lives. We are surrounded today by algorithms of every type and specialization, to the point that those who own the means of knowledge, through eavesdropping, espionage, imaging, aggregation or analysis, know more about each one of us than we know about ourselves. As far as I am aware, there are companies that moved beyond identifying people through facial scanning some time ago and have now come close to – if they have not already arrived at – scanning our intentions and predicting reactions in advance. At this point, what value remains in opinion polls and their analysis if manipulating them is easier than drinking water? What hope of change remains, given a strategic alliance between right-wing radicalism, the lords of capital and the magnates of advanced technology? In confirmation of this, and in addition to Musk’s role in supporting extremist forces across Europe, it was revealed at the weekend that two cryptocurrency billionaires had donated, in equal shares, £72 million (\$97 million) to the British Reform UK party.

Iran Checkmates the Hormuz Bypass

Qamar Bashir



This is what I describe as Iran’s strategic checkmate of the Hormuz-bypass concept. I do not use “checkmate” to mean that Iran possesses uncontested sovereignty over two international waterways or has defeated American military power. My argument is economic and strategic. Iran and forces aligned with it possess sufficient capabilities across different theatres to make alternative energy routes vulnerable. In commercial transportation, the ability credibly to threaten passage can sometimes be almost as consequential as physically occupying it. The deeper story concerns money and power

THE war with Iran is no longer merely a contest of missiles, aircraft and naval power. It has become a struggle over the arteries through which the world’s energy flows. For months, the United States, Israel and regional producers have searched for ways to reduce dependence on the Strait of Hormuz. Israel has proposed pipelines carrying Gulf energy westward to its Mediterranean ports, while other projects envisage moving Iraqi and regional oil toward the Mediterranean. But events of recent days demonstrate a fundamental weakness in this strategy: bypassing one vulnerable chokepoint does not abolish geography. It merely transfers the vulnerability somewhere else. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made his vision explicit in March. He proposed oil and gas pipelines running westward across the Arabian Peninsula to Israeli Mediterranean ports, arguing that such infrastructure could eliminate dependence on maritime chokepoints. The broader search for alternative corridors has also involved proposals linking Iraqi energy resources with Syria’s Mediterranean coast. These projects potentially create enormous commercial opportunities for transit countries, ports, construction companies and international energy corporations. The contest, therefore, is not simply over oil. It is increasingly over who will build, operate and influence the infrastructure carrying that oil. Saudi Arabia already possessed the most important working example of the bypass strategy. Its 1,200-kilometre East-West Pipeline, or Petroline, carries crude from the kingdom’s eastern producing regions across the Arabian Peninsula to Yanbu on the Red Sea. As Hormuz became increasingly dangerous, this pipeline became enormously important. Roughly four million barrels per day were moving through the system, allowing Saudi Arabia to export without sending those barrels through Hormuz. Then came the drones. Saudi authorities say several drones launched from Iraqi territory attacked the East-West Pipeline system in the Riyadh and Madinah regions. The attacks caused injuries and damage and forced authorities to shut the pipeline as a precaution while technical teams assessed its safety. The entire 1,200-kilometre pipeline did not need to be physically destroyed. A sophisticated energy artery depends upon pumping stations, controls and associated infrastructure. Damage at strategically important points can interrupt the entire flow. The economic consequences could be enormous. Saudi Arabia reportedly has enough exportable crude stored at Yanbu to maintain current flows for only about five to seven days if Petroline remains closed. After that, as much as four percent of global oil supply

could be jeopardised. Repair estimates remain uncertain, ranging from days to weeks. The important strategic lesson is therefore not whether Petroline can eventually be repaired. Of course it can. The lesson is that the principal functioning escape route from Hormuz has itself demonstrated its vulnerability. This is where Iran’s strategic depth becomes important. Tehran does not require conventional naval supremacy over every kilometre of Hormuz to exercise extraordinary leverage there. Commercial shipping operates according to risk. One successful missile or drone attack can force shipowners, insurers and cargo operators to reconsider whether a voyage remains commercially acceptable. The same logic increasingly applies at the other end of the Arabian Peninsula. Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthis have advanced along the Red Sea coast and reached Perim Island, situated inside Bab el-Mandeb—the narrow gateway connecting the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden. Saudi Arabia’s Petroline may bypass Hormuz by terminating at Yanbu, but tankers sailing from the Red Sea toward Asian markets still confront the geography surrounding Bab el-Mandeb. The alternative route therefore possesses a chokepoint of its own. This is what I describe as Iran’s strategic checkmate of the Hormuz-bypass concept. I do not use “checkmate” to mean that Iran possesses uncontested sovereignty over two international waterways or has defeated American military power. My argument is economic and strategic. Iran and forces aligned with it possess sufficient capabilities across different theatres to make alternative energy routes vulnerable. In commercial transportation, the ability credibly to threaten passage can sometimes be almost as consequential as physically occupying it. The deeper story concerns money and power. Every new pipeline creates winners. Construction companies receive contracts. Energy corporations acquire projects. Transit countries collect revenues. Ports gain business. Investors obtain returns. Countries hosting terminals acquire additional strategic importance. Israel’s proposed Mediterranean corridor could enhance its position as an energy bridge. American companies participating in Middle Eastern energy and infrastructure projects can obtain major commercial opportunities. Regional governments, meanwhile, seek diversified routes that reduce their dependence on waterways vulnerable to war. Yet the cruel paradox is that Middle Eastern oil-producing countries risk carrying a disproportionate share of the immediate damage. Their pipelines become targets. Their export terminals require protection. Their production revenues become vulnerable to interruption. Their cities face missile and drone threats, while insurance and transportation costs

rise. Saudi Arabia’s present predicament illustrates the danger: an infrastructure system designed to provide strategic security from Hormuz has itself become exposed to the expanding battlefield. The widening conflict around Bab el-Mandeb demonstrates another limitation of purely military calculations. A superpower can deploy aircraft carriers, destroyers, missile defences and tens of thousands of personnel, yet commercial shipping requires something more difficult to guarantee: confidence. A shipping company contemplating a billion-dollar vessel and valuable cargo does not ask merely which navy is stronger. It asks whether the ship can complete its voyage safely, whether insurance remains available and whether the potential profit justifies the possibility of catastrophic loss. That is why geography continues to defeat attempts to declare Hormuz irrelevant. A pipeline across Saudi Arabia substitutes pumping stations and hundreds of kilometres of exposed infrastructure for the strait. A Syrian corridor would traverse another politically sensitive landscape. An Israeli Mediterranean corridor would require enormous investment, security and regional cooperation. And Red Sea exports must still confront the security environment surrounding Bab el-Mandeb. There is no magic line on a map capable of removing geopolitical risk. The Iran war has consequently evolved into something much larger than the conflict with which it began. It is simultaneously a military confrontation, an energy war and a contest over the future architecture of global petroleum transportation. The question is no longer simply who produces Middle Eastern oil. Increasingly, it is who builds the pipelines, controls the ports, protects the waterways and possesses leverage between the wellhead and the consumer. The architects of alternative corridors hoped to diminish Iran’s greatest geographical advantage by diminishing Hormuz itself. Instead, the expanding conflict is demonstrating that energy routes cannot simply escape geography. Close one chokepoint and another becomes indispensable. Build a pipeline and the pumping stations become strategic assets. Shift exports toward the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb assumes greater importance. That is the strategic irony of this war. The attempt to make Hormuz irrelevant may instead have demonstrated just how difficult it is to make Iran’s geography irrelevant. The map of the Middle East has not changed. What has changed is the number of places on that map where the world’s energy lifelines can now be threatened.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

A Response Awaited

I AM only a young girl. My name may never appear in a newspaper, my photograph may never be shown on television, and perhaps no one beyond my family will ever know what happened to me. Yet something happened that has changed the meaning of every tomorrow. A crime was committed against my body, but everyone now seems to be asking questions about my character, my clothes, my movements, my friendships, my silence and my future. I therefore ask one question—not only of myself, but of my family, my society and my State: How shall I live my life now? Shall I live as though I am guilty of the crime committed against me? Shall I lower my eyes whenever people look at me? Shall I abandon my education, my dreams and my confidence because a criminal violated my dignity? Shall my family regard me as a burden, a source of shame, or a wound that must be hidden behind the walls of the house? Or shall I be told, with courage and compassion, that the shame belongs entirely to the perpetrator and never to the victim? These questions are not imaginary. They are being asked silently in thousands of homes across Pakistan. The official numbers themselves are disturbing, though they reveal only a fraction of the truth. Data presented before Parliament recorded more than 173,000 cases of violence against women between 2021 and 2024, including thousands of reported rape and gang-rape cases, honour killings, domestic violence incidents and nearly 90,000 kidnappings and abductions. In 2024 alone, independent monitoring recorded more than 32,000 gender-based violence cases, including over 5,000 reported rapes. Child sexual abuse remains equally horrifying. NGO’s monitoring recorded thousands of cases involving children, with more than nine children reported to be abused every day in 2025. Behind every number is a human being. Behind every statistic is a face, a family, a broken childhood or a young woman wondering whether she still belongs to the world around her. And yet the most frightening number may not be the number of crimes. It is the number of criminals who escape accountability. Conviction rates for rape and other grave offences remain disastrously low. A society

cannot protect its daughters merely by announcing severe punishments in its laws. If the offender believes that investigation will be weak, witnesses will disappear, families will be pressured into compromise, and justice will arrive too late, the law becomes a threat written on paper rather than a shield held in reality. Our first duty, therefore, is to change the question. We must stop asking a violated girl, “Why were you there?” and begin asking, “Why was the criminal allowed to harm you?” We must stop examining the honour of the victim and examine the conduct of the offender. Honour does not reside in the silence of a frightened child. Honour resides in justice. The family has perhaps the most sacred responsibility. A daughter who has suffered sexual violence does not need suspicion; she needs an embrace. She does not need interrogation; she needs belief. She does not need to be hidden; she needs to be protected. If parents turn their backs upon her because of society’s whispers, the crime is followed by another cruelty—social abandonment. The State, too, must answer. Why should a survivor travel from police station to hospital, from hospital to court, and from court to another office, repeatedly narrating the most painful chapter of her life? Why should forensic evidence be lost, investigations delayed and cases buried beneath procedural obstacles? Anti-rape laws, specialised courts, crisis cells, forensic laboratories and mechanisms such as Zainab Alert can have meaning only when they function with urgency and integrity. The apparent rise in reported cases should not automatically be interpreted as a sudden discovery of evil. Greater awareness, media scrutiny and improved reporting mechanisms have encouraged some victims to come forward. But beneath these numbers lies the darker reality of underreporting—fear of retaliation, family pressure, economic dependence, social stigma and distrust of institutions. The low official rape rate cannot therefore be mistaken for a low incidence of sexual violence. There are other forces that demand attention. Poverty and social inequality create vulnerability. Children working outside protected family environments may become

easy targets. Power is frequently abused by acquaintances, relatives, neighbours and authority figures. The misuse of information technology has opened another dangerous frontier through online grooming, cyber-harassment and the easy circulation of violent and exploitative material. Children require digital protection as much as physical protection. But let us not imagine that harsher punishment alone will cure this disease. A severe sentence that is rarely imposed cannot deter as effectively as a just sentence that is certain and swift. What Pakistan needs is not merely the multiplication of penalties but the certainty of accountability: competent investigation, reliable forensic evidence, protection of witnesses, speedy trials and an end to settlements that sacrifice justice at the altar of family reputation. Education must begin before tragedy occurs. Children should be taught, in language appropriate to their age, about personal boundaries, bodily safety, consent and the importance of speaking to a trusted adult. Parents must know whom their children meet, where they go and what they encounter online. Religious scholars, teachers and community leaders must speak unequivocally against victim-blaming and the misuse of honour as a weapon against the vulnerable. And now I return to the young girl.
“How shall I live?”
The answer must come from all of us: Live. Study. Dream. Walk with your head held high. Laugh again. Build your future. You are not the crime committed against you. You are not the shame of the criminal. You are not a broken reputation. You are a human being whose dignity remains intact. And to her family, society and State, her question carries another demand: Will you stand beside me, or will you make me suffer twice? The true measure of a nation is not how loudly it condemns a crime after it occurs, but how faithfully it protects the innocent before it occurs, how firmly it pursues the guilty afterwards, and how tenderly it restores the life of the survivor. If Pakistan can answer that question with justice rather than silence, compassion rather than suspicion, and accountability rather than compromise, then perhaps one frightened young girl will eventually discover that her future was not stolen from her. It was only delayed—and her nation helped her reclaim it.

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

The State, too, must answer. Why should a survivor travel from police station to hospital, from hospital to court, and from court to another office, repeatedly narrating the most painful chapter of her life? Why should forensic evidence be lost, investigations delayed and cases buried beneath procedural obstacles? Anti-rape laws, specialised courts, crisis cells, forensic laboratories and mechanisms such as Zainab Alert can have meaning only when they function with urgency and integrity

Briefs

No state resources for PTI's protest

FROM PAGE 01

provincial police chiefs to ensure implementation of court directives. The interior secretary and Islamabad chief commissioner and inspector general were directed to ensure compliance with court orders. The hearing The bench had reserved its verdict on the plea earlier in the day after the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police chief assured the court that no "illegal or unconstitutional activities" would be allowed in connection with the protest. At one point during the hearing, Chief Justice Dogar recalled that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Advocate General (AG) Shah Faisal Utmankhel had stated during the previous hearing that notices had been issued to provincial authorities for judicial assistance. The chief justice clarified that the court had not issued any notice under Section 27-A of the Civil Procedure Code for judicial assistance from provincial law officers, observing that such assistance could only be sought through the attorney general, the federal government's law officer, Islamabad Advocate General Naveed Hayat Malik, who was among those who appeared before the court today, informed the bench that a miscellaneous application had been filed seeking permission to screen videos of the PTI's protests in 2022 and 2024. The Islamabad AG noted that the PTI leadership was claiming that its planned long march would remain peaceful and was aimed at strengthening the judiciary. He said he wished to place before the court statements made by PTI leaders as well as videos of the party's previous protests. Initially, Justice Dogar expressed reluctance to allow the screening of videos. "That is not the practice of this court," he observed when the AG sought permission to play footage of the November 2024 protest. When the law officer pointed out instances of videos being played in the Supreme Court, Justice Dogar remarked that the IHC did not wish to establish a precedent of routinely playing videos during court proceedings. After a brief break, however, the bench allowed the footage to be screened, with the chief justice making it clear that the videos would be played only once. The Islamabad AG then played videos related to the PTI's 2022 and 2024 protests and argued that the demonstrations could not be described as peaceful.

FCC issues notice to AG on...

FROM PAGE 01

Following the IHC verdict, three inmates, Muhammad Ilyas Khan, Mohammad Ismail Hussain and Owais Altaf had approached the FCC praying for setting aside the decision dismissing their medical and communication facilities pleas. In their constitutional petition, the prisoners referred to Article 25 of the Constitution, arguing that all citizens are equal before the law. They requested the court to end what they described as discriminatory treatment and provide them with medical facilities equal to those available to the PTI founder. The petitioners referred to the Supreme Court's August 18 order and requested that they also be transferred to the Shifa International Hospital for medical treatment. They sought permission to communicate via WhatsApp with individuals living abroad, similar to the communication facilities available to Imran Khan. The top court on August 18 ordered the transfer of the former prime minister to Shifa International Hospital from Adiala jail. However, citing security concerns, authorities took the deposited premier to the government-run Pims under tight security, just moments before the 48-hour deadline set by the top court expired. Imran, the cricketer-turned-politician, aged 73, has been in jail in Rawalpindi since August 2023, convicted in a string of cases that he and his party maintain were "politically driven" following his ouster in 2022.

Pak fined for over-rate in Birmingham Test

"Ranjan Madugalle of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction, after on-field umpires Paul Reiffel and Chris Gaffaney, third umpire Allahudien Palekar and fourth umpire Russell Warren levelled the charge," the cricketing body said

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan have been fined 50 per cent of their match fee, and penalised 11 World Test Championship points for maintaining a slow over-rate during the third and final Test against England in Birmingham, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Monday. In a press release, the ICC said

Pakistan were ruled to be 11 overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration during the match. "Ranjan Madugalle of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction, after on-field umpires Paul Reiffel and Chris Gaffaney, third umpire Allahudien Palekar and fourth umpire Russell Warren levelled the charge," the cricketing body said. It

said that Pakistan were now sitting at the bottom of the World Test rankings, with 4.63 points percentage. Pakistan were previously at the bottom of the rankings, with 14.81 points percentage. As per ICC rules, a side is penalised one point for each over short. In addition, players are fined five per cent of their match fee for each over their team fails to bowl within the allot-

ted time, with the maximum penalty capped at 50pc of the match fee. The Test, which concluded on Saturday, saw England complete a comprehensive 3-0 series sweep of Pakistan, winning the last match by eight wickets. In May, Pakistan were penalised 40pc of their match-fees as well as eight World Test Championship points for maintaining a slow over-rate during a Test match against Bangladesh.

Cristiano Ronaldo calls for lifetime bans after 'Jota' chants aimed at Neves

CRISTIANO Ronaldo said on Sunday that fans who appeared to make chants referencing former teammate Diogo Jota at Ruben Neves during a Saudi Pro League match should be banned from football stadiums for life. The chants occurred on Saturday during a fixture between Al-Taawoun and Neves' side Al-Hilal in Buraidah, Saudi Arabia. Jota died on July 3, 2025, in a car crash in Zamora, northwestern Spain, along with his brother Andre Silva. A close friend of Jota, Neves was a pallbearer at his funeral. Footage filmed from the stands during the match and circulated on social media appeared to show supporters chanting 'Jota'. The shouts attracted the attention of Neves, who pointed to his eye and then up to the sky in response. Passing through the mixed zone after the game, Neves commented, "I hope they don't go to pray afterwards." In response to an Instagram post showing the footage, Ronaldo commented from his personal account. "The league must take action and punish this kind of fan behavior," said Ronaldo. "This is no longer football, and there have to be limits. People who be-



have like this should never be allowed to enter a stadium again." The game finished 6-0 to Al-Hilal, with Neves playing 75 minutes before being substituted. Al-Hilal Club Company announced in a statement on its website on Sunday that it had filed a complaint with the Saudi Arabian Football Federation relating to the incident. The Saudi Pro

League club were "confident" that measures would be taken to "protect the integrity of sporting competition from offensive practices." "The Company expressed its absolute rejection of such actions targeting players or their families, or intended to cause personal offense," said Al-Hilal's statement. Later on Sunday, Al-

Taawoun also released a statement, which strongly condemned the offensive chants. "Such conduct is completely unacceptable and does not represent Al-Taawoun, its supporters or the values for which its terraces are known." Al-Taawoun added that it would "take all necessary measures in coordination with the relevant authorities to prevent a recurrence and hold offenders accountable." The Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF) and the Saudi Pro League (SPL) also condemned the supporters' behavior on Sunday. In a joint statement, SAFF and the SPL said the conduct of some fans during the match was "inconsistent with the values of Saudi football and the principles of sportsmanship." The governing bodies added that exploiting personal tragedies "for the purpose of abuse or provocation is unacceptable behavior that has no place in Saudi football." SAFF said the relevant committees had identified the conduct in question and would take the necessary action in accordance with applicable regulations and procedures, with the outcome to be announced once the process is completed. - APP

British High Commission delegation visits IRS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of diplomats from the British High Commission visited the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, for wide-ranging consultations on Pakistan's foreign policy and neighbourhood diplomacy. The delegation was briefed on recent developments in Pakistan's relations with its neighbouring countries, particularly Afghanistan. It was conveyed that Pakistan seeks friendly and peaceful relations with all its neighbours, including India and Afghanistan, and expects reciprocal positive responses to its peaceful aspirations for the region. With regard to Afghanistan, Pakistan's principal concern remains the use of Afghan soil for terrorist activities against Pakistan. Addressing this concern to Pakistan's satisfaction could significantly improve bilateral relations and open avenues for greater regional trade, connectivity and economic cooperation. The discussion also highlighted the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan and its constructive relations with neighbouring countries for realizing the region's considerable potential for trade and connectivity. Integration of Afghanistan into regional initiatives, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and projects such as the Trans-Afghan Railway, could create significant economic opportunities for Afghanistan and contribute to improved livelihoods.

DNA

MANCHESTER, England: Manchester United was enraged after Erling Haaland's hotly contested goal settled the 199th Manchester derby. The Norwegian struck in the 60th minute to seal a 1-0 win for 10-man Manchester City at Old Trafford in the Premier League on Sunday. At first, the goal was ruled out for offside, but after VAR review the onfield decision was overturned, sparking a roar of celebration from the away fans, including Oasis' Noel Gallagher. United's players were incensed because Enzo Fernandez was in an offside position during the buildup. The Premier League said the goal was allowed because, despite diving to head the ball, the Argentine did not get a touch before it reached Haaland at the far post. However, soccer rules state a player is interfering with play when "clearly attempting to play a ball" or "challenging an opponent for the ball." United defender Lisandro Martinez, who was challenging Fernandez, called it an "injustice" and coach Michael Carrick was also perplexed. "I just don't get it, I really don't get

Haaland's disputed goal wins Manchester derby

it," he said. "It's worrying, it really is if that's how the game is seen by those who are officiating." Asked if he thought he would get a better explanation from the referee's governing body or even an apology, Carrick said, "I look forward to that." City's fans may have felt justice was done after Phil Foden was sent off in the 23rd for kicking out at Bruno Fernandes. Foden and City's players remonstrated on the field and coach Enzo Maresca said after that Fernandes should also have been shown a red for the altercation. With an extra man United hit the post either side of halftime - first from Marcus Rashford's long-range free kick and then Kobbie Mainoo's low shot from the edge of the area. It was Maresca's first derby since taking over from Pep Guardiola at the end of last season and victory extended City's 100% start to the season. City moved level on points with

defending champion Arsenal at the top of the standings. "The red card changed the plan of the game, but credit to the players and their effort, spirit and togetherness was brilliant," Maresca said. "It is already an abnormal situation when you are able to win a game with 10 players. It is fantastic. Then this game is a derby so it is even better." United is 13th in the standings with just one win from four games. Carrick's teams plays Brighton in the English League Cup on Wednesday, having been knocked out of the competition at the earliest stage against fourth division Grimsby last season. United plays winless Fulham next weekend before the international break. "We haven't got as many points as we would have liked at this point, for sure. There's no getting away from that. But we don't need a break or a restart. We've just got to move on and get winning again," Carrick said.

ATC orders blocking of 24 PTI leaders'...

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Other individuals whose passports are to be blocked under the court's order include Arshad Umarzai, Zar Alam, Mian Umar, Akhtar Khan, Humayun Khan, Riaz Khan, Abdul Kabir Khan, Tufail Anjum, Asif Mehsud, Ajab Gul, Muhammad Usman, Babar Saleem Swati, Irfan Saleem, Advocate Ali Zaman and Malik Shahab.

PM orders facilitation for public

FROM PAGE 01

the petrol relief from the night between Wednesday and Thursday. The Prime Minister directed the Chief Commissioner and Inspector General of Islamabad, along with the administration, to remain present in the field to guide the public and facilitate them in completing the registration process. He also called for mobilizing elected representatives and volunteers across the country to assist citizens in registration and other necessary procedures. Shehbaz Sharif instructed the authorities to launch an extensive awareness campaign about the scheme through print, electronic, digital and social media platforms. The meeting was briefed that over 600,000 SMS messages have been received in the Islamabad region since the launch of the scheme, while 42,933 applicants have successfully registered. It was further informed that only four basic pieces of information are required for registration: Computerized National Identity Card number, vehicle number plate, province of registration and vehicle registration date. Complete details of the fuel subsidy scheme are available on the website pmfuelrelief.pk.

Gulf states call off meeting...

FROM PAGE 01

Saudi authorities announced brief emergency alerts there and in three other southern cities which have previously come under Houthi fire. The Houthis launched a lightning advance last week in Yemen, culminating in the seizure of an island in the mouth of the Red Sea on Friday. A separate attack that day, which Riyadh blamed on fighters in Iraq, knocked out Saudi Arabia's east-west pipeline, the main route for Middle East oil bypassing the blockaded Strait of Hormuz. Crude oil prices rose more than 3% on Monday, when the market reopened after the weekend, while the politically sensitive average retail price of diesel in the United States hit a new all-time high above \$6.23 a gallon. Traders say the closure of the Saudi pipeline could cut off as much as 4% of global oil supply unless it is reopened within days. Images from space show sections of the pipeline damaged by blazes. Riyadh has not given a firm estimate for how long it will be shut.

PFF Unveils Roadmap to Transform Women's Football in Pakistan

PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani, speaking at a press conference alongside PFF CEO Shahid Khokhar and PFF Head of Women's Football Muzghan Orakzai, said the federation was committed to building a strong and sustainable ecosystem for women's football across Pakistan

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has taken a major step towards transforming women's football by unveiling an ambitious Women's Football Strategy 2026-30, developed with FIFA support to create a structured nationwide pathway for girls and women to enter, develop and excel in the sport. The landmark strategy aims to shift women's football towards a sustainable, structured and competitive model, with district and regional championships planned as a pathway towards a national women's football league. The initiative will focus on grassroots talent identification, player development, stronger competitions and greater opportunities for female players, coaches and officials. PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani, speaking at a press conference alongside PFF CEO Shahid Khokhar and PFF Head of Women's Football Muzghan Orakzai, said the federation was committed to building a strong and sustainable ecosystem for women's football across Pakistan. "This is not just about organising tournaments; it is about building a complete pathway for women's football in Pakistan—from grassroots development and talent identification to elite competition and the national team," Gilani said. He said the strategy would place special emphasis on girls' football, grassroots and youth development, while a comprehensive player talent identification and development system would be established to ensure promising players from across the country have opportunities to progress. Under the strategy, the PFF plans to organise district and regional women's championships, followed by a national women's football league, providing female players with regular competitive opportunities and a platform to showcase their talent. Gilani said the federation would also prioritise skills development for women players, coaches and officials, while promoting



women's leadership and administration and creating more opportunities for Pakistani female coaches. Highlighting the scale of the grassroots initiative, he said the FIFA Football for Schools programme is targeting three million Pakistani children, creating a major opportunity to introduce a new generation to football and significantly expand the country's talent pool. Gilani also praised the Pakistan women's team for its recent performances, saying its success in the FIFA Series reflected the hard work and commitment of the players and team management. He said Pakistan secured an impressive 8-0 victory in a recent FIFA tournament.

"Our vision is to create opportunities for Pakistani women footballers to compete at every level and ultimately see the Pakistani flag flying proudly on football grounds around the world," Gilani said, adding that government support and close cooperation among all stakeholders would be crucial to taking football to the next level in Pakistan. On governance, Gilani said the PFF was working with FIFA through workshops and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen transparency, governance and institutional systems. A stronger administrative structure, he added, would provide a more stable foundation for the long-term development of football in the country.

Briefs

Gold price drops

LAHORE: A significant drop in gold prices is being recorded again in both Pakistani and international markets after a one-day interval. According to All Pakistan Sarafa Association, the price of 24-karat gold across the country fell by Rs3,800 per tola, settling at Rs 453,336, while the price of 10 grams of gold decreased by Rs3,258 to Rs388,672. While the price of silver per tola has been dropped by Rs122, reaching Rs6,802. Meanwhile, in the international market, the price of gold rose by \$38 per ounce, reaching \$4,308.—APP

Rupee gains 01 paisa against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in inter-bank trading and closed at Rs277.31, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.32. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 277.90 and Rs 278.40, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 1.77 and closed at Rs 319.93 against the previous day's closing of Rs 321.70, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.79, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 0.78 and closed at Rs 373.85 compared to the previous day's Rs 374.63. The exchange rates of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 01 and 02 paisa to close at Rs 75.49 and Rs 73.83, respectively.—APP

PSX turns bearish, sheds over 2,541 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish on Monday, losing 2,541.20 points, a negative change of 1.49 percent, to close at 167,970.66 points against 170,511.86 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 570.472 million shares, compared to 687.467 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value stood at Rs24.672 billion, down from Rs33.705 billion. Market capitalisation decreased to Rs18.728 trillion from Rs19.016 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 492 companies that traded in the ready market, 83 posted gains, 373 suffered losses, while 36 remained unchanged, reflecting an overall bearish trend in the market. Cnergyco PK led the volume chart with 97.168 million shares, followed by Waves Home (R) with 72.902 million shares and Media Times Ltd with 52.841 million shares. Among the top gainers, Pakistan Services Limited surged by Rs108.75 to close at Rs1,196.22, while Nestle Pakistan Limited gained Rs84.53 to settle at Rs7,508.75. On the losing side, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited fell by Rs688.55 to close at Rs24,109.22, while Buxly Paints Limited declined by Rs83.46 to Rs751.13. In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 147.996 million shares with a traded value of Rs8.070 billion, compared with 188.682 million shares worth Rs10.531 billion in the previous session. Of the 311 companies traded in the DFC market, 29 advanced, 280 declined, and two remained unchanged.—APP

Incubator shortages, premature births strain Gaza's hospitals

The war between Israel and Hamas has devastated the Palestinian territory's healthcare system, with many medical facilities rendered completely or partially unusable

KHAN YUNIS: As monitors beep and doctors consult near them, two tiny newborns lie silently side-by-side, sharing a single incubator in a southern Gaza hospital running short on space and supplies. Gaza's youngest already face an extremely precarious entry into the world, given the dire humanitarian situation in the war-shattered territory that borders Israel and Egypt. But for babies needing specialist care, such as those born prematurely, the road ahead is even more perilous. "The situation is dire: there is no oxygen available for them, nor is there any spare incubators in the hospital," said Hatem Dhahir, head of the neonatal department at Nasser hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis. "We're trying to transfer them to other hospitals, but they're always full and

the situation is very bad. Most of the children need oxygen and are very underweight, and things are going from bad to worse," he told AFP. The war between Israel and Hamas has devastated the Palestinian territory's healthcare system, with many medical facilities rendered completely or partially unusable. Ongoing Israeli restrictions on goods entering the Gaza Strip mean medical supplies and specialist equipment are also running low. Dhahir said Nasser hospital had seen a significant increase in the number of premature births in recent months, as well as twins and triplets. The influx was forcing staff to place two or even three babies in each incubator, he said. In March, the UN's humanitarian agency OCHA said that one in three pregnancies in Gaza were high-risk and 70 per-

cent of newborns were premature or underweight. Incubator sharing significantly increased mortality risks, it said. "No room" Nearly the entirety of Gaza's population was displaced at least once during the devastating war which started in October 2023. The fighting flattened swathes of the territory, left hundreds of thousands of people living in tents and temporary shelters and shattered vital infrastructure such as sanitation and access to safe water. Despite a US-backed ceasefire declared in October 2025, the Israeli military continues to target Palestinians it says are militants. A UN-mandated inquiry published in June said that severe shortages of food, medical supplies, fuel and the collapse of healthcare services had an enormous impact on maternal health. "Against this

background, rates of miscarriage, stillbirth, low-birthweight infants and congenital defects have increased," the UN's Independent International Commission of Inquiry said. Heart conditions were among three types of congenital defects to have particularly increased, the commission said, citing medical practitioners. In southern Gaza, Mona Ahmad was accompanying a baby taken to Nasser hospital in late August and diagnosed with a serious congenital defect in which the heart's two main blood vessels are switched in position. "We received a final report stating that the baby was suffering from transposed arteries and needed to be transferred, as there was absolutely no treatment available for her here," Ahmad told AFP. "The baby spent a full

week in the neonatal unit and was discharged because there was no room for her there," she added. In a bid to revive Gaza's neonatal care system, the UN children's agency UNICEF has scaled up its work to supply medical equipment such as incubators, ventilators and monitors to hospitals. Including work that began before the ceasefire, UNICEF has supplied 93 incubators to six facilities across the Gaza Strip. But challenges remain immense and more needs to be done, said Toby Fricker, chief of advocacy and communications for UNICEF Palestine, following a visit to a neonatal intensive care unit in the territory. For now, "through the pure... resilience of the doctors, of people, things are working," he said.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar meets with Thomas Rachel, Federal Government Commissioner for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Germany, at the Ministry of Human Rights. German Ambassador to Pakistan Ms. Ina Lepel is also present.

FBR's digital invoicing modernized system: Chohan

HYDERABAD: A special awareness and training session on FBR Digital Invoicing was organized by the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry (HCSTSI) in collaboration with Cystence Private Company at the Chamber Secretariat. A large number of respected chamber members, traders, industrialists and representatives of the business community attended the session. The objective of the session was to provide the business community with awareness and practical guidance regarding the procedure, key requirements, practical implementation and use of FBR Digital Invoicing in day-to-day business operations. During the session, Chief Executive Officer of Cystence Private Company, Syed Anas Shah, delivered a detailed introduction and practical presentation on the "FINARDS LITE" software developed for FBR Digital Invoicing. He explained that Finards Lite is a modern cloud-based invoicing, Point of Sale and Enterprise Resource Planning platform that provides integration with FBR Digital Invoicing. He briefed the participants on the practical procedure for issuing invoices through the software, maintaining sales and billing records, and integrating relevant invoice data with the FBR system. Syed Anas Shah further explained the key features of Finards Lite, including FBR-compliant invoicing, integration with Point of Sale and Enterprise Resource Planning systems, generation of QR codes and FBR Invoice Reference Numbers, monitoring of invoices and FBR responses through a centralized dashboard, tracking of failed or pending invoices, and transmission of data once connectivity is restored. He also provided detailed guidance on the practical use of the software by different types of businesses, its implementation process, and its role in making business operations more organized and digital. Earlier, in his welcome address, Senior Vice President of Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry, Ahmed Idrees Chohan, termed the awareness session on FBR Digital Invoicing organized by Cystence Private Limited a welcome initiative for the business community. He said that business systems are rapidly becoming digital in the present era, and therefore the trader and industrialist community must adapt to changing requirements. He said that the Hyderabad Chamber organized the session to promote greater coordination between the business community and Federal Board of Revenue, address the questions and concerns of traders, and provide awareness regarding the procedure, requirements and practical implementation of Digital Invoicing. He added that the Hyderabad Chamber would continue organizing such awareness and training programs to facilitate and guide the business community. At the conclusive part of the session, participants raised a large number of questions and practical points concerning FBR Digital Invoicing, invoice issuance, practical use of the software, maintenance of business records, integration with the FBR system and other related matters. Representatives of Cystence Private Limited, along with Muhammad Zubair Memon, ACCA, provided detailed answers and guidance to the participants.—DNA

Oil refining in Kazakhstan set to rise to 39m tons by 2040

ASTANA: Kazakhstan plans to more than double its annual oil refining capacity to 39 million tons by 2040 under a new strategy aimed at modernizing the sector, increasing processing depth and expanding petrochemical production, Qazinform News Agency reports. Nazym Bekbatyrova, head of the Oil Refining and Petroleum Products Production Department at Kazakhstan's Ministry of Energy, presented the key provisions of the approved Concept for the Development of the Oil Refining Industry for 2025-2040 at the 13th Downstream Central Asia & Caspian Summit in Astana. According to Bekbatyrova, the concept focuses on the gradual modernization and expansion of refining capacity, increasing the depth of crude oil processing, improving the quality of petroleum products and developing the petrochemical industry. Implementation of the strategy is expected to increase annual oil refining volumes from 18 million to 39 million tons. The ratio of oil production to refining is also projected to improve from 5:1 to 2.5:1.—APP

Call for 'urgent action' to rein in AI in face of 'unprecedented risks'

GENEVA: The United Nations rights chief called Monday for countries and "frontier" artificial intelligence companies to act urgently to rein in a technology he warned posed "unprecedented risks" in a letter sent to countries and AI developers and shared with the media. Volker Turk cautioned that the world was "on the cusp of irreversible change, affecting not just us but generations of humanity to come". "The current race towards ever more powerful AI is a step change towards greater existential risks to every aspect of our lives." He sent the letter at a time when worries over the risks of "superintelligent" computer systems have been on full display, after a researcher publicly resigned from leading AI firm Anthropic over fears that the technology could escape human control. Another Anthropic employee, who did not resign, stated publicly that "we really do earnestly believe AI could kill all humans", and that he thought the chances were greater than "10 percent within the next decade". Amid the outcry, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei called Saturday for AI companies to "pace the frontier" -- or coordinate a slowdown in the technology's development, with his chief competitors, xAI's Elon Musk and OpenAI's Sam Altman, publicly supporting him. "In today's world, we are almost entirely reliant on a small number of powerful companies to make the right choices on AI development for all of humanity," Turk lamented. "I call on States and companies to mobilise urgently through multilateral fora to chart a path for action to govern advanced, frontier AI models, grounded in international human rights law."—APP

Fuel prices trigger protests in Syria

Protests broke out across parts of Syria on Sunday over a government decision to raise fuel prices, with demonstrators blocking roads and demanding that the increases be scrapped as the cost of living continues to bite. In the Aleppo countryside, footage emerging online showed protesters take to the streets in Azaz and Al-Bab, chanting against the price hikes and closing roads in a show of opposition to the decision. Protesters also blocked the M5 international highway near Maarat al-Nu'man in southern Idlib countryside, according to videos and images circulating online that showed burning tires on the road. The protests came a day after Energy Minister Mohammed al-Bashir said the "increase was needed to bridge a temporary gap between the cost of securing petroleum products and their domestic selling prices," state-run Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported. He said Syria was producing around 102,000 barrels of oil per day, compared with domestic demand of about 325,000 barrels, leaving the government reliant on imports to make up the shortfall. The Energy Ministry also said it would continue reviewing fuel prices in response to changes in global markets, while working to expand refining and storage capacity over the longer term.—APP

EU to propose law curbing social media for kids

BRUSSELS: The European Union will on Thursday propose a new law to shield children from social media harms, a day after EU chief Ursula von der Leyen is due to reveal an age limit for minors to access such platforms. After more than a year of talks and pressure from member states including France and Greece as well as parents across the 27-country EU, von der Leyen will address the issue in a speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The "EU Kids Act" will be presented on Thursday by von der Leyen and EU tech chief Henna Virkkunen in Brussels, spokesman Olof Gill told reporters. Von der Leyen is expected to say that social media and platforms used by children should be "safe by design", meaning that they are not addictive and have features removed that encourage excessive use. She has also been weighing up barring social media access entirely for children under 13 - which an expert panel has recommended - or under 15, which France wants.—APP

Pakistan Pavilion inaugurated at Abu Dhabi Book Fair

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Pavilion at the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2026 was formally inaugurated on Monday by Ambassador of Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates Shafqat Ali Khan, marking a significant moment for Pakistan's literary representation on the international stage. The pavilion is jointly represented by three leading Pakistani literary and publishing institutions: the National Book Foundation (NBF), represented by Director Headquarters Murad Ali; Book Corner Pakistan, represented by Director Amar Shahid; and Urdu World Books, represented by CEO Sarmad Khan, said a message received here. During the inauguration ceremony, the ambassador performed the ribbon-cutting and toured the Pakistan Pavilion, visiting thematic sections showcasing the country's literary diversity, including translations, children's literature, cultural studies and new publications. Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan appreciated the efforts of the participating organisations and commended their commitment to promoting Pakistan's book culture internationally. He assured his continued support for initiatives aimed at strengthening Pakistan's literary outreach and cultural diplomacy. The visit also featured discussions on expanding access to books, promoting translation projects and strengthening collaboration to reach readers in underserved, flood-affected and conflict-affected regions.—APP

Between the Lines – The Real Test of Journalism

NISAR HUSSAIN



Journalism is often described as the fourth pillar of the state. Its strength does not come from any constitutional authority; it is derived from public trust, the pursuit of truth and the ability to hold power accountable. A responsible journalist does not become a party to a story. He seeks facts, gathers evidence, presents the relevant viewpoints, publishes the story and then moves on. If a report is strong, credible and properly documented, it does not require the journalist's continued advocacy to make its way into the public domain. A good story travels from the national media to the international media on its own because the real strength and speed of

a news report lie in its truth. The fundamental principles of journalism are impartiality, integrity and the protection of the public's right to information. When a journalist becomes the mouthpiece of a political party, group, institution or powerful individual, he moves away from journalism's essential role. Journalism is not about campaigning for or against anyone; it is about asking questions, seeking the truth and presenting it to the public. However, becoming the voice of the voiceless and questioning powerful interests can sometimes come at the cost of pressure and danger. In the present era, investigative journalism is more important than ever—and more difficult as well. Social media has accelerated the speed at which news travels, but unverified information, propaganda and manufactured narratives have multiplied a journalist's responsibilities. An investigative reporter must reach the truth behind a story, obtain documents, verify sources, cross-check different aspects and reach a conclusion only after seeking the relevant party's position. These are the principles of professional ethics and the very foundation of journalism. The three-decade journalistic career of senior journalist Syed Tabassum Abbas, his editorship of several newspapers and his investigative reporting represent this journalistic tradition. For an investigative reporter, curiosity, observation, the courage

to ask questions, access to documents, the ability to connect facts and the determination to uphold a professional position even under pressure are of fundamental importance. These qualities have remained prominent in his journalistic work. Whether it was his investigative work on India, such as "The Journey of Friendship" and "Karbala Serial," or his documented stories on sensitive issues, the central principle remained the same: evidence matters more than claims. His story concerning an Rs80 billion tax refund is also cited as an important example from his journalistic career. Following the report, he faced pressure and difficulties, but subsequent developments strengthened his position, and the relevant tax official was eventually sent to prison. His investigative reports against mafias also exposed him to danger. On one occasion, he survived an assassination attempt, although his vehicle was severely damaged. Investigative journalism is not merely about putting pen to paper. At times, a journalist has to pay the price of a story in the form of pressure, threats and danger. But if the report is accurate, the documents are solid and the investigation is thorough, time becomes the story's greatest witness.

A journalist is not merely a purveyor of news; he is also an opinion-maker. He senses the trends emerging in society, understands them and presents them to the public. A survey he con-

ducted on party positions before the 2008 elections also demonstrated journalism's ability to influence public opinion. At the time, there was a widespread perception that the party in power would win, but the election results remained close to the survey's findings. He subsequently faced criticism and pressure over the survey. The major lesson from this episode is that every journalistic effort capable of influencing public opinion must be grounded in research, transparency and responsibility. In journalism, it is not always necessary to say everything directly. At times, "between the lines" can become more effective journalism. Documents, the sequence of events and the right questions can make many things clear on their own. This does not mean creating ambiguity; rather, it means presenting facts in a manner that enables the reader to reach a conclusion independently while avoiding unnecessary allegations. The greatest test of a good story is that it does not bounce back. A journalist should not have to appear the next day to explain, retract or apologise for his report. Breaking news is not the ultimate achievement in journalism; breaking accurate news is. The importance of the fourth pillar of the state can be preserved only when a journalist maintains a clear distinction between news and opinion, fact and speculation, and investigation and propaganda. Journalistic ethics require

that personal interests not be allowed to enter a news report, that no one be subjected to baseless allegations, that the opposing viewpoint not be ignored and that there be no hesitation in correcting an error when it comes to light. Freedom of the press must be accompanied by responsibility. When freedom is separated from ethical principles, it becomes mere noise rather than journalism. In the current circumstances, journalism faces challenges including pressure, economic difficulties, political polarisation, digital competition and an overwhelming flood of information. In such an environment, a journalist's greatest strength is not his institution but his credibility. A journalist who prioritises the protection of sources, the verification of facts and professional principles may be isolated for a time, but in the long run, his credibility becomes his greatest asset. The purpose of journalism is not to defeat anyone; it is to preserve the truth. A journalist's job is to present a story with evidence and then move on. If the report is true, time will bear witness to it; if it is false, time will expose it. In today's fast-paced information age, journalism's greatest test is to ensure that a journalist does not lose the truth in the race for news.

—The writer is a veteran Pakistani journalist with nearly four decades of experience in print and electronic media, having served in senior editorial positions since 1986.

Briefs

France to ban
underage
social
media use

NEWS DESK

PARIS: The French government submitted a reworked proposal to ban social media for children, after its previous ban was struck down by the country's top constitutional authority, President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday. "After rigorous technical work the government today is notifying" the European Commission of the new draft, Macron wrote on X. The notification is a key step, as it ensures that the legislation is in line with European Union laws.

Iran nuclear
chief blocked
for Vienna
meeting

TEHRAN: Iran's nuclear chief was blocked from attending an annual conference on Monday at the headquarters of the UN's nuclear agency in Vienna due to opposition from the United States, Iranian state television said. "Mohammad Eslami and his delegation took a regular flight to Vienna on Saturday, but were blocked on the way because of obstructions by the United States," the state broadcaster reported, saying he had returned to the capital Tehran. Iran stated on Monday it had summoned Austria's charge d'affaires after the European country refused to allow Iran's nuclear chief to participate in the meeting. "The Austrian government's refusal to issue visas to the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a completely unjustified decision," foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said at a press conference in Tehran. "It is clear to us that this incident occurred under American pressure, but that does not absolve the Austrian government of responsibility." - APP

Boat sinks off
Greek island
Gavdos

NEWS DESK

ATHENS: One person died and 25 remained missing after a boat filled with migrants sank off the Greek island of Gavdos, near Crete, the coast guard told AFP on Monday. "Fifty-one were picked up by two boats that were in the area," a coast-guard spokesman said, adding that according to those plucked from the sea, 77 people were on board the boat when it went down. Crete and Gavdos, about 320 kilometres (200 miles) from the Libyan coast, have become the main point of entry for asylum seekers in Greece. In late August, Greece's ANA news agency published figures from the immigration ministry that indicated that migrant arrivals in Greece fell from about 61,000 in the year to August 2025 to 42,000 in the following 12 months - a decline of around 31 percent. Authorities in Europe have tightened their immigration rules over recent years as far-right, anti-immigrant parties have won increasing support.

Serious PTI leadership prefers
dialogue over long march: Kundi

During a meeting with newspaper editors in Islamabad, Governor Kundi discussed the country's political situation, law and order in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, constitutional and financial rights of the province, and other key issues. He expressed regret that both provincial and federal governments have neglected the province, noting that current priorities conflict with public interests and that restoring peace should be the government's main focus



ISLAMABAD: Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi interacted with a select group of journalists. In picture from left to right, Ali Furqan (News One), Aziz Alvi, Resident Editor (Nawa-i-Waqt), Amir Ghauri Resident Editor The News, Ansar Mahmood Bhatti Editor Daily Islamabad Post and Ijaz Ahmed GNN. - DNA

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has emphasized that the provincial government's foremost priority must be the elimination of terrorism and the establishment of sustainable peace in the province, as development and prosperity are impossible without security. During a meeting with newspaper editors in Islamabad, Governor Kundi discussed the country's political situation, law and order in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, constitutional and financial rights of the province, and other key issues. He expressed regret that both provincial and federal

governments have neglected the province, noting that current priorities conflict with public interests and that restoring peace should be the government's main focus. Kundi highlighted the sacrifices made by the people, police, and security forces in the fight against terrorism, insisting that peace must remain the government's top agenda. He called for unity among all political parties to secure the province's rights and present a strong case before the federation. Speaking on the merged districts, he criticized the ruling party for failing to fulfill promises made to residents over the past 15 years. He stressed that providing resources, equal opportunities, and development to these areas is the

government's responsibility. He also noted weak administrative control in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, urging the government to ensure protection and governance across all regions. Commenting on Maryam Nawaz's statement about provinces, Kundi questioned whether Punjab does not benefit from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's water, electricity, oil, and gas. He said the federation's strength depends on respecting the rights of all provinces. On PTI's long march, he remarked that even within the party there are conflicting views. He said serious leadership prefers dialogue over confrontation, adding that the matter is currently under judicial review and future steps will depend on the court's

decision. Kundi also noted that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has so far remained relatively safe from major climate change impacts this year. He shared that work is underway on establishing a SIUT hospital in Dera Ismail Khan with funds provided by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He praised the media's role in highlighting public issues and amplifying the voice of the people, acknowledging journalists' efforts in bringing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's challenges to national attention. The meeting was attended by editors including Aamir Ghouri (The News), Aziz Alvi (Nawa-i-Waqt), Ansar Mahmood Bhatti (Daily Islamabad Post), Ejaz Ahmed (GNN TV), and Ali Furqan (News One).

'India now stands exposed',
says Bilawal Bhutto

PAKISTAN Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has praised Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim for rejecting India's attempt to link Pakistan with terrorism, saying New Delhi now stands exposed internationally. In a post on X, the former foreign minister said Ibrahim was "exposing Indian propaganda" during his appearance on Indian television. Ibrahim had rejected an attempt by an Indian television interviewer to link Pakistan to the April 2025 Pahalgam attack, saying Malaysia's security agencies had not told him that the Pakistani state was involved in terrorism and that he had not been provided with any evidence establishing such a connection. "The truth is India started a war based on a lie and lost miserably. India now stands exposed internationally," the PPP chair-

man said. Bilawal said India must now live up to its commitments made at the time of the ceasefire and agree to discuss "all friction points" with Pakistan. "So we can together bring peace, prosperity and stability to our region," he added. The former foreign minister's remarks came after Ibrahim made the comments during an interview with Indian broadcaster NDTV on the sidelines of the Brics Summit in New Delhi. The Malaysian premier was asked about the Pahalgam attack after the interviewer sought to draw a connection between Pakistan and the incident. Ibrahim said he had not been presented with evidence linking the Pakistani state to terrorism. He also said Malaysia's security agencies had not informed him of any Pakistani state involvement in terrorism. - APP

Imran ex-wife Jemima marries



NEWS DESK

LONDON: Jemima Goldsmith, the former wife of ex-premier Imran Khan, has married for the second time, Britain's The Daily Mail reported on Monday. According to the publication, Jemima exchanged vows on Sunday with 62-year-old Cameron O'Reilly, an Irish-Australian financier. The Mail on Sunday revealed in May that the couple had become engaged

after a year-long romance. The news was confirmed by Jemima's brother Ben Goldsmith. His wife, Jemima Jones, shared a picture from the wedding on Instagram with the caption, "Celebrating Jemima and Cameron's wedding, with my favourite date, what a happy day!" According to the Daily Mail, the couple are understood to have met while O'Reilly was working as an executive producer on several documentaries and films. Jemima produced several films, including What's Love Got To Do With It, a film she described as her "love letter to Pakistan". O'Reilly has four children from previous relationships, while Jemima shares two sons, Kasim and Sulaiman, with Khan. The couple were married in 1995 for nearly a decade. She has consistently campaigned for the release of her former husband, who remains incarcerated in cases that he says are politically motivated.

PM wants quick relief for those
who really need: Tarar

PM Shehbaz Sharif launched the targeted relief scheme on Sunday, offering a Rs100-per-litre discount on petrol for motorcyclists, rickshaw and Qingqi drivers and users of vehicles with engine capacities of up to 800cc

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal ministers Attaullah Tarar, Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Ali Pervaiz Malik are holding a press conference to brief the media on the Prime Minister's fuel relief scheme. The briefing, which is currently underway, is providing details of the government's fuel relief measures, including the scheme's scope, eligibility criteria and mechanism for extending assistance to beneficiaries. PM Shehbaz Sharif launched the targeted relief scheme on Sunday, offering a Rs100-per-litre discount on petrol for motorcyclists, rickshaw and Qingqi drivers and users of vehicles



with engine capacities of up to 800cc. The scheme was introduced to provide relief to citizens amid a sharp rise in fuel prices driven by escalating tensions in the Middle East. Federal Minister for IT Shaza said the prime minister had launched a targeted petroleum relief programme for eligible citizens.

Shaza said the registration process was divided into two parts, with applicants first required to register using their CNIC and vehicle details. Applicants must send their CNIC number from a SIM registered against their identity card to 9771, along with their vehicle registration number, province or city and registration date. The province entered must be the one where the vehicle or motorcycle is registered. Applicants will receive a message if any required information is missing, she said. Shaza said registration would only need to be completed once. After registering, beneficiaries could obtain the fuel token by sending "TOK" to 9771 when purchasing petrol.

Crude oil tops \$107 as
major Saudi pipeline shuts

LONDON: Oil prices jumped more than 2% on Monday after new Houthi strikes on Saudi Arabia and Iranian attacks on ships in the Gulf compounded supply concerns following the closure of a key Saudi oil pipeline. Brent crude futures rose \$2.90, or 2.77%, to \$107.51 per barrel as of 2313 GMT. WTI futures rose \$2.27, or 2.27%, to \$102.32 per barrel. Prices had initially risen more than 3% at market open. Saudi Arabian state media on Sunday released video footage showing damage to homes and a mosque from what it said was a Houthi attack on the country's southern Jazan province. The Houthis said they had also struck a Saudi military base in a neighbouring province.

A vessel in the Strait of Hormuz was struck by a projectile, causing a fire and forcing the crew to be evacuated, the British maritime security agency UKMTO said on Sunday. Iran said one person was killed and four crew members were wounded aboard an Iranian commercial vessel struck off its coast. Oil prices had been expected to rise on Monday amid growing concerns about risks to supply from Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, whose East-West oil pipeline was shut on Friday by a

drone strike that originated in Iraq. The loss of the pipeline, which helped Saudi Arabia reroute its exports while avoiding the Strait of Hormuz, threatens up to 4% of global oil supply. Meanwhile, Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis reached the strategic island of Peir on Friday, moving to tighten their control over the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, another key oil transit lane that has carried 4-5% of global supply in recent months. Oil surged 8% on the week due to the disruptions, rising above \$100 for the first time since July. - APP