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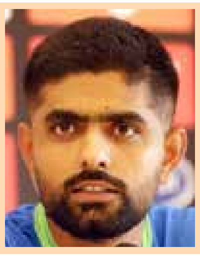
Daily Islamabad POST

Wednesday, September 09, 2026 | Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper | Price Rs. 40

Nations are defined by their strength, resolve: Naval chief

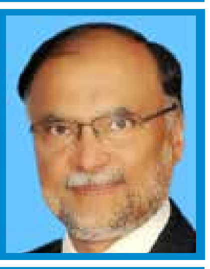
Detailed News On Page-08

Babar says he was not consulted for team changes



Detailed News On Page-06

Pak needs to take on climate challenges



Detailed News On Page-02

Middle East crisis

Houthi attacks disrupt Saudi energy facilities, wound 73

The flare-up in violence between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis came as tensions mounted between the United States and Iran as the wider Middle East conflict sent oil prices soaring with diplomatic negotiations stalling

DNA

RYADH: Operations at some energy facilities in Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, were halted on Tuesday following attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels that wounded 73 people, in what Saudi authorities described as a dangerous escalation. Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry strongly condemned the "terrorist Houthi militia's targeting of civilian and economic" sites in the southern cities of Abha, Khamis Mushait, Jazan, and Najran. The ministry said the attacks resulted in 73 civilians being injured, including women and children. Fires erupted at the sites and several people were injured as firefighting and other emergency teams rushed to contain the blazes and assess the damage, the Saudi energy ministry said.

It added that the authorities concerned were dealing with the repercussions of the attacks. "The needed measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the facilities and workers and the continuation of work according to the approved operational plans," said the ministry. The Saudi foreign ministry said Riyadh would "take all necessary measures to defend its sovereignty". It also called for an "immediate halt to all forms of escalation practised by this militia", as well as Houthi attacks on shipping. The flare-up in violence between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis came as tensions mounted between the United States and Iran as the wider Middle East conflict sent oil prices soaring with diplomatic negotiations stalling. Brent crude futures rose $1 to $98 per barrel after the Saudi energy ministry statement, while US crude futures rose over $2 to $93.65 per barrel.

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PM Shehbaz Sharif 'strongly' condemns Houthi attack

Premier says such attacks threaten innocent lives as women and children among 73 wounded

Saifullah Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has "strongly" condemned the Houthi attack targeting Saudi civilian and energy facilities, terming it a "cowardly" act that endangered innocent lives and threatened regional peace and security. In a statement on X, the prime minister expressed Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and the people of Saudi Arabia. His statement came hours after Yemen's Houthis launched attacks on four cities in southern Saudi Arabia, targeting civilian areas and energy infrastructure. The strikes reportedly injured more than 70 people and sparked fires at oil facilities,

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Italian envoy meets Shehbaz

Saifullah Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Ugo Ciarlatani, Ambassador of the Italian Republic, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House. Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Sen. Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Syed Tauqir Shah, SAPM Syed Tariq Fatemi and Foreign Secretary Amb. Amna Baloch were also present.

While welcoming the newly arrived Italian Ambassador to Pakistan, the Prime Minister stated that Pakistan and Italy enjoyed excellent bilateral relations. He conveyed his warm greetings to Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and fondly recalled his interactions with the Italian leader. He also expressed his pleasure at Prime Minister Meloni's completion of four uninterrupted years in office, which made her the Italian leader with the longest tenure. Amb. Ciarlatani thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and said that he would make it, his earnest effort to further promote and strengthen Pakistan-Italy relations, during his tenure.

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ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. Ugo Ciarlatani, Ambassador of the Italian Republic, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House. – DNA

PTI's Sept 27 protest

IHC forms larger bench to hear plea

IHC summons AG, IGPs over PTI planned Sept 27 countrywide protests, Islamabad march

Faisal Sheikh

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday issued notices to the attorney general, inspectors general of police and advocate generals of all four provinces on a petition challenging the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) planned nationwide protests and September 27 long march on Islamabad. The major opposition party has announced a nationwide protests and, long march towards Islamabad on September 27 to demand release of jailed party founder Imran Khan.

IHC Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar heard a petition filed by citizen Waqas Ahmed and directed the respondents to appear in their personal capacities. The court also decided to constitute a larger bench to hear the matter. During the hearing, the petitioner's counsel said he was a trader doing business in Islamabad and was affected because the planned protest was intended to be brought to the capital. Referring to statements by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, the lawyer said several matters involving the party's leaders were already pending before courts and should be dealt with according to law. "If their argument is accepted, people across Pakistan whose cases are pending should also take to the streets," the counsel said.

He questioned whether there was a plan to attack Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, referring to the previous attack on the General Headquarters (GHQ), and asked how the country's system could function if such actions continued. The counsel described the proposed protest as "completely illegal", claiming previous demonstrations by the party had caused casualties and financial losses.

He said three Rangers personnel lost their lives during a previous protest and cited media reports putting the financial loss from the last demonstration at Rs240 million. The petition's counsel argued that the protests were aimed at exerting pressure on the government to secure relief in pending cases, stressing that the Constitution guaranteed judicial independence. "Can the government direct courts to suspend sentences in appeals if two million

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Briefs

US slaps curbs on Iran airlines

News Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States imposed sanctions Tuesday on "all remaining Iranian airlines" that have yet to face such penalties, as Washington pushes to step up economic pressure in its war with Tehran. The US Treasury Department said its latest action takes aim at "36 targets for supporting Iran's aviation sector, which the regime uses to move weapons, personnel, and illicit cargo." These include 27 Iranian airlines, alongside firms based in countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Malaysia and Kazakhstan. "Essentially, we're taking the entire aviation sector of the Iranian economy out of the market," a US Treasury official told reporters on condition of anonymity.

Petrol prices increased again

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), acting on the revised petroleum pricing mechanism issued by the Federal Government, has announced an increase in the ex-depot prices of key petroleum products effective from September 9, 2026. According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) on September 8, 2026, the cost of both High Speed Diesel (HSD) and Motor Spirit (MS) has gone up. OGRA announces increase in petrol and diesel prices effective September 9.

Price Breakdown:

High Speed Diesel (HSD): The price of HSD has been increased by Rs. 4.18 per liter. The existing price of Rs. 381.77 will rise to a revised price of Rs. 385.95 per liter.

Motor Spirit (MS): The price of petrol (MS) has seen a steeper increase of Rs. 5.58 per liter.

Russia backs Iran's inclusion in Makkah defence agreement

FM Lavrov says Russia proposed Gulf security concept involving Arab countries and Iran over two decades ago

News Desk

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has called for Iran to be included in a regional security framework for the Gulf, saying its participation would be an important step towards regional stability, according to Turkish news agency Anadolu. Lavrov's remarks came as he discussed the Makkah Joint Defence Pact signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye on August 7 as a possible framework for broader regional security cooperation.

The trilateral agreement provides for collective security and defence cooperation among the three countries, with the Strategic Political and Defence Committee established under the pact holding its inaugural meeting in Istanbul on August 31. The pact was signed amid heightened tensions in the Middle East following the conflict that began on February 28, when the United States and Israel launched

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Saudi FM blasts Houthis for prioritising 'narrow interests'

DNA

RIYAD: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud has called Yemen's Houthi rebels "selfish" for putting their own interests above the welfare of the country's people, according to Al Jazeera. "The Houthis choose to prioritise their narrow interests over the interests of Yemen and resort to violence," he says at a press conference in Moscow alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. "The kingdom will not hesitate to protect its interests and fulfil its duties in a manner

Continued on Page 06

Israel shuts British consulate

News Desk

LONDON/TEL AVIV: Britain on Tuesday announced a trade ban on goods made in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank in coordination with France and Canada, the latest sanctions to target Israel as it faces growing diplomatic isolation. British Foreign Minister Ed Miliband said Britain could no longer simply "call out" injustice and suffering, but told the House of Commons that the country now had to "act" to oppose the expansion of settlements.

Another news on Back Page

"Today we refuse to be bystanders to further suffering and to the destruction of the two-state solution," Miliband said, referring to Britain's long-held support for the two-state idea, which Israel opposes. The US, through its ambassador to Israel, has already criticized Britain's new sanctions, while two Israeli ministers

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Karachi Varsity professor subjected to 'severe torture'

Three hotel employees arrested over assault on KU professor, say police

Nazir Siyal

KARACHI: A University of Karachi professor was allegedly subjected to severe torture after a double-cabin vehicle hit the online taxi he was travelling in near the city's Safoora Chowrangi, police said on Tuesday. Arif Saqi, who is the KU Department of Islamic Learning's chairperson, said: "I was travelling to the University of Karachi in an online taxi when a double-cabin [vehicle] hit it." Giving details of the incident, the senior professor said the double-cabin vehicle was coming out of a parking area when guards signalled the taxi to stop. The vehicle then reversed and hit the taxi, causing damage to it, Saqi added. The professor said that he asked the people in the vehicle to compensate the driver for the damage. Saqi said the hotel owner's son then got out of the vehicle and fired two shots. "The hotel owner's son hit me with pistol butts and carried out aerial firing,"

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Much ado about new provinces

Analysis

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

THE debate surrounding the creation of new provinces in Pakistan has once again taken center stage. It is a debate that often appears wayward, lacking coherence and direction, yet it is rooted in a genuine need for administrative restructuring. The question is not whether Pakistan needs new provinces, it certainly does, but whether the way this debate is being conducted will lead to meaningful reform or simply another exercise in political maneuvering.

Punjab, by sheer size and population, has long created a political imbalance in the federation. Its dominance in the National Assembly, bureaucracy, and even the military has often left other provinces feeling marginalized. The division of Punjab is not only logical but necessary. Smaller administrative units would allow for better governance, more equitable distribution of resources, and greater representation for diverse communities. In fact, all provinces require division into smaller, more manageable units. Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa each have their own internal complexities that could be better addressed through smaller provinces.

At its core, however, the push for new provinces is not merely about administrative efficiency. It is deeply political. The establishment, it seems, seeks to dismantle the entrenched two-family rule that has dominated Pakistan's politics for decades. The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), led by the Bhuttos and Sharifs respectively, have alternated in power, often leaving behind a legacy of misrule, corruption, and poor governance.

Every time these families returned to office, promises of reform were quickly replaced by self-interest and patronage politics. Their governance has been marked by corruption, nepotism, and incompetence. The children of these dynasties have shown little capability to lead effectively, and the parties themselves have reached a point of stagnation. The establishment believes that by creating new political units, it can open space for fresh leadership and new political actors, thereby breaking the cycle of dynastic politics.

Interestingly, history shows that whenever military dictators ruled, governance indicators often appeared better at least in terms of administrative efficiency and economic management. Roads were built, institutions functioned, and the economy often grew at a faster pace. This does not mean dictatorship should be preferred over democracy. Rather, it highlights the failure of democratic leaders to learn from their mistakes. Democracy, in Pakistan, has been reduced to a game of personalities rather than institutions.

The tragedy is that democratic leaders have failed to strengthen institutions. They have focused instead on consolidating personal power. The result is a democracy that exists in form but not in substance. For democracy to succeed, leaders must learn from past mistakes, reform institutions, and prioritize national interest over personal gain.

Yet, the real issue is not the number of provinces. The real issue is the mindset, attitude, and practices of those who govern. If the same entrenched families are allowed to dominate the new provinces, then the exercise will be futile. They will ensure their relatives and loyalists capture power in these new units, perpetuating the same cycle of corruption and inefficiency.

What Pakistan truly needs is systemic reform. An all-inclusive government of technocrats, drawn from the available talent pool, could help reset the system. Reforms in the Election Commission, police, and bureaucracy must precede any move toward new provinces. Without institutional reform, new provinces will simply replicate old failures.

As for political consensus, it will eventually come. PPP and PML-N have little choice but to agree to proposals for new provinces. Their resistance is not rooted in concern for the people of Pakistan but in their own survival. They seek concessions and guarantees for their future relevance. But the tide of change is against them, it seems.

The prevailing situation favors Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which has regained relevance despite setbacks. PTI still enjoys significant popularity and cannot be sidelined indefinitely. How PTI is dealt with in the future will determine the trajectory of Pakistan's stability. If excluded unfairly, instability will persist. If included constructively, PTI could play a role in reshaping the political landscape.

The creation of new provinces, therefore, should not be seen as an end in itself. It is a means to an end—the end being a more representative, efficient, and corruption-free political order. But unless Pakistan changes the way it practices politics, new provinces will merely be cosmetic.

The establishment's, or for that matter, a common desire to end dynastic politics is understandable. For decades, two families have monopolized power without delivering meaningful progress. Pakistan has seen similar debates before. The demand for a separate Hazara province in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the calls for a Bahawalpur province in Punjab, and the push for administrative restructuring in Sindh all highlight the complexities of provincial politics. These movements were driven by genuine grievances, lack of representation, neglect of development, and cultural identity. Yet, they were often hijacked by political elites for their own gain.

The lesson is clear: new provinces must be created with genuine intent to improve governance, not as tools for political manipulation. Otherwise, they will become another layer of bureaucracy without delivering real change. The real challenge is to change mindsets, attitudes, and practices. Only then can Pakistan move toward a future where democracy is not a game of families, but a system of institutions serving the people. The establishment may believe that new provinces will end dynastic politics, but unless institutions are reformed and accountability is enforced, the same families will continue to dominate.

Pakistan needs new provinces, yes. But more importantly, it needs new politics.

Bugti for strengthening of education sector

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, in his message on World Literacy Day, said that literacy was not merely the ability to read and write but the foundation of a brighter future for children, social progress, and a prosperous society. He highlighted that the Government of Balochistan has prioritized education, taking practical steps to improve the system and revive schools across the province. Sarfraz Bugti noted that over the past two years, more than 3,800 inactive schools have been reactivated and 768,000 out-of-school children have been brought back into the education system. He added that under the Balochistan Education Foundation, more than 2,000 new schools have been established, while projects for an additional 1,800 schools and construction of 3,000 classrooms in existing institutions were underway.
The Chief Minister emphasized that education was not just a sector but the fundamental means of building the province's future.
He reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring that no child in Balochistan was deprived of quality education and that the younger generation was empowered to contribute to a prosperous and capable society.–APP

Customs destroys seized contraband in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Customs authorities here on Tuesday destroyed drugs, substandard and hazardous goods worth Rs375 million seized in various operations and stored at the State Warehouse Ratta Kalachi. Additional Collector Customs Enforcement Peshawar Amanat Khan was the chief guest at the destruction ceremony. Deputy Collector Sajid Khan of the Anti-Smuggling Division, Dera Ismail Khan, and officials of other relevant departments were also present.
According to customs officials, 77 lots of seized goods from the customs state warehouses in D.I. Khan and Kohat were destroyed. The items included substandard, expired, unfit-for-human-consumption and banned products. The destroyed goods included 12,872kg of betel nuts valued at Rs15 million, 66,952 sleeves of cigarettes worth Rs300 million, and 6,250kg of Chinese salt (Ajinomoto) valued at Rs10 million. Miscellaneous items, including Indian medicines, gutka and naswar, were valued at around Rs50 million.
The officials said the destruction was carried out in accordance with the prescribed procedure under complete transparency and supervision. They said the measure was aimed at ensuring that the seized and hazardous goods did not find their way back into the market for sale or consumption._APP

Court Notice

MA YASEEN GUARDI AN JUDGE RAWALPINDI Petition U/S 25 of Guardian and Ward Act 1890 Sayyar Khokhar Versus Aneesa Notice to Aneesa R/O House No. 4364/A, Darya Abad, Gawal Mandi, Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 15-09-2026 at 8 am avoid ex-parte proceeding.

Ahsan for climate-resilience audit, early preparations for monsoon

He stressed that enforcement should be supported by a carefully designed transition across the plastic supply chain, from imports and manufacturing to retail use and waste management, besides promoting affordable biodegradable alternatives to protect both the environment and livelihoods

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Sep 08 (APP):Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) and other relevant departments to immediately commence preparations for Monsoon 2027.He also stressed that effective flood-prevention measures required eight to ten months of technical assessment, planning, approval, financing and execution. Chairing a meeting of the Prime Minister's Emergency Response Committee on Monsoon Preparedness 2026, the minister ordered a comprehensive district-wise audit of areas affected by floods in 2022, 2025 and the current monsoon season, along with an assessment of outstanding rehabilitation needs and vulnerable infrastructure. The meeting was attended by representatives of the NDMA, PDMAs, WAPDA, federal and provincial departments, district administrations and other relevant institutions.
Ahsan Iqbal appreciated the coordination among federal, provincial and district authorities, saying the whole-of-government approach had helped minimise the impact of seasonal abnormalities, including heavy rainfall, urban flooding, heatwaves and drought-like conditions. "Last-minute emergency interventions cost more and deliver less. We must replace reactive measures with proactive planning, climate-resilient infrastructure and clearly assigned institutional responsibility," he stressed. The minister said many bridges, culverts, drains and flood-disposal structures had been designed decades ago and were no longer adequate to cope with challenges intensified by climate change. He noted that undersized bridges and culverts obstructed water discharge in several areas, while drainage systems designed for much smaller flows now overflowed, inundating entire settlements.
The district-wise audit, to be jointly conducted by PDMAs, irrigation departments, communication and works departments, district administrations and other federal agencies, would identify obstructions and encroachments in floodplains and protective infrastructure. Ahsan Iqbal directed that technically viable and time-sensitive flood-protection schemes identified through the exercise be processed through a Green Channel for expedited approval and funding. He also directed provincial governments to assess the status of post-flood recovery and prepare roadmaps covering preventive interventions required before the next monsoon as well as rehabilitation of outstanding damage to enable affected communities to return to normal life. The initial audit would be completed within one month, followed by time-bound action plans for the provinces and federal agencies, with implementation to be monitored through quarterly reviews. The committee also discussed plastic waste as a major contributor to urban flooding. The minister called for a nationwide awareness and behaviour-change campaign, coupled with effective enforcement of restrictions on polythene bags. He stressed that enforcement should be supported by a carefully designed transition across the plastic supply chain, from imports and manufacturing to retail use and waste management, besides promoting affordable biodegradable alternatives to protect both the environment and livelihoods. "By throwing plastic into drains, people are mercilessly clogging the arteries of our cities," he remarked. The committee was informed that Monsoon 2026 had entered its withdrawal phase and no significant monsoon system was presently expected to affect Pakistan. Light rainfall could occur in northern areas due to western disturbances, while Sindh, Balochistan and southern Punjab were likely to remain dry. Rainfall deficits exceeding 60 per cent in parts of Sindh and Balochistan had created serious water stress, while above-normal temperatures were expected to persist. During October and November, northern Pakistan could receive normal to above-normal rainfall under the influence of western disturbances, potentially improving air quality. Sindh and much of Balochistan were expected to remain comparatively dry, while temperatures could remain above normal across the country. River flows were reported as normal, with no riverine flooding. The committee reviewed incidents in Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Balochistan, including landslides, road blockages, house collapses and localised flooding. The cumulative monsoon toll reported to the meeting stood at 181 deaths and 515 injuries, while approximately 1,740 houses or structures had been damaged.

Senate digitization to further enhance transparency

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday welcomed the launch of the Senate Mobile App, saying digital transformation would make the institution more efficient, transparent and responsive. Addressing the launching ceremony of the Senate Mobile Application, she said the government's digital transformation agenda had three major aspects: digital economy, digital society and digital governance. She said that under digital governance, the digital transformation of all government and public-sector institutions was a core agenda.
Shaza Fatima said the Digital Nation Pakistan Act was passed by the Senate and National Assembly last year, under which the Pakistan Digital Authority was formed. She said digital transformation was no longer limited to the IT sector but had become a cross-sectoral element. The minister said technological transformation was a paradigm shift affecting everyday life, health, education, finance and national security, with systems such as EdTech, GovTech and FinTech emerging rapidly. She said the Senate's participation in the digital transformation process and bringing governance to technology would not only make the institution more efficient but also improve transparency and efficacy and empower senators. Shaza Fatima said the initiative was not merely about launching a mobile application but represented a wider process of digitization. Recalling the parliamentary system in 2013, she said Parliament was completely paper-based when she joined it. She said multiple reforms were later introduced in the National Assembly. The minister recalled that parliamentarians previously had to visit a small room on the last Friday of a session to submit questions, resulting in a rush and a non-transparent system. She said the process was later automated, with questions handled through ballots, emails and first-come, first-served timestamps. "Today, from anywhere in the world, you can even submit your questions, access your agenda, and participate," she said, describing it as a massive transformation. She said transparency had improved and expressed hope that efficiency would also continue to improve. Shaza Fatima said around 68 per cent of the world's parliaments had digital transformation strategies and expressed satisfaction that Pakistan was also moving rapidly in this direction. The minister said the government wanted to develop a complete legislative stack by digitizing parliamentary data, including legislation, laws, committees and press releases. She said the government was also working with the Supreme Court to digitize its decisions taken on various occasions. She said such a system would allow parliamentarians to access relevant information at the click of a button when legislating or conducting research. Shaza Fatima said the Pakistan Digital Authority, along with Parliament and the courts, could help establish a complete legislative stack to promote innovation and make policymaking better, more efficient and informed.–DNA

SIFC engages Japanese Sumitomo corporation for investment

The engagement with Sumitomo Corporation underscores growing international interest in Pakistan's resource potential and SIFC's role as a central platform for facilitating investment

ISLAMABAD: The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has engaged Sumitomo Corporation, Japan, to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's high-potential mining and minerals sector, including emerging projects with significant investment prospects.
Sumitomo Corporation is a leading Japanese general trading and investment conglomerate headquartered in Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan The engagement reflects SIFC's continued efforts to connect leading international investors with Pakistan's strategic economic sectors and facilitate their entry into commercially viable projects, said press release issued here.
Through a coordinated investment facilitation mechanism, SIFC is providing prospective investors with greater clarity on opportunities, relevant projects and the enabling environment. Pakistan's mining and minerals landscape offers substantial potential for exploration, development, value addition and downstream industrial activity. SIFC is actively facilitating international engagement to unlock this potential and promote greater participation of global investors in the sector. With strengthened investment facilitation, dedicated security arrangements and an emphasis on policy continuity, SIFC is working to provide a more predictable and investor-friendly environment for international businesses. The engagement with Sumitomo Corporation underscores growing international interest in Pakistan's resource potential and SIFC's role as a central platform for facilitating investment.–DNA

Call for collective effort to improve literacy rate

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said Pakistan's low literacy rate is a serious national problem that requires a joint effort from the government, educational institutions, civil society and all sections of society. Speaking at a ceremony held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) to mark International Literacy Day, he said that despite decades of efforts to promote education in rural and underdeveloped areas, the desired results have not been achieved, so new and workable approaches are now needed instead of traditional methods. The minister suggested that the country's extensive network of mosques could be used effectively to promote literacy — proposing that, with cooperation from local clerics, communities and relevant institutions, mosques could serve as short-duration learning centers before noon, giving large numbers of children, young people and illiterate adults access to basic education. During the event, a mobile app titled "Har Shakhs Aik Fard Ko Parhayen" ("Let Everyone Teach One Person") was launched to strengthen the national literacy campaign and encourage students and other segments of society to teach at least one illiterate person. National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Chairman Sadiq Iftikhar called for coordinated, result-oriented measures to boost literacy nationwide, noting that NCHD is working at the community level with a focus on areas with limited educational facilities. NCHD Director General Ali Asghar said involving local communities as active participants is essential, adding that successful literacy programs are those designed around local needs, available resources and community involvement. Allama Iqbal Open University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood said that with genuine commitment, the light of education can reach every individual even with limited resources, and that the university continues to serve people who cannot access traditional institutions due to geographic, economic or other constraints. – APP

Mobile veterinary clinics to bring livestock healthcare to farmers in KP

He said around 25 vehicles had already been arranged, while procurement of additional vehicles was in progress to launch services in both settled and merged districts

PESHAWAR: The Livestock and Dairy Development Department has launched a programme to establish mobile veterinary clinics across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to provide livestock healthcare and treatment facilities at farmers' doorsteps. "The scheme, titled 'Ehsaas Be-Zuba'n Sehat Gaari,' has been approved to provide free treatment, medicines, diagnostic services and vaccination to animals in different areas of both settled and merged districts of the province," said Dr. Kamran, Senior Veterinary Officer. Talking to APP, Dr. Kamran said the scheme had been included in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the current fiscal year, with an estimated cost of Rs. 485 million for settled districts and Rs. 469 million for the merged districts. Under the programme, 50 mobile veterinary clinics would be introduced, including 25 for settled districts and 25 for merged districts. He said the mobile clinics would be equipped with veterinary doctors, diagnostic laboratories, ultrasound machines, surgical equipment, medicines, vaccines and cold-chain facilities. The vehicles would also be fitted with tracking devices and linked with the Livestock Management Information System (LMIS) to monitor their movement and service delivery. Dr. Kamran said the project had been launched under the KP Good Governance Plan, with every tehsil in the settled districts planned to receive mobile veterinary services to ensure maximum coverage across the province. The 'Ehsaas Be-Zuba'n Sehat Gaari' would take veterinary healthcare directly to livestock farmers, particularly those living in remote and underserved areas where access to professional veterinary services remained a longstanding challenge, he added. He said LED screens and sound systems would also be installed in the vehicles to run livestock-related awareness videos and conduct farmer education sessions during field visits. – APP

Daily Islamabad POST
METROLITE
Wednesday, September 09, 2026

National Days and Armed Forces Days

SEPTEMBER

Sept01/Libya Revolution Day
Sept01/Tanzania Defence day
Sept01/Uzbekistan Independence Day
Sept07/Brazil Independence Day
Sept09/DPR Korea National Day
Sept09/Tajikistan Independence Day
Sept16/Malaysia Armed Forces Day
Sept16/Mexico National Day
Sept16/Papua New Guinea Independence Day
Sept18/Chile National Day
Sept21/Malta Independence Day
Sept23/Saudi Arabia National Day

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

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Emergency Ambulance.1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
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DHQ..................5556311-4
RGH...................9290301-7
Holy Family.........9290322-7
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Shifa International 4603666

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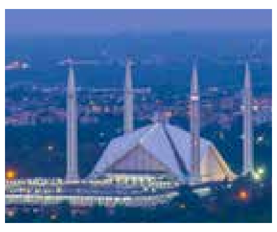
Met Office.........9250360-6
RDA.......................5555864
TMA.....................5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation..........9209224
Potohar Town.........9209224
Rawal Town...........5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad......0321-5744480

ICCI hosts ASEAN Day celebration

Envoys call for greater trade and investment cooperation

ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said the most enduring partnerships are built on trust and described ASEAN as a powerful bridge between people, economies and nations. He said ASEAN's remarkable journey demonstrates that countries with different histories, cultures and levels of development can transform diversity into cooperation and shared prosperity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Tuesday celebrated ASEAN Day with a high-level diplomatic and business gathering, calling for a stronger, more structured and result-oriented economic partnership between Pakistan and ASEAN. The ceremony was attended by Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez, Ambassador of Philippines and Chair of the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad; Colonel (R) Pengiran Haji Kamal Bashah, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam; Mr. Pham Anh Tuan, Ambassador of Vietnam; Mr. Wunna Han, Ambassador of Myanmar; Mr. Rongvudhi Virabutr, Ambassador of Thailand; Mr. Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, Ambassador Indonesia; Mr. Mohamad Alif Syafiq Bin Mohd Faudzi, Deputy Chief of Mission of Malaysia, along with senior ICCI office-bearers, members of the diplomatic corps and business leaders.

Philippine Ambassador and ASEAN Committee Chair Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez thanked ICCI for hosting the ASEAN Day celebration and said ASEAN-Pakistan friendship was no longer simply a relationship between governments but was increasingly a relationship between businesses, institutions, communities and people. Referring to the Philippines' 2026 ASEAN chairmanship theme, "Navigating Our Future Together," he said the rapidly changing global economy, technological transformation, restructuring of supply chains and climate challenges made cooperation more important than ever. He urged Pakistani and ASEAN chambers, companies and entrepreneurs to work by saying that governments and embassies could open doors, while chambers such as ICCI could bring the right people together, but businesses must convert opportunities into partnerships.

In his welcome address ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said the most enduring partnerships are built on trust and described ASEAN as a powerful bridge between people, economies and nations. He said ASEAN's remarkable journey demonstrates that countries with different histories, cultures and levels of development can transform diversity into cooperation and shared prosperity. He stressed that the next chapter of Pakistan-ASEAN relations should increasingly be written in the language of trade, investment, technology, entrepreneurship and business-to-business partnerships.

FGP, NUST partner for AI collaboration, youth empowerment

ISLAMABAD: Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) and the National Centre of Artificial Intelligence (NCAI) at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) have expressed a strong interest in exploring collaboration to promote responsible artificial intelligence (AI), digital innovation, research, skills development and inclusive economic opportunities, particularly for Pakistan's youth. This was discussed during a meeting held at NCAI-NUST between Prof. Dr. Yasar Ayaz, Chairman and Central Director of NCAI, and an FGP delegation comprising Muhammad Anwar, Chief Executive Officer, and Shafqat Aziz, Strategic Policy Advisor. Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Anwar said that artificial intelligence was rapidly reshaping economies, industries and labour markets, creating new opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship and employment. He emphasized the need for Pakistan to prepare its young population for the changing world of work by strengthening digital skills, encouraging innovation and building stronger linkages among research institutions, academia, industry and development organizations. He added that FGP was keen to promote informed dialogue and collaborative initiatives that translate technological advancements into inclusive economic opportunities and sustainable development. Prof. Dr. Yasar Ayaz highlighted the growing importance of artificial intelligence research and innovation in strengthening Pakistan's technological and economic competitiveness. He emphasized the need to invest in indigenous research, human capital and practical AI applications across key sectors, while creating opportunities for young researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs to contribute to the emerging digital economy. He also stressed the importance of stronger collaboration among research institutions, academia, industry, government and development organizations to ensure that AI-driven innovation effectively responds to Pakistan's national development priorities. Shafqat Aziz shared FGP's perspective on the need to broaden public understanding and policy discourse around artificial intelligence and the economic and social transformation associated with emerging technologies. He also highlighted the potential of AI-based solutions to address pressing development challenges, including environmental protection and climate change.—APP

VEON, JazzWorld vow to Pakistan's digital growth

ISLAMABAD: A VEON and JazzWorld leadership delegation, led by Kaan Terzioglu, CEO of VEON Group, and Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of JazzWorld, Tuesday with Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, Chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), to discuss Pakistan's digital growth, continued telecom investment, quality of service, and a conducive regulatory environment. The delegation also included Kazim Mujtaba, President, Jazz GSM; Zaheer Mehdi, Group Chief Corporate & Regulatory Affairs; and Mudassar Hussain, Head of Public Policy and Regulatory Affairs. The delegation appreciated the PTA's role in supporting the country's digital development and welcomed the progress made through the recent spectrum award and 5G licensing process. The additional spectrum has enabled JazzWorld to accelerate its 4G and 5G network expansion, with the company having crossed 1,000 live 5G sites and targeting more than 2,500 sites by the end of 2026. "Pakistan remains a strategic growth market for VEON, and JazzWorld is committed to investing in its digital future. The progress of the country's 5G journey will require continued investment and policies that support a healthy and sustainable telecom sector," said Kaan Terzioglu. Aamir Ibrahim said, "Our focus is on translating our investments in 4G and 5G into better quality of service and greater digital inclusion. Sustaining this progress will require continued investment and collaboration across the industry and regulatory ecosystem to ensure digital services remain accessible to more Pakistanis.—DNA

DIG vows best treatment, legal action over crash

ISLAMABAD: Dupty inspector General DIG Traffic/DG Safe City Muhammad Haroon Joya on Tuesday visited ITP officer ASI Mahmood, who was seriously injured after being hit by a vehicle while performing duty on Srinagar Highway, and assured that all available resources would be used for his treatment. An official told that the DIG Haroon inquired after the injured officer and said senior police officers were continuously present with him to oversee his care. He said the injured officer would be provided the best possible medical treatment under the supervision of senior doctors. DIG Haroon said strict legal action would be taken against the vehicle involved in violating traffic laws and subsequently hitting the police officer. —APP

Senate App step towards modernising Parliament: Tariq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Tuesday said the launch of the Senate mobile application marked another meaningful step towards modernising the way Parliament worked and engaged with its members and citizens. Addressing the launching ceremony, the minister said the initiative represented more than the adoption of a new digital tool, reflecting a broader institutional commitment to making Parliament more accessible, efficient and responsive. He said a modern Parliament must not only make good laws but also have modern systems through which parliamentary work could be carried out, organised, recorded and communicated. Dr Tariq Fazal said the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs had a key role in strengthening institutional links between Parliament and the government, facilitating parliamentary business and promoting coordination and effective governance. He said digital tools could make this relationship faster, more organised and responsive. "Our larger objective must be to build an integrated parliamentary ecosystem in which information moves securely and efficiently, and parliamentary reports are accessible," he added. The minister said members could engage with legislative business in real time through digital tools, while citizens could better understand the work being done in their name. He said the initiative also provided an opportunity to make Parliament more citizen-centred. "The Parliament of the future should communicate with citizens in the language and the medium they use every day," he said. At the same time, Dr Tariq Fazal stressed that digital transformation must not compromise parliamentary privilege, constitutional procedures, institutional independence, or the security and integrity of Parliament. "Technology must serve Parliament. Parliament must remain guided by the Constitution," he remarked. The minister congratulated Acting President Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani for providing leadership for the important transformation and commended the Senate for embracing a culture of innovation. He said the launch was not merely about introducing an application but about strengthening the infrastructure of a more efficient Parliament. Dr Tariq Fazal expressed hope that the initiative would become the beginning of a wider journey towards a smarter.—APP

KSA extends Rs 150m to modernise IIUI

ISLAMABAD: In a significant gesture coinciding with the celebrations of Saudi National Day, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has extended a Rs.150 million developmental grant to the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) for the modernisation of its academic infrastructure. The grant marks a major step in the University's ongoing efforts, spearheaded by the President of IIUI, to improve academic and student facilities and transform IIUI into a modern, technology-enabled institution equipped to meet contemporary teaching, learning and research requirements, said a press release on Tuesday. Under the first phase of the initiative, the Saudi grant will support the upgrading of classrooms, computer laboratories, information technology systems and allied academic facilities across the University. The intervention addresses a longstanding need for modern teaching spaces and technological infrastructure capable of supporting evolving pedagogical and research demands. A key component of the project is the establishment of a dedicated smart classroom in each faculty, equipped with an interactive smart board, digital podium and dedicated Wi-Fi connectivity, with capacity for up to 30 students. Five computer laboratories will also be established, providing 55 workstations and a total of 220 computer systems, including desktops, VDI systems and laptops. The facilities will be complemented by CCTV systems, furniture, curtains and other essential equipment and interior improvements. The grant is expected to substantially strengthen the teaching and learning environment at IIUI by giving students and faculty greater access to modern digital resources, improved laboratories and more effective technology-supported classrooms. The improvements are also expected to enhance the University's academic profile and its attractiveness to prospective students. The initiative forms part of a broader improvement drive personally pursued by the Acting Rector/President of IIUI, Prof. Dr Ahmed Saad Alahmed, over the past year, with particular emphasis on student welfare and the quality of facilities available to the University community. Through regular visits to hostels and academic areas and direct engagement with students, the President has sought a firsthand understanding of the challenges confronting them and prioritised practical interventions to address longstanding infrastructure needs. While the phased renovation of student hostels is already underway, the upgradation of classrooms and computer laboratories marks another significant step in this direction, reflecting the President's sustained focus on instituting meaningful and constructive changes for the benefit of students. The securing of the Rs. 150 million grant from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represents a major advancement in these efforts and reflects the President's continued engagement, alongside his team, in mobilising support for the University's development. The University expressed its profound gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its generous and continued support to IIUI. It described the grant as another manifestation of the Kingdom's longstanding commitment to the University and a reflection of the enduring fraternal relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. IIUI said the initiative would help equip its students with learning environments aligned with contemporary global educational trends while strengthening the University's capacity to deliver quality higher education in an increasingly technology-driven and interconnected world.—DNA

Call for expediting WWEF operationalisation

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Housing and Works has been asked to expedite the operationalisation of the Working Women Endowment Fund (WWEF), while the government is also advancing initiatives to expand day-care facilities and make workplaces more supportive for women. According to a document on the implementation of decisions made by the Special Committee of Parliament on Gender Mainstreaming, the proposed endowment fund, which will have a seed fund of Rs2 billion, is intended to reimburse a portion of the rental expenditure incurred by working women from different parts of the country who hire accommodation in Islamabad. The ministry has also been asked to ensure the disbursement of a Rs500 million non-lapsable grant through national philanthropic organisations, non-governmental and community-based organisations, and public-sector organisations. The Ministry of Housing and Works is the lead agency for implementing the relevant prime ministerial directives under the Gender Women Empowerment Package 2024. The ministries of Finance, Planning and Human Rights have also been assigned responsibilities. Alongside housing assistance, the government is pursuing plans to strengthen childcare support for working women. A national-level Day Care Fund has been proposed to support working women and make their workplaces more women-friendly. The Ministry of Human Rights is the lead agency for the initiative, supported by the ministries of Finance and Planning and the National Commission on the Status of Women. The Departmental Development Working Party approved a project titled "Establishment of Day Care Centres in ICT, AJK, and GB" on April 7, 2025, at an original cost of Rs700 million. The project cost was subsequently revised to Rs804.743 million for the PSDP 2026-27. The project has also been made the main component of an umbrella PC-I titled "Human Rights & Women Development Initiatives." The umbrella PC-I is currently at the pre-Central Development Working Party stage. The document, available with Wealth Pakistan, further said the Cabinet Division has facilitated the establishment of day-care centres in public-sector entities to support working women. A flagship day-care centre has been established in the Pakistan Secretariat as a model facility to provide childcare services to employees in compliance with the prime minister's directive. The directive calls for establishing day-care centres across all public-sector entities. The Cabinet Division is the lead agency for its implementation, assisted by the Establishment Division and the Ministry of Human Rights.—APP

Briefs

No one above law, no misuse of uniform: Waseem

ISLAMABAD: Newly appointed Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Islamabad Ali Waseem assumed charge of his office and set law enforcement, protection of citizens and improved service delivery as his key priorities, warning that misuse of uniform or authority and negligence in duty would not be tolerated An official told media on Tuesday that DIG Waseem chaired an introductory meeting soon after assuming charge, attended by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Qazi Ali Raza, SSP Investigation Suleman Zafar, SSP Security and Administration Muhammad Shehryar Khan, zonal SPs, circle SDPOs and SHOs. The DIG Waseem met the officers individually and discussed professional and policing matters with them. He said upholding the law, protecting citizens' lives and property and ensuring quality service delivery would remain top priorities. "No one is above the law," DIG Waseem said, directing police officers to perform their duties responsibly and effectively. He made it clear that misuse of uniform or authority would not be acceptable under any circumstances, adding that merit, performance and professional competence would be given priority. The DIG Waseem said negligence in duty or violation of law would not be tolerated. Officers showing outstanding performance would be encouraged, while those found negligent would face action without discrimination.

He directed officers to work as a team to maintain law and order and ensure the safety of citizens across the federal capital DIG Waseem also ordered effective action against crime and indiscriminate enforcement against lawbreakers. Ali Waseem has previously served in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan in different capacities.—APP

MoU to advance digital transformation, cybersecurity

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan and the National Information Technology Board (NITB) on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in cybersecurity, software development, digital services, information technology infrastructure and technical capacity-building. The MoU was signed at the Supreme Court by Registrar Suhail Muhammad Laghari on behalf of the Supreme Court and NITB Director General Faqirullah on behalf of NITB. The signing ceremony was witnessed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi and Supreme Court Judge Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb. Secretary Ministry of IT and Telecommunication Zarrar Hasham Khan, NITB Chief Executive Officer Faisal Iqbal Ratyal, Director General National Cyber Emergency Response Team (NCERT) Haider Abbass, NITB Director Saif ur Rehman, Assistant Director (E-Office) Azhar Mahmood Janjua, members of the Supreme Court's IT team and other senior officers also attended the ceremony.—APP

RAWALPINDI: Incharge Physiotherapy Dept Benazir Hospital Dr Rub Nawaz Dr Samavaya and Dr Suniyya cutting cake in connection with World Physiotherapy Day on Tuesday.

Pak marks 60th Literacy Day with focus on lifelong learning

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday marked the 60th anniversary of International Literacy Day (ILD), with the government and international partners reaffirming their commitment to expanding literacy, adult education and lifelong learning opportunities across the country The event was organized by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), under the auspices of the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad. The commemoration was held under the theme "Literacy for people, the planet and prosperity," providing a platform for stakeholders to review six decades of progress in literacy and discuss persistent challenges and priorities for strengthening literacy and non-formal education in Pakistan. Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui attended the event as Chief Guest, while Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal also participated as co-Chief Guest. The event brought together representatives of the federal and provincial governments, United Nations agencies, development partners, academia and education institutions to deliberate on the role of literacy in promoting inclusive and sustainable development. Speaking at the event, the federal education minister highlighted the government's priorities and ongoing reforms in the non-formal education sector, emphasizing the need to expand access to literacy and lifelong learning, particularly for adults and underserved communities. Prof. Ahsan Iqbal shared the government's perspective on literacy as an essential component of human development and linked improvements in education and skills with Pakistan's broader development priorities. Provincial ministers also highlighted initiatives being undertaken by their respective governments to improve literacy rates and strengthen non-formal education. The provincial representatives participated virtually in the session. UNESCO Representative in Pakistan and Head of Office Fuad Pashayev, United Nations Resident Coordinator a.i. and UNICEF Representative in Pakistan Pernille Ironside, JICA Pakistan Office Chief Representative Yusuke Shinozaki, and NCHD Director General Ali Asghar also addressed the gathering. The speakers underscored the importance of coordinated efforts among government institutions, development partners and other stakeholders to address literacy gaps and create sustainable learning opportunities for people of all ages. The commemoration also featured key highlights of ongoing education reforms and national priorities, with particular emphasis on adult literacy, non-formal education and lifelong learning. The International Literacy Day event at AIOU marked six decades of global efforts to promote literacy and served as an opportunity for Pakistan to reaffirm its commitment to ensuring that literacy and learning opportunities reach all segments of society. Moreover, minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar on Tuesday said that literacy was not merely the ability to read and write, rather it was the foundation of awareness, dignity, empowerment, equal opportunity and national development.In her message on International Literacy Day, she said that for Pakistan, literacy was not simply an educational target but a national imperative. An educated and skilled population is essential for building a stronger economy, an inclusive society and a prosperous Pakistan.—APP

PNCA organizes Mehfil-e-Milad for women

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) organized a Mehfil-e-Milad for women in connection with the sacred occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him) on Tuesday. The Mehfil was arranged to promote the tradition and culture of Naat Khawani, foster love and devotion for the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), and highlight the importance of following his Sunnah. Such gatherings reflect PNCA's continued commitment to preserving and promoting Pakistan's rich spiritual and cultural heritage. The sacred gathering commenced with Qirat. Renowned television anchor and Naat Khawan Professor Salma Khan hosted the Mehfil and enlightened the audience about the blessings and significance of reciting Darood-e-Pak, remembering the Holy Prophet (PBUH), and incorporating his teachings and Sunnah into our daily lives. Renowned Naat Khawans from the twin cities, including Mehmooda Qamar, Sabeen Younas, Rukhsana Sehar, Alina Noor, Neelum Shehzadi and Tasneem Akhtar, participated in the Mehfil and presented heartfelt Naats in praise of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Mehmooda Ghazia, a renowned poet, also presented her Naat, adding to the spiritual atmosphere of the gathering. The soulful renditions moved many in the audience, creating an atmosphere of deep devotion and reflection. Madam Iffat Khalid, Islamic Scholar, addressed the audience and highlighted the importance and blessings of reciting Darood-e-Pak, emphasizing its significance in the light of Islamic teachings. Farrah Naz Akbar, Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage and Culture Division, graced the occasion as the chief guest.—APP

Uraan Pak initiatives train 160,000 youth

ISLAMABAD :Uraan Pakistan-linked initiatives have trained around 160,000 youth under different programmes and enrolled about 114,300 out-of-school children as part of efforts to expand access to education and skills development According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, about 160,000 youth have been trained under different programmes through the Prime Minister Youth Skill Development Programme, which is aligned with the priority of promoting technical and vocational education and training. Progress has also been reported in expanding equitable access to education. Under the Enrolment, Retention and Progression of Out-of-School Children in Islamabad Capital Territory initiative, about 114,300 out-of-school children have been enrolled. The initiatives also include the establishment of Daanish Schools in ICT and lagging districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Sindh. According to the document, the academic session at the Daanish School in ICT has started, with 180 boys and 180 girls enrolled. Under the provision of basic educational or missing facilities in ICT educational institutions, 152 institutions are being renovated, while 411 new classrooms are being added to existing schools. In addition, two new colleges are being added in ICT under the Federal Directorate of Education. Early childhood education has also expanded, with 100 Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres established in existing educational institutions and about 5,500 children enrolled in these centres. Efforts to improve teaching quality are being advanced through the National Institute of Excellence in Teacher's Education. A Continuous Professional Development (CPD) centre has been established with 55 coaches, 12 RMs and one programme manager, along with support staff. The initiative has also registered 95% of primary and secondary schoolteachers on the digital platform. A three-level induction and in-service certification programme, verified by AKU, has been developed, while a training development studio has also been established. Technology is being incorporated into education delivery through the Rumi app, described in the document as an all-in-one innovative solution developed according to teachers' needs and class size. It provides real-time classroom observation and feedback in six languages. A Digital Hub-Connected Classroom YouTube channel has also been established. Under the Daanish Schools initiative, state-of-the-art Google labs, computer labs and science labs are to be established. The document further shows that a state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence for Autism Children is being established at H-8/4, Islamabad.—APP

No monsoon spell in sight, rising heat ahead

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said on Tuesday that no active monsoon system is currently affecting Pakistan and no significant rainfall is expected over the next couple of days The forecast was issued by the Emergency Response Committee (ERC), meeting at the NDMA headquarters in Islamabad on the Prime Minister's directions, reviewed the country's weather and hydrological situation, preparedness and response measures amid forecasts of rising temperatures across various parts of the country. The 18th meeting of the ERC was held at the National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC), NDMA headquarters, under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, who participated through video link. Chairman NDMA Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, representatives of provincial disaster management authorities (PDMAs), the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), and senior officials from relevant federal ministries and departments attended the meeting. The committee reviewed the prevailing weather situation, hydrological conditions, temperature trends, weather outlook and the overall preparedness of federal and provincial authorities. The NEOC presented a comprehensive situational briefing covering the latest weather forecasts, river flows, hydrological conditions and the anticipated weather pattern over the coming days. According to the NDMA briefing, Pakistan is currently not under the influence of an active monsoon system.—APP

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday in various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to an IESCO spokesperson, in Islamabad Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Taramri, Lehtrar Road, ISI, from 7 am to 11 am, G-9/4, FBR, G-9/2, feeders. In Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, RIC, Dk. Farman Ali, Tipu Road, Jahangir road, Rahimabad, Rehmatabad-1, PAF, Takbeer-1, Chaklala, from 7 am to 11 am, Chakri, feeders. In Rawalpindi City Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Benazir Bhutto Hospital, Sector-IV, APHS, Tehmasamabad, Dk. Hukam Dad, feeders Similarly, in Attock Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Katchery, Dar ul Islam Colony, Attock cantt, Dhoke Fateh, feeders. In GSO Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 09:00 am to 04:00 pm, 132kv AWC HMC Taxila and 132KV Sangjani-Burhan, from 08:00 am to 06:00 pm, 132KV Kahuta City- Palandri, 132KV New Wah-Bahtermore along with related earth switch, and surrounding areas. IESCO apologized to consumers for the temporary inconvenience and said electricity supply would be restored before the scheduled time if the maintenance work was completed earlier than expected.—APP

ISLAMABAD: Chairman United Business Group (UBG) S.M. Tanveer and prominent business leaders pose for a group photograph during a dinner hosted in his honour by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Member Central Core Committee, UBG, at his residence. The gathering was attended by leading business personalities from Islamabad, Rawalpindi and surrounding areas.The dinner was attended by Atif Ikram Sheikh, Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Sardar Tahir Mahmood, Zubair Ahmed Malik, Khalid Iqbal Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari, Abdul Rauf Alam, Sardar Ya Sir Ilyas, Khawaja Arif, Wahid Ayub, Waheeduddin Hassan Soroush, Hamza Soroush, Chaudhry Masood, Sheikh Aamir Waheed, Zahid Maqbool, Khalid Javed, Khurshid Barlas, Samina Fazil, Imtiaz Abbasi, Hammad Kazmi, Jawad Kazmi, Syed Mumtaz Ahad Mansehra, SM Irfan Munir Ijaz Abbasi, Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, Malik Shabbir Abdul Rehman, Karim Aziz Malik, Haji Iftikhar Abbottabad, Tariq Jadoon and Omar Hussain Malik, among other prominent personalities.

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Beyond the Four Provinces: History, Hopes and Hazards of Further Division

Muhamad Mohsin Iqbal

PAKISTAN'S debate on the formation of new provinces continues to surface with renewed vigour, driven by the practical difficulties of governing a nation whose population now exceeds two hundred and forty million within an administrative framework that has remained largely unchanged since 1970. At present the country comprises four provinces—Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan—alongside the Islamabad Capital Territory and the territories of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Calls for additional units, whether limited to South Punjab or Hazara or extending to schemes of twelve, fifteen or even thirty provinces, arise from administrative overload, regional disparities, population pressure and a widespread sense that distant provincial capitals cannot respond adequately to local needs.

Those who favour reorganisation contend that smaller provinces would shrink the administrative distance that now separates citizens from decision-makers. Capitals such as Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta lie far from many districts, impeding timely action in health, education, policing and disaster management. New units could adapt policies to regional circumstances, lessen the dominance of Punjab—which alone accounts for roughly half the national population—and grant under-represented areas a fuller voice in provincial assemblies, the Senate and the distribution of resources. Institutions and development funds, long concentrated in existing capitals, might spread more evenly, while cultural and linguistic identities, notably those of Seraiki and Hindko speakers, would receive formal recognition. Smaller governments, being easier to monitor, could weaken dynastic politics, encourage middle-class leadership and heighten official accountability. Proponents frequently cite India's expansion from a handful of units to twenty-eight states and Afghanistan's larger number of provinces, arguing that fixed large entities struggle when populations multiply several times over.

Opponents, however, emphasise the heavy fiscal and administrative burden. Every new province would necessitate a governor, chief minister, cabinet, assembly, high court, secretariat, housing, vehicles, security and pensions, expanding the political class and locking in higher recurring expenditure at a moment when Pakistan already contends with deficits, debt and disputed National Finance Commission awards. Division along ethnic or linguistic lines risks intensifying identity politics, generating boundary disputes and fostering fragmentation rather than national cohesion. Constitutionally, the creation or alteration of provinces demands a two-thirds majority in both houses of Parliament together with the consent of the affected provincial assembly under Article 239—an exacting requirement in a polarised political climate.

Experience suggests that new units would not automatically cure deeper ailments of weak institutions, elite capture and insufficient accountability; they might merely transplant the same patronage networks closer to the districts. The protracted difficulties that have attended the merger of the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa illustrate how restructuring can lag for years. More provinces would also complicate federal arrangements for resource sharing and Senate representation, while smaller entities might prove financially fragile and more dependent on the centre.

These arguments gain sharper relief when set against the historical evolution of Pakistan's provincial map. Upon independence in 1947 the western wing consisted of West Punjab, Sind, the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, supplemented by acceding princely states such as Bahawalpur, Khairpur, Kalat and others. Karachi was separated as a federal capital territory, and the Baloch states briefly formed a union. The One Unit scheme, announced in 1954 and implemented in October 1955, merged all western provinces and states into a single Province of West Pakistan in order to establish parity with East Pakistan and curb provincialism. Running parallel is the equally uneven history of local government, often advanced as a less costly alternative to provincial multiplication. Colonial-era panchayats and municipal bodies were inherited in attenuated form and received scant attention in the early years of independence. Ayub Khan's Basic Democracies system of 1959 established a hierarchical network of union, tehsil, district and divisional councils whose members served both as local administrators and as an electoral college, giving unprecedented formal weight to grassroots institutions while securing legitimacy for military rule.

After a decline under civilian government, Zia-ul-Haq revived elected local bodies through the 1979 ordinance, holding successive non-party elections. Musharraf's devolution plan of 2001 went further, creating a three-tier structure of union, tehsil and district councils headed by elected nazims, transferring substantial administrative and developmental powers and reserving seats for women and other groups. Each of these military-era experiments elevated local institutions, yet civilian administrations have more often delayed elections, dissolved councils or recentralised authority. The 18th Amendment of 2010 constitutionally required provinces, under Article 140-A, to establish elected local governments and devolve political, administrative and financial powers. Provincial laws followed, and elections were held in phases from 2013 onward, yet implementation has remained inconsistent, with frequent interruptions and incomplete fiscal autonomy. Many observers therefore maintain that consistent empowerment of genuine local governments would secure most of the advantages claimed for new provinces—proximity, responsiveness and accountability—without the fiscal burden or the risk of ethnic fragmentation. In the end the controversy mirrors genuine shortcomings of oversized administration, uneven development and distant governance. Smaller provinces, if fashioned primarily around administrative efficiency rather than pure ethnicity and underpinned by strong institutions and fiscal prudence, might ease certain pressures. It is highly likely that the political parties in Parliament and beyond will approve this proposed arrangement with consent, semi-consent, or a mix of both. Time will now determine the extent to which it is implemented. Yet the formidable costs, constitutional obstacles and dangers of further division lead a substantial body of opinion to favour first the thorough strengthening of local government. Any lasting reorganisation would require broad national consensus and meticulous design if it is not to aggravate the difficulties it seeks to resolve.

Do Not Turn Pakistan's Provinces Against Each Other

Qamar Bashir

Maryam Nawaz has every right to highlight improvements made under her administration. Punjab has invested in surveillance technology, policing, infrastructure and digitally enabled governance, and a chief minister naturally wants to demonstrate the effectiveness of those initiatives. But Punjab's achievements require no comparison that diminishes other provinces. The strongest demonstration of successful governance would be for Punjab to use its resources and experience to strengthen national coordination, share technology and intelligence, and help create security...

PUNJAB Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's statement that Punjab faces a greater security threat from adjoining Pakistani provinces than from neighbouring countries is far more consequential than an ordinary observation about law and order. By arguing that terrorism, organised crime and other threats enter Punjab through its inter-provincial boundaries, she has introduced a disturbing dimension into Pakistan's security discourse.

Pakistan's provinces are components of one federation, not independent territories confronting one another across hostile frontiers. Any suggestion that one province must view the others principally through the prism of security risks transforming an administrative challenge into a dangerous political and national question.

The implications become even more serious when her argument is followed to its logical conclusion. If Punjab is being portrayed as relatively peaceful, secure and progressive while terrorism, crime and instability are flowing towards it from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Sindh or other Pakistani territories, responsibility cannot simply end at those provincial boundaries. It raises questions about the provincial administrations, the federal government, the bureaucracy and the national security institutions responsible for maintaining order throughout Pakistan. In that sense, the statement inadvertently casts doubt on the performance of the entire governmental structure outside Punjab. That inference reaches directly to the federal government headed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz's uncle and a leader of the same political party. Islamabad possesses federal law-enforcement bodies, intelligence agencies and counterterrorism institutions, while national security remains inseparable from the responsibilities of the state. If neighbouring provinces have deteriorated to such an extent that they constitute a greater danger to Punjab than foreign countries, the federal government cannot escape the resulting question: why has it failed to prevent those territories from becoming conduits for terrorism, organised crime and instability?

The greater danger, however, lies not in the immediate controversy but in the precedent it can establish. If Punjab begins defining its internal problems by pointing towards neighbouring provinces, those provinces can employ exactly the same reasoning against Punjab.

Sindh can revive complaints about economic concentration and control over national decision-making. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can raise questions about resources, security policies and the enormous price it has paid for wars against terrorism. Balochistan can respond with grievances concerning natural resources, political representation, military operations and missing persons. Once provincial blame becomes politically legitimate, Pakistan possesses enough unresolved historical grievances to sustain that argument indefinitely. Punjab itself could then become the target of precisely the kind of collective attribution now being generated by this controversy. Critics elsewhere could begin identifying the provincial origins of military officers, senior bureaucrats, politicians or business interests and attributing institutional decisions to Punjab as a whole.

They could revisit disputes over wheat movement, agricultural commodities, water distribution, federal resources or economic policy and portray them as deliberate acts by one province against another. Such reasoning would be profoundly unfair, but that is exactly why political leaders must not legitimise the principle of collective provincial responsibility in the first place.

Pakistan cannot afford such a blame game. The Pakistan Army is a national institution and cannot be reduced to the provincial origins of individual officers or soldiers. Federal institutions belong equally to every Pakistani.

Likewise, terrorists operating in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa do not represent its people; criminal gangs in Sindh do not represent Sindhis; and militants operating in Balochistan do not speak for Baloch citizens. Once governments abandon these distinctions, individual criminality becomes provincial guilt, administrative disagreements acquire ethnic identities, and national institutions themselves become vulnerable to dangerous provincial interpretations.

There is also a basic question of governmental responsibility. If terrorism enters Punjab, the Punjab government has every right to strengthen checkpoints, improve intelligence, deploy technology and demand cooperation from neighbouring administrations.

Maryam Nawaz has every right to highlight improvements made under her administration. Punjab has invested in surveillance technology, policing, infrastructure and digitally enabled governance, and a chief minister naturally wants to demonstrate the effectiveness of those initiatives.

But Punjab's achievements require no comparison that diminishes other provinces. The strongest demonstration of successful governance would be for Punjab to use its resources and experience to strengthen national coordination, share technology and intelligence, and help create security systems capable of operating seamlessly across provincial boundaries. Pakistan was conceived as a federation whose constituent units possess different histories, languages, cultures, resources and political experiences but share a common national destiny.

Punjab's prosperity cannot ultimately be insulated from instability in Balochistan, terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or economic distress in Sindh. Karachi's economic strength benefits Lahore; Punjab's agricultural production feeds the country; Balochistan's resources and strategic geography serve national interests; and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's security protects Pakistan's western approaches. Treating these interdependencies as vulnerabilities rather than strengths misunderstands the very structure of the federation. Pakistan's history should make its leaders particularly cautious about rhetoric that accentuates provincial alienation. The country has already experienced the catastrophic consequences of allowing political grievances, unequal treatment and regional distrust to overwhelm a common national identity. The lesson of that history is not that provincial differences should be suppressed, but that they must be addressed through dignity, constitutional equality, equitable development and political accommodation. A federation becomes stronger when its constituent units believe that another province's progress adds to their own rather than occurring at their expense.

The appropriate response to Maryam Nawaz's statement, therefore, is not an equally provocative response from Sindh, Balochistan or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. That would merely accelerate the cycle this editorial warns against.

Political leaders across Pakistan should instead reaffirm that terrorists cannot be assigned a provincial character and that security cannot be achieved by shifting responsibility across Pakistan's internal boundaries. Militants, smugglers and organised criminals must be identified as individuals and networks, pursued wherever they operate and confronted through coordinated national institutions rather than converted into symbols of entire populations.

The real question is consequently not which province exports terrorism, crime or instability to another. The question is why Pakistan's collective administrative and security machinery allows these threats to survive, move, finance themselves and cross jurisdictions in the first place.

That question belongs equally to provincial governments, Islamabad, law-enforcement agencies and the national security establishment. Accountability should travel upward towards institutions entrusted with authority, not outward towards millions of citizens who happen to live on the other side of an administrative boundary. Maryam Nawaz's remarks should therefore become an opportunity to correct the direction of the debate rather than deepen it. Punjab's security is inseparable from peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stability in Balochistan, prosperity in Sindh and cohesion throughout Pakistan. No province can permanently protect itself from the difficulties of another because Pakistan's economy, security and political future are interconnected. Provincial governments may compete in performance, investment and service delivery, but they must never compete in assigning collective guilt. Pakistan has international borders that must be defended and provincial boundaries that must be administered. Confusing the political meaning of the two is dangerous. The country needs stronger intelligence sharing, better policing, equitable development, accountable government and deeper cooperation among its constituent units—not psychological walls between them. Every Pakistani province must be able to regard the progress of another as a national achievement and its suffering as a national responsibility. The moment Pakistan's provinces begin treating one another as threats, the terrorists and extremists who seek to fracture the country will have achieved something they could never accomplish on their own.

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Beyond Dwarka: The Enduring Legacy of Pakistan Navy

Fawad Hassan

Pakistan Navy has also developed a significant role in maritime diplomacy. The multinational AMAN exercises, professional exchanges and cooperation with regional and extra-regional navies have provided avenues for interoperability and dialogue in an increasingly contested Indian Ocean. Perhaps the clearest evidence of the Navy's transformation is the modernization of its fleet. The induction of Type 054A/P frigates, Babur-class MILGEM corvettes and Yarmook-class...

EVERY year, 8 September Navy Day offers Pakistan an opportunity not merely to revisit an important chapter of its military history, but to reflect on the evolution of a naval force whose responsibilities have expanded dramatically over the decades. From the audacity of Operation Dwarka in 1965 to today's technologically advanced surface, subsurface, aviation and maritime-security capabilities, Pakistan Navy's journey is one of adaptation, professionalism and an enduring commitment to safeguarding the country's maritime interests.

The origins of Navy Day are inseparable from the night of 7–8 September 1965, when a Pakistan Navy task group approached the Indian coast and carried out Operation Dwarka. Conducted by a relatively young and numerically smaller navy, the operation demonstrated initiative, surprise, coordinated planning and the ability to carry naval power close to an adversary's coastline. Dwarka's enduring significance lies not merely in the action itself, but in the principle it represented: at sea, professional competence, preparedness and intelligent employment of available strength can compensate for numerical disparity.

That spirit would again be demonstrated during the 1971 war. PNS/M Hangor's successful attack on INS Khukri became a landmark in submarine warfare the first sinking of a warship by a submarine since the Second World War. The episode remains central to Pakistan Navy's submarine tradition and its emphasis on exploiting the inherent advantages of the undersea domain.

Pakistan's maritime challenges today are vastly different from those of 1965. The country's economic lifelines run through the Arabian Sea, making the protection of ports, shipping routes, energy flows and sea lines of communication an essential component of national security.

Consequently, Pakistan Navy has evolved beyond a force designed primarily for conventional fleet engagements. Its contemporary responsibilities encompass maritime deterrence, protection of sea lines of communication, maritime-domain awareness, counter-piracy, counterterrorism, coastal security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, alongside its core war-fighting mission.

Pakistan Navy has also developed a significant role in maritime diplomacy. The multinational AMAN exercises, professional exchanges and cooperation with regional and extra-regional navies have provided avenues for interoperability and dialogue in an increasingly contested Indian Ocean.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of the Navy's transformation is the modernization of its fleet. The induction of Type 054A/P frigates, Babur-class MILGEM corvettes and Yarmook-class offshore patrol vessels has introduced modern sensors, weapons and multi-purpose capabilities. PNS Babur and PNS Hunain entered service in 2024, while PNS Khaibar, the second Babur-class corvette, was inducted in April 2026.

The transformation below the surface is equally consequential. In April 2026, Pakistan commissioned the first of its new Hangor-class submarines, PNS/M Hangor. The eight-submarine programme is particularly significant because four boats are to be constructed at Karachi Shipyard under a transfer-of-technology arrangement, strengthening both underwater capability and domestic shipbuilding expertise.

This localization is strategically important. A future-ready navy cannot remain indefinitely dependent upon importing complete platforms. The construction of MILGEM ships at Karachi Shipyard and plans for the Jinnah-class frigate, envisaged as Pakistan's first indigenously designed and built frigate-sized warship, point toward a gradual transition from acquisition to indigenous design, construction and technological ownership.

Similarly, Pakistan Navy of tomorrow will operate sophisticated ships and submarines unimaginable to those who sailed toward Dwarka six decades ago. But technology alone cannot create maritime power. It must be matched by trained sailors, capable commanders, resilient institutions and the ability to anticipate rather than merely react to change. Navy Day should therefore be both a remembrance and a commitment a remembrance of those who established Pakistan's naval traditions, and a commitment to build a force capable of meeting the challenges of an increasingly complex Indian Ocean.

From Dwarka to Hangor, from conventional platforms to networked warfare, and from foreign acquisition toward indigenous capability, Pakistan Navy's evolution reflects a broader strategic imperative: to remain credible today while preparing for the battlespace of tomorrow. The platforms will change and technologies will evolve, but the mission remains constant to guard Pakistan's maritime frontiers, secure its economic lifelines and remain ready whenever the nation calls.

As Pakistan commemorates Navy Day, the most meaningful tribute to that generation is not simply to remember what happened at Dwarka. It is to preserve the qualities that made decisive action possible: professional excellence, vigilance, courage and readiness. The sea rarely announces the challenges it will bring. A navy's task is to be ready when they arrive

Briefs

Houthi attacks disrupt Saudi...

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On Monday, the Financial Times said Aramco's Jazan oil facilities were hit in new strikes, and the damage was being assessed. Reuters was not immediately able to verify the report and Aramco has not commented. The Houthi military spokesperson said the group will announce in the coming hours a broad operation deep into Saudi territory. Spokesperson Yahya Saree said on Monday that Riyadh had taken "escalatory steps" by conducting airstrikes on Yemen. The Saudi-led coalition did not announce any recent strikes on Yemen, but the Yemeni government has in recent days mounted an offensive on multiple fronts against the Houthis in Yemen. The coalition vowed to respond firmly to the latest outbreak of hostilities, saying the latest escalation against the de facto Opec leader was "dangerous". "The coalition will take all necessary operational measures to deter this terrorist militia and resolutely confront its hostile approach," Colonel Turki al-Malki said in a statement on X.

PM Shehbaz 'strongly' condemns...

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marking what appeared to be a significant escalation in the six-month-old conflict that has heightened tensions across the Middle East. PM Shehbaz emphasised that such attacks not only put civilian lives at risk but also undermine regional stability and security. He reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for the Kingdom's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity. "Such dastardly attacks threaten innocent lives as well as regional peace and security. We reaffirm our steadfast support for the Kingdom's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity, and pray for the swift recovery of all those injured," PM Shehbaz added. The Houthis, who control most of Yemen's populated areas including the capital, said they had launched a broad operation deep into Saudi territory. They used drones and missiles to strike a Saudi airbase in the southern city of Khamis Mushait, and targets belonging to Saudi Arabia's state oil company in nearby Abha, Najran on the Yemeni border and Jazan, a major Red Sea port city that houses a large refinery and power plant.

Karachi Varsity professor...

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the professor said. Police said they had detained three employees of a local hotel over the alleged assault on the senior KU professor. Police officials said that a search was underway to arrest other people involved in the incident. A case was registered at Sachal police station on the complaint of Professor Saqi against Kunein Ali Gohar Shah and others, the police confirmed. The FIR includes charges of attempted murder, assault, causing injuries and wrongful confinement. Meanwhile, Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar sought a detailed report on the alleged "mistreatment and illegal confinement" of the KU professor from the SSP East.

Israel shuts British...

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called for measures to be taken against Britain. Miliband, who became Britain's foreign minister in July, also said Britain's position is that the occupation in the West Bank is unlawful, and that London believes that there is ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in areas of the West Bank. The impact on the £6 billion ($8.12 billion) of annual bilateral trade is likely to be minimal, with details unclear of how the UK will differentiate between goods originating in West Bank settlements and products made in Israel.

Pak dried chili shipment opens new trade route to SW China

New route is expected to improve efficiency of chili transportation to southwest China

DNA

BEIJING, Sept. 8 (): More than 80 metric tons of high-quality dried chilies from Pakistan have arrived at Chengdu International Railway Port, opening a new cross-border logistics route for agricultural products and giving fresh impetus to China-Pakistan agricultural cooperation.

The shipment, comprising eight containers, entered China through Qinzhou Port in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region before being transported to Chengdu by sea-rail intermodal service under the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday.

It is the first shipment to arrive in China under an agricultural cooperation project associated with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The new route is expected to improve the efficiency of chili transportation to southwest China.

Unlike traditional routes, which typically bring imported chilies through northern ports before distributing them to markets across the country, the new service transports the cargo directly from Qinzhou Port to Chengdu. According to Chengdu International Railway Port Economic and Technological Development Zone Construction and Development Co., Ltd., the route can reduce overall logistics costs by about 1,000 yuan ($140) per metric ton and cut transit times by seven to 10 days. Following the arrival of the first eight containers, more than 900 metric tons of additional Pakistani dried chilies are being shipped, with the service expected to move toward regular operations. Chengdu International Railway Port is seeking to leverage its transportation advantages to expand trade and support industrial development.

As a key node linking the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor with China-Europe freight train services, the port provides facilities for cross-border logistics, bonded warehousing, distribution and trade. "China has three major chili distribution centers in Qingdao, Henan and Guizhou, while Sichuan and Chongqing, despite being major consumer markets, have long lacked a specialized, large-scale distribution hub," said Li Jiarun, head of trade business at the development company.

The imported Pakistani chilies are being supplied to downstream industries, including major catering companies such as Haidilao, local hotpot restaurants and condiment producers, including manufacturers of Pixian Douban.

The project is helping build an integrated supply chain covering overseas cultivation, cross-border transportation, distribution, processing and final consumption. For Pakistan, the new route provides an additional channel for agricultural products to reach the Chinese market.

For southwest China, it offers a more direct supply of imported chilies to the region's growing hotpot, condiment and food-processing industries. The arrival of the Pakistani dried chilies marks another step in turning international transport corridors into platforms for trade and industrial cooperation, while strengthening links between Pakistani agricultural producers and China's regional food industry.

Dubai Basketball sign Euroleague champion Thomas Walkup

DNA

DUBAI: Dubai Basketball have reached an agreement with Thomas Walkup on a multi-year deal, bringing to the UAE one of Europe's premier defensive guards ahead of the 2026/27 season. The 33-year-old Greek international joins from Olympiacos, where he spent five successful seasons. Standing at 1.93 meters, Walkup arrives fresh off a EuroLeague title-winning campaign, adding championship experience and defensive excellence to Dubai's roster.

Dubai Basketball have great respect for Olympiacos and hope the agreement will contribute to building a positive and lasting relationship between the two clubs. Both organizations are also committed to working together to support the continued development and growth of the EuroLeague, while contributing to the expansion of its new franchise model. Dejan Kamenjasevic, president of Dubai Basketball, said recently: "Thomas is a very important signing for Dubai Basketball and another step forward in the direction we want to take as a club.

"His understanding of the game, competitiveness and ability to make the players around him better will be extremely valuable for our team. "I would also like to personally thank the management of Olympiacos for the way the discussions were handled and for helping us reach an agreement that allows Thomas to begin this new chapter with Dubai Basketball."

Champion and defensive leader: Walkup arrives in Dubai following a championship-winning season with Olympiacos, helping the Greek side lift the 2025/26 EuroLeague title after defeating Real Madrid in Athens. Across 37 EuroLeague appearances last season, he averaged 5.3 points, 5.7 assists, and 2.6 rebounds per game, highlighting his ability to control the game.

Over 277 EuroLeague games, Walkup has built a reputation as one of the competition's most influential defensive guards. Named the EuroLeague Best Defender in 2024 and the league's steals leader in 2022/23, his leadership, basketball IQ and relentless defensive presence have been instrumental in Olympiacos' sustained success at the highest level.

Journey from NBA to Europe: Walkup began his basketball journey in the US, playing collegiate basketball before earning opportunities with the Golden State Warriors during the 2016 NBA Summer League and later signing with the Chicago Bulls ahead of the 2016/17 season.

Although his NBA experience was brief, it marked the beginning of a professional career that would see him become one of Europe's most respected guards. Walkup began his pro career in Germany with MHP Riesen Ludwigsburg. He quickly established himself as one of the Bundesliga's standout performers, earning All-German BBL First Team honors in 2018. He then joined Lithuanian powerhouse Zalgiris Kaunas, where he further enhanced his reputation as an elite defender, winning the Lithuanian League Defensive Player of the Year award in 2019.

Lazio go joint top in Italy while La Liga games end all square amid goals and red cards

DNA

LAZIO won for the third time in a row in Serie A while Real Sociedad beat struggling Elche 3-2 in a gripping game and Getafe and Celta Vigo drew 1-1 in La Liga on Monday. Davide Frattesi scored for the third game in succession as Lazio came from a goal behind to beat Udinese 2-1. Frattesi got winners for Lazio in 1-0 wins over Genoa and Bologna and he slid in to convert a low cross in the 75th minute to cancel out Jesper Karlstrom's 49th minute opener. He was replaced by Albert Gudmundsson a few minutes later and two minutes from time the Icelander bulleted home a header on his Lazio debut. The win took Lazio joint top with nine points from three games, alongside Roma and Inter Milan. Udinese remained in 10th. Daniel Maldini, who was on loan from Atalanta, put Cagliari a goal up when he glanced home a header from a first half corner and although the home side was on top for most of the match it could not add to the score. Paul Mendy saw a low shot hit the base of the post early in the second half and Maldini struck the woodwork with a free kick soon after. The win lifted Cagliari into the top half of the table, while Lecce fell to 14th. Sociedad survive late onslaught Real Sociedad won away from home in La Liga for the first time since February thanks to a 90th minute goal from Luka Sučić.

Usyk won't be a 'back-up plan' after Fury suggests fight with Joshua is off

DNA

LONDON: Oleksandr Usyk won't be Tyson Fury's "back-up plan" after Fury challenged Usyk to a trilogy fight because he can't nail down a long-awaited bout with Anthony Joshua. Negotiations for a lucrative all-British fight between former heavyweight champions Fury and Joshua have dragged on without a firm date or venue, and key financial questions left open. In a video packed with insults and expletives on Instagram late Sunday, Fury laid the blame with Joshua, branding him "weak-minded" and suggesting he lacked the courage to take the fight. "This will only lead me to a fight with Oleksandr Usyk," Fury said. But Usyk's manager Sergey Lapin said in a statement to Sky Sports News that "Usyk is not Tyson's back-up plan. If Fury needs an opponent, he should visit the Ready to Fight platform. They can help him find a worthy opponent there. "Oleksandr is always open to big challenges. But serious intentions are backed by a concrete offer, not statements in the press." Usyk (25-0) vacated his three heavyweight world titles in June and said he wanted one "last dance" fight before retirement. He beat Fury twice in 2024. "Let's do it again. Let's run it back in November," Fury said.

Pakistan roll the dice in search of consolation win over England

LONDON: Pakistan will try to salvage something from the wreckage of a woeful tour of England with an upset victory in the third Test at Edgbaston starting on Wednesday. Mammoth defeats in the opening two encounters mean Pakistan have already lost the three-match series in emphatic fashion. But their response to a 194-run loss in the second Test at Lord's – which followed an innings reverse in the series opener at Headingley – surprised even longstanding observers of Pakistan's often volatile cricket scene. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) took the extraordinary step of sending seven players home and calling up another seven, five of whom are uncapped at Test level.

At the same time, the PCB also sacked Test coach Sarfaraz Ahmed and bowling chief Umar Gul, replacing them with Pakistan white-ball counterparts Mike Hesson and Ashley Noffke. Salman Ali Agha – Pakistan's captain at Headingley when Babar Azam was injured – and left-arm spinner Ali Usman, who took a five-wicket haul in that match, were among those told to leave. So too were experienced wicket-keeper Mohammad Rizwan and opener Imam-ul-Haq, who did not bat in either innings at Lord's because of a calf injury.

No wonder Hesson said last week: "The guys are probably more used to a little bit of chaos than I am. I don't think anyone wants this to happen in the middle of a series."

Hesson, a former head coach of his native New Zealand, added: "From my perspective, it is about putting a balanced squad together, not only for this Test, so we actually have some variety in our attack. "Pakistan is known for the pace, unusual actions, mystery spin – we haven't really been able to present any of that." 'Backfires' Azhar Ali, a member of the Pakistan side that topped the Test world rankings a decade ago, said much of the blame for the current debacle rests with Aaqib Javed, the PCB's high performance director since 2024. "Every decision he makes backfires and he then says: 'It's not me'", former Pakistan captain Ali told the Guardian, with Jason Gillespie, an ex-Pakistan coach, saying Javed needed to "look at himself in the mirror". The PCB subsequently announced Monday an investigation into the squad's conduct in England.

Of more immediate concern, however, to the incoming Pakistan players is with no tour games between the second and third Tests they will have little chance to acclimatise to conditions. England captain Joe Root, second in Test cricket's list of all-time run-scorers, said after Lord's that a combination of seam-friendly pitches, overcast skies and responsive cricket balls had created a "perfect storm" for batsmen on both sides. But it is Pakistan, yet to reach 200 in any of their four innings this series, who have really struggled against England's revamped pace quartet of Ollie Robinson, Jofra Archer, Josh Tongue and Gus Atkinson. – **APP**

Digital Economy - A New Hope for Youth

Tanveer Hussain

PAKISTAN'S youth today stands at a crossroads where, on the one hand, they hold degrees in their hands, while on the other, employment opportunities are limited. Every year, thousands of young people complete their education at universities and enter practical life, but many of them are unable to find employment according to their qualifications. Inflation, economic difficulties, a decline in business activities, and limited growth in traditional employment opportunities have made this problem even more serious.

In such circumstances, the growing trend of going abroad appears natural. Queues outside embassies for obtaining visas, advertisements for jobs abroad, claims of overseas employment on social media, and the rush of young people to agents' offices reflect the desire of young people to leave the country in search of a better future.

Obtaining employment abroad is not, in itself, a problem. If a young person legally obtains a job in another country with proper training and valid documentation, it can be beneficial both for the individual and for the country. The real concern arises when the lack of employment and uncertainty about the future begin to push young people towards illegal and unsafe migration.

Many young people hand over their lifelong savings to agents. Some fall victim to fake visas and fraudulent job offers, while human trafficking networks also exploit their vulnerability. In attempts to reach Europe or other countries through illegal routes, many young people lose their lives, while many others face arrest, legal proceedings, imprisonment, and financial losses. In this situation, the fundamental question is whether alternative avenues for earning a respectable income while remaining in their own country cannot be created for young people.

In my view, an important answer to this question lies in the digital economy. The concept of employment is changing rapidly around the world. It is no longer necessary for a person to be physically present in an office, factory, or shop for eight hours a day in order to work. The internet has largely eliminated geographical boundaries in the world of work. Today, a talented young person sitting in Pakistan can provide services to a client in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Gulf, or any other part of the world. They can develop software, work in graphic design, provide digital marketing services, teach online, sell products through e-commerce, or work from home for a global company.

Freelancing, e-commerce, digital marketing, software services, web and graphic designing, artificial intelligence, and other modern fields can open new doors of employment for Pakistani youth. But there is one fundamental condition: access to the internet alone is not enough; marketable skills are essential. Therefore, the government, private sector, educational institutions, and technology companies should jointly develop a comprehensive national programme for young people. At the district and tehsil levels, centres can be established where young people are provided not merely theoretical education but practical training according to market requirements. They should be taught how to create a profile on freelance platforms, how to communicate with clients, how to maintain the quality of their work, and how to present themselves as professionals in the global market.

An important part of this training should also be financial and digital literacy. Today, many young people are interested in online trading, international stock markets, and cryptocurrencies. It is essential to explain to young people that investment, business, trading, and speculation are not the same thing. They should be educated about risk management, protection against fraud, identification of fraudulent investment schemes, and relevant laws. Another reality that cannot be ignored is that online income is not a shortcut to instant wealth. Social media sometimes carries claims of earning hundreds of thousands of rupees within a few days or weeks, but the reality is that success in the digital world also requires skills, hard work, time, consistency, and experience. Young people need to be taught skills rather than sold dreams.

Lack of resources is also a major obstacle. Many talented young people in rural and low-income areas do not have access to good laptops, reliable internet, and quality training. If the government and private sector provide them with low-cost or easy-installment laptops, high-speed internet, and quality training programmes, the participation of young people in the digital economy can increase many times over.

This will not only be an employment programme for young people but could also prove to be an important investment in the national economy. When a young person sitting in Pakistan provides services to a foreign company or client and earns income in return, they not only support their family but also generate foreign exchange for the country. Similarly, if Pakistani youth use e-commerce to take local products to consumers around the world, small businesses can also become part of the international market. We must also change the way we think about young people. Instead of viewing a young person merely as a candidate for a government job or as someone aspiring to go abroad, we need to see them as a potential entrepreneur, freelancer, exporter, technology expert, and active member of the global market.

This does not mean that young people should be prevented from going abroad. Legal and safe migration is also a legitimate avenue for employment. But the future of a young person should not depend solely on whether they obtain a visa for another country. They should also have viable opportunities to progress while remaining in their own country. Today, the choice before us is clear. We can leave our youth between unemployment, despair, and the risks of illegal migration, or we can provide them with skills, training, opportunities, and proper guidance and connect them with the global economy.

If a young person can earn a respectable livelihood from Pakistan while serving clients anywhere in the world, the need to choose dangerous routes will decrease. The real objective is not to stop young people; it is to empower them. The future of Pakistan's youth does not lie only in queues for overseas employment; it also lies in the digital pathways that connect Pakistan to the global market. The digital economy is not merely a sector of technology; it can become a new hope for our youth in terms of employment, self-reliance, and a better future.

Russia backs Iran's inclusion in Makkah defence...

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joint strikes against Iran and targeted its senior leadership. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had also previously signed a mutual defence agreement under which aggression against either country would be treated as an attack on both. Lavrov made the remarks on Monday while speaking to students and faculty at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), where he outlined Moscow's long-standing approach to security cooperation in the Gulf. He recalled that Russia had proposed more than two decades ago that Gulf countries, including the Arab countries and Iran, consider holding a meeting to develop a regional security concept. "Recognising that relations between them are complex, we proceeded from the assumption that we would facilitate meetings, discussions of mutual grievances, and agreement on certain confidence-building measures," he said. "We believed these discussions would be easier to organise if the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council were involved simultaneously," he added.

Saudi FM blasts Houthis...

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that achieves security in Yemen and the region." After heavy strikes on the kingdom, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister says diplomacy is still possible with the Houthis to end the fighting, according to Al Jazeera. "The Houthis have their own problems and they want to export these problems to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to the legitimate government in Yemen," says Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud. "The provocation by the Houthis will end up in failure. These practices by the Houthis and this selfishness by the Houthis will lead to results that will not be bearable." However, he adds, "The road to diplomacy is not closed. Saudi Arabia will always support diplomatic solutions, but the kingdom will never hesitate to defend itself." According to Al Jazeera Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov tells his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, that Russia is ready to help resolve the ongoing situation in the Middle East.

IHC forms larger bench to hear plea

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people are brought to Islamabad?" he asked. The chief justice asked whether the protesters would arrive alongside the KP chief minister and government machinery. The counsel replied in the affirmative and presented a November 21, 2024 letter from the Ministry of Interior. He claimed government machinery was used during the PTI's 2024 protest despite the Interior Ministry's instructions, and said no application had so far been submitted to the Islamabad district magistrate for the planned demonstration. The lawyer also referred to the £190 million case and other pending proceedings, arguing that the court had repeatedly asked for arguments on an appeal but they had not been presented.He questioned whether street protests could be used to pressure courts, arguing that guidelines could be issued for demonstrations but should not facilitate individuals involved in criminal cases.

Italian envoy...

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In this regard, he looked forward to working closely with the Government across all areas of mutual interest. The Prime Minister assured the Italian Ambassador of Pakistan's full cooperation in building stronger ties between the two countries, particularly in the areas of agriculture, IT & AI, industry, textile and people-to-people contact.

Briefs

Gold prices fall by Rs1,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a decline in the local market on Tuesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs1,000 to settle at Rs462,136, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs857 to Rs396,207, whereas 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs786 to Rs363,202. In the international market, the price of gold fell by $10 to $4,396 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs10 to Rs7,069, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs9 to Rs6,060. The price of silver in the international market also increased by $0.10 to $65.90 per ounce, the association added. –APP

Renewed fighting displaces nearly 20,000 in Yemen

GENEVA: Renewed fighting between Iran-backed Houthi militia and pro-government forces in southwest Yemen has forced nearly 20,000 people to flee their homes, the International Organization for Migration said on Tuesday.

Last week the militia launched a new offensive targeting areas bordering the Bab al-Mandab strait – a gateway to the Red Sea that has gained significance since Iran blocked the Strait of Hormuz in the months-long Middle East war.

Clashes have killed more than 300 people since Thursday, driving many families to flee, according to sources from both sides who spoke to APP.

"We are deeply alarmed by the escalating violence on Yemen's West Coast, which had up to yesterday displaced more than 18,500 people," Abdusattor Esoev, the IOM's chief of mission in Yemen, told reporters from Aden. The UN agency said in a statement that "the number of displaced people is rising by the hour" as people continue to arrive at displacement sites. The Houthis have been at war with the government since 2015 in a conflict that has killed hundreds of thousands of people, while millions have been displaced in what the UN calls the world's biggest humanitarian crisis._APP

Ethiopia's Tigray rebels accuse govt of new drone strike

ADDIS ABABA: Rebel Tigrayan authorities accused Ethiopia of another drone strike in the country's northern region on Tuesday.The federal government has launched multiple drone strikes in Tigray in recent weeks and massed troops at the regional border, raising fears of a return to the civil war of 2020-2022 that killed some 600,000 people. "There was a drone strike this morning in Hintalo district," south of the regional capital, Mekelle, Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) vice president Amanuel Assefa told AFP. "I am hearing that civilians have been killed in their residences," he said, without providing further details. AFP was unable to independently verify the claim. The federal army did not respond to requests for comment. A medical source at a nearby hospital, who requested anonymity, told AFP that at least three people were wounded in Tuesday's strike, including at least one member of the Tigrayan forces.

The conflict tracking group, ACLED, has previously recorded 14 drone strikes in Tigray this year, focused on military targets. The TPLF ruled the whole of Ethiopia from 1991 to 2018 before being sidelined with the rise of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, eventually triggering the civil war. Rights groups have accused the TPLF of a campaign of forced recruitment this year.–APP

easypaisa & KTrade to simplify digital stock market

Collaboration enables instant digital account opening, records highest number of investment accounts opened in a single day in PSX history

DNA

ISLAMABAD: easypaisa digital bank and KTrade have joined hands in a first-of-its-kind partnership to make stock market investments more accessible and convenient for millions of Pakistanis, by enabling instant digital Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) account onboarding via the easypaisa app. The partnership was formally unveiled during a ceremony held in Islamabad last week, attended by senior representatives from the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), including Commissioner Muzaffar Mirza; Naveed Qazi, CEO, National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL); Badiuddin Akber, CEO, Central Depository Company (CDC), and senior officials from easypaisa, and KTrade. Through this collaboration, easypaisa users can open a KTrade PSX investment account within 10 minutes through a fully digital and seamless onboarding process, removing traditional barriers and paperwork that have long limited public participation in Pakistan's capital markets. This initiative advances financial inclusion by making investment opportunities more accessible for every Pakistani. The partnership's impact was immediate and unprecedented, with easypaisa and KTrade recording the highest single-day investment account onboarding volume in PSX history, setting a new benchmark for digital wealth creation in Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Jahanzeb Khan, President & CEO, easypaisa digital bank, said:"At easypaisa, our mission is to unlock access to financial opportunities for every Pakistani. Through our partnership with KTrade, we are extending this vision beyond payments and banking into investments, enabling users to participate in Pakistan's capital markets through a simple, secure, and fully digital experience. This partnership marks another important step towards building a more financially empowered and inclusive Pakistan. I would also like to thank the SECP, NCCPL, and CDC for their continued support in digitizing the onboarding of brokerage accounts, laying the foundation for millions more Pakistanis to participate in the formal investment landscape and helping drive the next phase of growth in Pakistan's capital markets."

Mahmood Ali Shah Bukhari, CEO, KTrade, commented, "The future of investing lies in accessibility and convenience. Through our collaboration with easypaisa, we are bringing the stock market closer to millions of Pakistanis and making wealth creation opportunities available at their fingertips. Together, we are helping cultivate a stronger investment culture in the country." Representatives from NCCPL highlighted the significance of digital innovation in expanding investor participation and strengthening Pakistan's financial ecosystem. Meanwhile, CDC was acknowledged for its supportive role in enabling the infrastructure and collaboration required to bring the initiative to life. The partnership aligns with broader national efforts to increase retail participation in capital markets, encourage the adoption of digital financial services, and create new avenues for wealth creation among underserved segments of society. With instant account onboarding, seamless user journeys, and secure market access, easypaisa and KTrade are paving the way for a new generation of digital investors, helping more Pakistanis take their first step towards long-term financial growth. With over 60 million registered users and as the country's first digital bank to commence commercial operations, easypaisa remains aligned with the State Bank of Pakistan's vision of driving inclusive economic growth and continues to expand its range of financial products and services, catering not only to its existing users but also to millions who remain unbanked or underbanked.

Pakistan unveils 10-year plan to save sharks

The minister said the plan sought to strengthen fisheries management and enforcement while improving data collection and scientific research on shark populations

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Tuesday unveiled Pakistan's first 10-year national action plan for shark conservation, under which the government will restore declining shark populations, curb illegal finning and bycatch, protect critical marine habitats and promote sustainable fisheries in Pakistani waters through 2035, with the plan to be implemented in three phases by the Marine Fisheries Department and backed by an estimated $3.8 million to $5 million in funding during its first five years. The National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA-Sharks Pakistan 2025-2035) will be overseen by a multi-stakeholder National Advisory Committee, Mr Chaudhry said in a statement. The minister said the plan sought to strengthen fisheries management and enforcement while improving data collection and scientific research on shark populations. Among the proposed measures are mandatory fins-naturally-attached policies, species-specific protections, shark sanctuaries, mangrove restoration and steps to reduce shark deaths as bycatch across different fisheries. The plan also seeks to improve the livelihoods of coastal fishing communities through targeted support, while encouraging sustainable shark fisheries and greater international cooperation, including through the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. Mr Chaudhry said implementation would be assessed annually against performance indicators such as landing-site monitoring coverage, completion of stock assessments, deployment of vessel monitoring systems and reductions in bycatch mortality. Formal reviews would be carried out every three years. The plan covers all chondrichthyan species found in Pakistani waters, including sharks, rays, skates and chimaeras, with particular focus on species targeted by fisheries or facing high levels of bycatch mortality. "Although the primary emphasis is on sharks, the management frameworks, data collection systems and enforcement mechanisms established through the NPOA will also benefit other elasmobranch species," the minister said. He said the action plan had been tailored to Pakistan's ecological, institutional and socioeconomic conditions while remaining aligned with the Food and Agriculture Organisation's International Plan of Action for Sharks and other international best practices. Mr Chaudhry said preparation of the plan fulfilled Pakistan's responsibilities as a shark-fishing nation under international fisheries law. The FAO's international shark action plan encourages countries to develop national conservation and management plans, minimise waste and promote sustainable fishing practices, he added. "Responsible management of marine resources must come first," Mr Chaudhry said, stressing the need for stronger safeguards for vulnerable shark species and those whose capture is prohibited.–Agencies

SECP, Askari Bank for faster corporate account opening

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and Askari Bank Limited have completed an API integration to enable newly incorporated companies to open corporate bank accounts more quickly and with fewer documentation requirements. Askari Bank is the first commercial bank to integrate its system with SECP's corporate registry under the initiative. The integration allows the bank to securely access authenticated corporate information directly from SECP, reducing manual verification and the repeated submission of company documents, said a release issued here on Tuesday. The agreement was signed by SECP Commissioner Muzaffar Mirza and Askari Bank's Group Head Retail Banking, Shaikh Rashid Rauf. The ceremony was attended by SECP Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, Commissioners Muzaffar Mirza and Zeeshan Khattak, Executive Director Mubashir Saddozai, Registrar of Companies Arsalan Zafar, Askari Bank President and CEO Zia Ijaz, Group Executive Operations Aslam Sadaruddin, and other officials. The integration will allow Askari Bank to securely obtain authenticated company information directly from SECP, reducing manual verification, repeated submission of documents and customer onboarding time. It will enable newly incorporated companies to swiftly operationalize by opening bank accounts and commencing business operations. "This integration is part of SECP's ongoing digitalization and B-READY reforms aimed at simplifying business processes, improving access to reliable corporate information and making it easier to establish and operate businesses in Pakistan," Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu said. SECP plans to extend similar digital integrations to other banks and financial institutions.–APP

UK bans on goods from illegal Israeli settlements

LONDON/TEL AVIV, Sept 8 : Britain on Tuesday announced a trade ban on goods made in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank in coordination with France and Canada, the latest sanctions to target Israel as it faces growing diplomatic isolation. British Foreign Minister Ed Miliband said Britain could no longer simply "call out" injustice and suffering, but told the House of Commons that the country now had to "act" to oppose the expansion of settlements. "Today we refuse to be bystanders to further suffering and to the destruction of the two-state solution," Miliband said, referring to Britain's long-held support for the two-state idea, which Israel opposes. The US, through its ambassador to Israel, has already criticized Britain's new sanctions, while two Israeli ministers called for measures to be taken against Britain. Miliband, who became Britain's foreign minister in July, also said Britain's position is that the occupation in the West Bank is unlawful, and that London believes that there is ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in areas of the West Bank. The impact on the £6 billion ($8.12 billion) of annual bilateral trade is likely to be minimal, with details unclear of how the UK will differentiate between goods originating in West Bank settlements and products made in Israel. Two prominent Israeli ministers reacted angrily to the move. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich called for the British ambassador in Tel Aviv to be expelled, while National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has asked Netanyahu to close the British Consulate in East Jerusalem, which is accredited to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Israeli President Isaac Herzog meanwhile accused Britain of interfering in Israel's upcoming elections, due in late October. The focus of recent concern is Israel's E1 settlement project in the West Bank not far from Jerusalem, which would cut across land the Palestinians seek for a future independent state and which Miliband said put the two-state solution at risk. Smotrich on Tuesday announced the advance of plans for 1,000 new homes in two other settlements in the West Bank. The United Nations, Palestinians and most countries regard settlements as illegal under international law. Israel disputes this. Britain in 2025 joined other countries to recognize a Palestinian state as a means to promote a two-state solution, and in June it sanctioned Israeli networks involved in financing, enabling and carrying out violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.–Agencies

AI Geo Navigators showcases MIRSAD

ISLAMABAD: AI Geo Navigators successfully participated in LEAP x DeepFest 2026, held from 31 August to 3 September 2026 at the Riyadh Exhibition and Convention Center, Malham, Saudi Arabia. During the four-day event, AI Geo Navigators showcased MIRSAD, its flagship Saudi-focused solution for operational hazard and climate screening. Designed for the Saudi context, MIRSAD brings together multi-hazard risk screening, climate intelligence, sector-specific analysis, bilingual access, and AI-assisted interpretation within a single operational platform, said a press release issued on Tuesday. The event marked an important step in AI Geo Navigators' engagement with Saudi Arabia's rapidly developing technology and innovation ecosystem. Conversations held throughout the event opened opportunities for continued engagement, knowledge exchange, and potential collaborations around geospatial AI and climate intelligence. Reflecting on the participation, the AI Geo Navigators team highlighted the value of connecting with organizations and professionals working toward technology-driven solutions for emerging challenges across Saudi Arabia. The participation provided AI Geo Navigators with an opportunity to present MIRSAD to technology professionals, innovators, industry representatives, and potential partners from Saudi Arabia and beyond. The team engaged in discussions around the growing role of AI, GIS, remote sensing, climate intelligence.–APP

Iran increases gasoline price for its heaviest consumers

TEHRAN, Iran: Iran early Tuesday introduced a higher price for its heaviest users of gasoline, state media reported, in the latest economic pinch caused by months of war. It's the second such hike since December Such gas price increases can be sensitive and contribute to inflation. An increase in 2019 sparked nationwide protests and a crackdown that reportedly killed over 300 people. Without specifically mentioning the war with the United States, the government's announcement cited the "current situation," adding that the extra money from the price increase will be given to households. Under the new system, people buying more than their quota of 110 liters (29 gallons) of gasoline a month now must pay 100,000 rials (about 7 cents) per liter, or twice as much as they have been paying since December. Iran still has some of the world's lowest gasoline prices, but the price increase adds to daily pressures for many of the country's more than 90 million people. Already, the currency has been dropping to record lows, and purchasing power has weakened. On Monday, the US dollar was trading at 2.22 million rials. Keramat Veis Karami, the CEO of the state oil distribution company, on Monday said the new gasoline rate would affect 15 percent of consumers, the official IRNA news agency reported. The CEO said consumption reached a record high at 145 million liters (38 million gallons) per day in August, while domestic production capacity was 122 million liters per day. The rest of the supply is imported. Raising prices can help calm high consumption, which experts have blamed on aging cars and spare parts in Iran as well as insufficient public transportation. But experts also say increases in gasoline prices will lead to higher inflation in a country that's already struggling with an annual inflation rate of about 67 percent, according to the country's statistics center, a government agency. Cheap gasoline has been viewed for generations as a birthright in Iran, sparking mass demonstrations as far back as 1964, when a price increase forced the shah to put military vehicles on the streets to replace those of striking taxi drivers. An hour after the new pricing went into practice, two of eight gas stations visited by The Associated Press were closed to regulate the price rate of the pumps. The six others were active, and a dozen cars were in line in each. Security was tight around the filling stations and both uniformed and plainclothes police were visible around. In the queue, Asghar Rahimi, a 34-year-old Tehran resident, said the price increases will not stop. "The tiny amount cannot help government to manage problems like poverty and unemployment," Rahimi said. "This was the first step. In coming months, they need to raise it again." Another resident, Ali Salari, 55, feared the raise in price will affect prices of other goods, including bread and meat. "It has been that way ever since government manipulated gas prices," Salari said. Tehran citizen Hamid Mirzei, 43, said food prices have kept rising and a grocery trip just for staples, like beans and lentils, can cost up to 100 million rials ($73). "Life has become difficult for all of us. Even basic groceries are becoming unaffordable," Mirzei said. "If gasoline prices go up as well, things will only get much worse," he added.–DNA

Jordanian, Palestinian ministers discuss religious tourism

LONDON: Jordan's Minister of Tourism Emad Hijazeen and his Palestinian counterpart Hani Hayek have discussed collaboration in religious tourism as Jordan prepares for the kingdom's 2030 celebrations to mark the 2,000th anniversary of Jesus' baptism.Hijazeen and Hayek have talked about developing joint religious tourism packages to attract Christian pilgrims. They have also explored initiatives in staff training and museum curation to showcase regional heritage, according to the Jordan News Agency. Hayek has expressed gratitude for Jordan's efforts in safeguarding Palestinian heritage – which is under constant threat from Israeli settlement expansion – including its support in registering the site of Sebastia in the West Bank as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The site, near Nablus, spans more than 5,000 years and reflects cultural influences of numerous powers in the Palestinian territories, including the Romans. Both Jordan and Palestine are home to important Christian holy sites, including the baptism site known as Bethany Beyond the Jordan; in the West Bank, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem; and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in East Jerusalem.

Israeli forces bomb Gaza's Bureij refugee camp

LONDON: Israeli forces bombed the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza on Tuesday shortly after ordering residents to evacuate several blocks, according to preliminary accounts from local residents The Israeli military issued the evacuation order earlier in the day, warning it planned to strike several blocks in the camp, residents told Arab News. Residents began leaving Bureij and moving toward nearby Nuseirat, according to local and Arab media reports. Maysa Yousef, a central Gaza resident, said the military had warned it would bomb a house, though residents did not know which home was being targeted. "The Israeli army said it was going to bomb a house – God knows whose house," Yousef said about an hour before the strikes were heard. "All of Bureij had to evacuate because of the planned bombing of a house whose owner has not been named."

Local media reported that the home of the Al-Siraj family in Block 7 was struck. Arab News could not independently verify the report. Yousef said evacuation calls were being issued neighborhood by neighborhood, fueling panic among families already displaced by the war.–APP

Germany sending missiles to Ukraine

BERLIN: Germany is sending Ukraine further "urgently needed" interceptor missiles for Patriot air-defense systems from its own military stockpiles, German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said on Tuesday."I have decided ... to deliver urgently needed PAK-2 interceptor missiles from Bundeswehr stocks to Ukraine," Pistorius said during an online meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group. He also appealed to other supporters of Ukraine "to look into their own stocks and make similar deliveries". However, Pistorius did not specify the number of interceptors or mention a timeline. Faced with Moscow's intensified ballistic missile strikes on the capital, Ukraine has warned of its urgent need for US-made Patriots amid dwindling supplies. Patriot interceptors are among the few air-defense weapons in Kyiv's arsenal that are capable of shooting down ballistic missiles, which fly at high speeds on steep trajectories. However, the United States is conserving its stocks after having used a large number of Patriot interceptors during the war with Iran. US deliveries of Patriot interceptors to Ukraine have been drastically reduced, and other countries are also clamouring for the weapons.–APP

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Karachi mayor's office completely gutted in fire at KMC building

Fire that erupted in kitchen next to Mayor Murtaza Wahab's office brought under control, says fire department

DNA

KARACHI: Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab's office was completely gutted after a fire erupted at the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) head office on Tuesday. The fire department said the blaze broke out in a kitchen adjacent to the mayor's office at the KMC head office.

"The fire has been brought under control," the fire department said, confirming that the blaze had been extinguished. There were no immediate reports of casualties in the fire. A spokesperson for KMC said that the fire erupted in the kitchen and spread to the mayor's office and the office of his personal secretary. Authorities deployed two fire tenders to extinguish the flames, the spokesperson added.

According to the spokesperson, Mayor Wahab's staff and other KMC personnel were present when the fire erupted. However, they evacuated the building in time.

The Karachi mayor said that an investigation would determine how the fire started at the KMC head office, adding that the chief fire officer had been tasked with looking into the incident.

He said that furniture had been burnt in the fire, but the blaze had been brought under control. "My room has been burnt; there was no such file [there]." He explained that files in his possession were unsigned and, after he signed them, they were sent to the offices of the relevant officers.

He also said firefighting staff had been engaged since the night in extinguishing a separate fire at a factory in Landhi.

The incident comes only a day after three people, including a woman, reportedly suffered breathing difficulties after a fire broke out at an old-clothes factory in the Landhi Export Processing Zone (EPZ) on Monday. According to a fire brigade spokesperson, the blaze was classified as a third-degree fire, prompting authorities to call in additional firefighting resources. As many as 11 KMC fire tenders, two water tankers and a snorkel were deployed to extinguish the blaze, while more fire tenders were also summoned.

Earlier this year, a deadly fire ripped through Karachi's Gul Plaza — a popular three-storey shopping mall in the port city, killing more than 70 people and exposed serious safety failures in the country's largest city. The building, housing almost 1,200 businesses across its basement, mezzanine and three floors, had a variety of options for Karachiites, such as wedding wear, toys, household items, baby clothes and many more, all of which were turned to ashes as a result of the incident.

Briefs

Israeli PM under fire

DNA

TEL AVIV: Israeli opposition leaders on Tuesday called Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unfit to serve after a report that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had warned him before the Oct 7, 2023 Hamas attack. Haaretz newspaper, in a report excerpted from a forthcoming book by its reporters, said UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan spoke to Netanyahu a week-and-a-half before attack and told him that Hamas was planning a major operation.

Netanyahu's office called the report by the left-leaning newspaper "an absolute lie" and denied he spoke to the Emirati leader at that time.

Gadi Eisenkot, a former military commander who has emerged as Netanyahu's top rival in upcoming Oct 27 elections, accused the long-serving prime minister of evading responsibility for security lapses and resorting to "pathetic" excuses, such as saying he was not woken up soon enough on the morning of the attack.

"Netanyahu received dozens of warnings for Oct 7 and ignored them all. He is unfit," Eisenkot wrote on X.

Naftali Bennett, a former prime minister also running in elections, said Netanyahu "bears personal and direct responsibility" for the deaths on Oct 7. "Netanyahu cannot continue to serve in his position for even one more minute," Bennett said.

Three Adiala jail inmates move FCC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Three Adiala jail inmates approached the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) on Tuesday to challenge the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) dismissal of their pleas seeking treatment at private hospitals, similar to the relief granted to incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan.

He added that the relief had become "necessary" after the Aug 18 Supreme Court order regarding Imran, which had directed the government to shift the PTI founder to Shifa International Hospital, a private facility. However, the government had taken him to the government-run Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences.

Subsequently, three Adiala inmates had approached the IHC seeking relief similar to that granted to Imran. On Aug 31, the IHC had dismissed the petitions. On Tuesday, Advocate Cheema appeared on behalf of one of the prisoners, Muhammad Ilyas Khan. He said the other inmates, namely Mohammad Ismail Hussain and Owais Altaf, were being represented by Advocates Irfan Nasir Cheema and Syed Jaffer Baqir, respectively. "Three separate petitions were filed before the FCC today," he said. Advocate Cheema said that Rule 197 prescribed that inmates could be shifted to a civil hospital, arguing that the distinction being drawn by the government that the term only referred to a public hospital was wrong.

Eiffel Tower reopens after row over removing women staff

PARIS: The Eiffel Tower reopened on Tuesday after staff walked out over the removal of women colleagues during a visit by a Hindu religious group which later apologised.

The operating company that runs the Paris landmark, SETE, acknowledged that the Hindu delegation had requested the visit on Saturday be organised so as to limit "interactions with women" and said that "these conditions should not have been accepted".

The Eiffel Tower, which says it receives nearly seven million people a year, reopened on Tuesday morning, with visitors making their way through security checkpoints at the base. The monument was closed on Monday, when SETE said it held a meeting between staff and management.

The Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) spiritual movement apologised for "any pain or inconvenience caused" by the incident. "To the best of our knowledge, at no point was anyone prevented access to the Eiffel Tower," the organisation wrote on X.

"Due to the size of our delegation, the visit was arranged in conjunction with the Eiffel Tower team at the start of normal operating hours to avoid disrupting or inconveniencing others." Eiffel Tower staff condemned "professional instructions that led to female employees being sidelined, replaced and made invisible because of their sex" during the visit by the delegation. "Instructions were given to female employees of the Eiffel Tower and to female employees of contractors to make themselves. – **APP**

Pakistan Navy commemorates Navy day with zeal

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Navy commemorated Navy Day, recalling the valour of its naval warriors during the 1965 War and honouring the enduring legacy of courage, professional excellence and sacrifice carried forward by successive generations in defence of the motherland. Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff, in his Navy Day message, stated that historic Operation SOMNATH demonstrated how a resolute maritime force, driven by courage and conviction, could achieve decisive effects despite numerical and material constraints.

He said that the legacy of courage and conviction established during Operation SOMNATH continues to endure, as reflected once again in Pakistan Navy's successful deterrence against Indian Navy during Marka-e-Haq. Navy Day commenced with Quran Khawani and special prayers for Shuhada.

Chief of the Naval Staff, laid floral wreath at Shuhada Monument, Naval Headquarters Islamabad, and met with Shuhada families, acknowledging their sacrifices and resilience.Navy Day commemorations were held across the country.

Imaan, Hadi sentence suspension plea deferred

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday adjourned the hearing of petitions seeking suspension of the sentences handed down to lawyers and rights activists Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, in the controversial social media posts case. Justice Muhammad Azam Khan heard the petitions. Lawyers Faisal Siddiqui, Riasat Ali Azad, Zainab Janjua and others appeared before the court on behalf of the couple. During the proceedings, the court was informed about the unavailability of the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) prosecutor. No substantial progress could be made on the petitions due to his absence. Subsequently, the court adjourned further proceedings of the case until September 23.

Imaan and Hadi have been in jail since their arrest on January 23 in a case registered against them for protesting outside the IHC and allegedly manhandling the IHC Bar Association (IHCBA) president. The arrest prompted criticism by rights bodies, politicians and journalists, who stressed the couple's right to a fair trial.

Just a day later, a sessions court sentenced Imaan and Hadi to a total of 17 years in prison in the social media posts case under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca). The sessions court sentenced the duo 10 years' imprisonment under Section 10 (cyber terrorism), five years' imprisonment under Section 9 (glorification of an offence) and two years' imprisonment under Section 26-A (false and fake information) of Peca. The case stemmed from a complaint filed on Aug 12, 2025 by the assistant director (investigating officer) at the NCCIA Islamabad, before the Federal Investigation Agency's Cybercrime Reporting Centre.

The complaint accused Imaan of disseminating and "propagating narratives that align with hostile terrorist groups and proscribed organisations", while her husband was implicated for reposting some of her posts. The couple had challenged their convictions by filing separate appeals in the IHC on February 7. The IHC later admitted the appeal and issued notices to the respondents on the applications for the suspension of sentences.

PSX sheds nearly 1,000 points as Middle East conflict hits sentiments

KSE-100 Index settles at 172,642.16, down 993.91 points, or 0.57% at market close

KARACHI: The Pakistan's stock market shed around 1,000 points on Tuesday, as escalating geopolitical tensions linked to the Middle East conflict dampened investor sentiment. The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) settled at 172,642.16,

The market remained under pressure throughout the session, touching an intraday high of 173,736.19 points and a low of 171,490.63 points. AAH Soomro, an independent investment and economic analyst, attributed negative sentiments to the rising energy prices amid escalation between Iran and the United States along with Houthis' attack on Saudi Arabia's energy assets.

"Oil at $100 is keeping a lot of people unexcited and keeping fresh money away," he added.

Ismail Iqbal Securities Chief Executive Officer Ahfaz Mustafa said the market remained largely lacklustre, with elevated oil prices raising concerns among investors.

"With volumes substantially lower than usual, the market remains directionless," he added.

Yemen's Houthis attacked four cities in the south of Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, wounding more than 70 people and setting oil installations ablaze in what appeared to be a major expansion of the six-month-old Middle East war.

The Houthis said they had launched a broad operation deep into Saudi territory. They used drones and missiles to strike a Saudi airbase in the southern city of Khamis Mushair, and targets belonging to Saudi Arabia's state oil company in nearby Abha, Najran on the Yemeni border and Jazan, a major Red Sea port. After a month of calm in August, fighting in the Gulf has resumed, with Iran and the US exchanging fire, sending global oil prices back up to levels unseen since July. Brent crude prices were up more than 2% on Tuesday, above $99 a barrel. – **DNA**

Renewed fighting displaces nearly 20,000 in Yemen: IOM

SANA: Geneva: Renewed fighting between Iran-backed Houthi militia and pro-government forces in southwest Yemen has forced nearly 20,000 people to flee their homes, the International Organization for Migration said on Tuesday.

Last week the militia launched a new offensive targeting areas bordering the Bab al-Mandab strait – a gateway to the Red Sea that has gained significance since Iran blocked the Strait of Hormuz in the months-long Middle East war. Clashes have killed more than 300 people since Thursday, driving many families to flee, according to sources from both sides who spoke to AFP.

"We are deeply alarmed by the escalating violence on Yemen's West Coast, which had up to yesterday displaced more than 18,500 people"," Abdusattor Esoev, the IOM's chief of mission in Yemen, told reporters from Aden. The UN agency said in a statement that "the number of displaced people is rising by the hour" as people continue to arrive at displacement sites.

The Houthis have been at war with the government since 2015 in a conflict that has killed hundreds of thousands of people, while millions have been displaced in what the UN calls the world's biggest humanitarian crisis. – **APP**

UK sanctions on settlements will be 'on wrong side of history'

UK to introduce import ban on goods from illegal Israeli settlements, Miliband says

DNA

JERUSALEM: Israel's President Isaac Herzog warned against British sanctions on settlements in the occupied West Bank, expected to be announced on Tuesday, saying the decision would "fall on the wrong side of history".

"Later today, we expect to see headlines announcing certain British trade sanctions on Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria," Herzog said, using the biblical term for the West Bank. "If this happens - and other nations may join - I believe it will prove to be a grave miscalculation, a decision that will fall on the wrong side of history," he added.

The expected UK move follows weeks of increasing settler attacks against Palestinians in the occupied territory.

It also comes as the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ramps up settlement construction in the West Bank, which some western governments fear threatens a two-state solution. British government minister Pat McFadden said Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband would make a statement to parliament laying out "measures specifically targeted at the expansion of these settlements, which are illegal under international law, in the West Bank".

He told Sky News that the changes, on which he provided no further detail, would be motivated by "the idea of keeping alive this possibility of seeing a Palestinian state alongside Israel".

"I think it's also important to say that Israel is an important trading partner for the UK. This isn't intended to be a boycott of all Israeli goods." UK government ministers have suggested recently that goods coming out of settlements could be subject to trade restrictions as part of the changes. Herzog on Tuesday said: "Sanctions are not a solution. Dialogue is." "I say to all foreign governments: Stop! Step away from the dead-end of sanctions and boycotts. And turn toward constructive dialogue and toward cooperation," he added. Israel has since 1967 occupied the West Bank, where more than 500,000 Israelis live in settlements among some three million Palestinians. With Israel headed to the polls next month, Herzog said the UK move, if announced, "would be a gross interference in the democratic elections of a sovereign nation". "It will serve no one. It will directly harm - unfortunately - Palestinians, robbing them of business and employment," he added.

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