



Daily

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With challenges ahead, the jury's still out on CJP Isa's legacy

Simultaneously Publishing from Islamabad, Sargodha and Karachi

Baisakhi is the festival of kindness and happiness, says PM Shehbaz Sharif



Soon Times Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has extended his heartfelt felicitations to the Sikh community on the auspicious occasion of Baisakhi. In a message of warmth and inclusivity, he has stated it as a festival of love, kindness, and jubilation. PM emphasized the significance of Baisakhi, describing the desi month of Baisakhi as a symbol of love, spring, and the sharing of happiness.

He proudly acknowledged Pakistan's rich tapestry of diverse faiths and cultures, stating that the vibrant colors of the Baisakhi festival only serve to enhance the beauty of diversity and inclusion within the nation.

Expressing the government's readiness to welcome Sikh pilgrims, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assured that every possible effort would be made to ensure their comfort and felicitations during their visit.

On this joyous occasion, PM Shehbaz Sharif conveyed a message of kindness, tolerance, harmony, and peace. He called upon everyone to strive for a world that is prosperous and peaceful, urging all to play a constructive role in its realization.

Middle East: Pakistan calls for restraint, moving towards de-escalation

Regrets 'breakdown of diplomacy', points to UN Security Council failure



Soon Times Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is watching with deep concern the ongoing developments in Middle East, said the Foreign Office in a statement issued on Sunday, just hours after Iran carried out a retaliatory attack on Israel in which it used hundreds of missiles and drones.

The Foreign Office said Pakistan had for months "underlined the necessity of international efforts to prevent expansion of hostilities in the region and for a ceasefire in Gaza."

"On 2 April 2024, Pakistan had pointed to the dangers of the attack on an Iranian consular office in Syria as a major escalation in an already volatile region," the statement recalled.

BREAK DOWN OF DIPLOMACY

At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs also regretted that the international community and diplomatic channels failed to address the challenge, terming it as a "breakdown of diplomacy" and the UN Security Council's failure.

"Today's developments demonstrate the consequences of the breakdown of diplomacy. These also underline the grave implications in cases where the UN Security Council is unable to fulfil its responsibilities of maintaining peace and security."

SHOW RESTRAINT

About the way forward, the Foreign Office stressed the need for taking measures for de-escalation.

"It is now critically urgent to stabilise the situation and restore peace. We call on all parties to exercise utmost restraint and move towards de-escalation," the statement read.

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz extends warm welcome to Sikh pilgrims for Baisakhi celebrations



Soon Times Correspondent

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has extended a heartfelt welcome to Sikh pilgrims gathering in Pakistan to commemorate the vibrant cultural festival of Baisakhi.

Embracing the spirit of diversity and unity, Punjab CM announced the official celebration of Baisakhi, emphasizing its significance as a joyous occasion for all.

Addressing on the occasion, CM Maryam Nawaz expressed her felicitations to the Sikh

community, referring to Baisakhi as a colorful festival that embodied the essence of shared heritage and harmony.

"I am Pakistani first, then Punjabi, and Punjab resides in my heart," she affirmed, underlining the deep-rooted connection she feels towards the province and its diverse populace.

Assuring the seamless organization of festivities, Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz emphasized that all arrangements were meticulously prepared in Hassan Abdal, Nanka Sahib, Kartarpur, and Lahore to warmly receive Sikh pilgrims from around the globe.

She underscored Punjab's commitment to providing optimal facilities and a conducive environment for the celebration of Baisakhi, ensuring a memorable experience for all participants.

"Baisakhi is not just a festival; it is the true cultural identity of Punjab," declared the Chief Minister, highlighting the significance of the occasion in preserving and promoting Punjab's rich heritage.

National Assembly's session called on Monday, Parliament's joint session rescheduled

Soon Times

Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

A National Assembly session has been called for Monday, while the joint session of Parliament has been rescheduled.

Speaker National Assembly Ayaz Sadiq will preside over the NA session on Monday at 5 p.m. sharp.

The NA session has been convened on the opposition's request, with discussions revolving around the opposition's agenda.

During the session, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Asifa Bhutto will take the oath as a member of the National



Assembly (MNA).

Meanwhile, the joint session of Parliament has been rescheduled.

According to parliamentary affairs officials, the joint session of Parliament will now be summoned on April 18 instead of April 17.

President Asif Ali Zardari is scheduled to address the joint session of Parliament.

Journey back begins as Eid holidays are over



ISLAMABAD

LAHORE

Bus and railway stations are once again teeming with passengers as journey back to cities started on Sunday after celebrating Eidul Fitr with loved ones.

Like other big cities, a large number of people are returning to Lahore from their native areas as a result of which rush on bus and railway stations has increased.

People that time passed away in a blink of an eye. "Holidays are over, now we have to return to work."

It may be recalled that the government had announced Eid holidays from April 10 to 13. But, like previous years, people started leaving for their native areas on April 5 to add Friday and Saturday to their days off. The government also ran special trains to carry people to their native places but that facility is unavailable on return journey.

Omar Ayub asserts PTI founder's imminent release, end of incumbent governments

PTI leader condemned any undue influence on judges and interference in judicial matters.



Soon Times Correspondent

QUETTA

Opposition leader and central general secretary of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) Omar Ayub has made bold claims regarding the impending release of PTI founder and the eventual downfall of the incumbent governments.

Ayub revealed plans to orchestrate nationwide protests and rallies, asserting that their movement would bring an end to the current regimes.

In a press briefing in Quetta, taking a swipe at ruling authorities Omar Ayub derisively labeled the government as "mountains of sand" propped up on crutches formed by Form-47.

He insisted Sharif family was afraid of prisoner number 804, reference to the PTI founder detained in Adiala Jail.

He criticized the detention of 106 prisoners under military courts, vehemently denouncing civilian

trials conducted within military courts jurisdiction.

Omar Ayub emphasized the PTI founder's pivotal role in raising awareness among the youth. He reiterated that the PTI movement harbors a singular agenda of upholding the rule of law and the constitution.

PTI leader Omar Ayub lauded the unwavering support of party workers during challenging times and announced the inclusion.

Bahawalnagar incident: Govt issues notification of JIT



Soon Times Correspondent

LAHORE

The Punjab government on issued a notification with regard to the formation of a joint investigation team (JIT) to investigate the Bahawalnagar incident.

Special Home Secretary Fazal-ur-Rehman will be the convener of the team whereas Bahawalpur Commissioner Nadir Chatha and DIG Special Branch Faisal Raza will be the members of the joint investigation team.

The team will also include a member each from Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Intelligence Bureaus (IB).

Bilawal pays homage to ZAB in message on 45th death anniversary

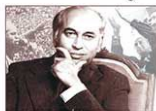
Soon Times Correspondent

NAUDERO

People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday urged the nation to continue Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's mission for progress and prosperity of the country.

In his message on the occasion of 45th death anniversary of the founder of the PPP and former prime minister, Bilawal said "let us strive to build a Pakistan where justice prevails, where democracy flourishes and where citizens are empowered to utilize his full potential."

"Let us all move forward with a new determination by following the legacy of ZAB. Today, we should pay homage to Shaheed Bhutto and also pledge to uphold the ideals for which he sacrificed his life."



It may be noted that the PPP had put off a rally to observe the death anniversary, which falls on April 4, due to Ramadan.

The PPP has made all the arrangements to hold the rally at Garhi Khuda Baksh at 3 pm today.

Party workers from all over the country have reached Bhutto's mausoleum where more than 8,000 police and security personnel have been deployed. As per party sources, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other party leaders will address the participants.

Finance Minister Aurangzeb leaves for Washington to hold talks with IMF

Team expected to meet with officials of World Bank.

Soon Times Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

An economic delegation led by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has left for Washington on Sunday to hold negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a new bailout package, Geo News reported. Talks between Pakistan and the IMF would be held next week, wherein Islamabad will request the global lender for the approval of a new loan programme.

Negotiations for the new loan programme will be held after the executive board meeting while the finance minister is expected to call on the IMF managing director later in Washington.

Apart from the Fund, the team is expected to meet with the officials of the World Bank and other institutes as well.

Ahead of his visit to the United

States.

ISLAMABAD

Aurangzeb on April 11 briefed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif about his meetings with the officials of the IMF, World Bank and other institutions.

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, matters related to the overall economic situation of the country were discussed in the meeting.

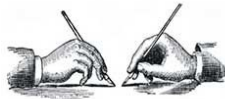
Whereas, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva on April 11 confirmed that Pakistan was in discussions with the Fund on a potential follow-up programme to its nine-month, \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA), adding that it had important issues to solve.

Georgieva had told an event at the



Atlantic Council think tank that Pakistan was successfully completing its existing programme with the IMF and its economy was performing somewhat better, with reserves now being built up.

"There is a commitment to continue on this path, and the country is turning to the fund for potentially having a follow-up programme", Georgieva had said, flagging issues that the struggling South Asian nation still needed to address.



Iran-Israel Clash and Pakistan's Deep Concerned

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday said that Pakistan was watching with deep concern the ongoing developments in the Middle East (ME) and called upon all the parties to exercise the utmost restraint and move towards de-escalation.

"Today's developments demonstrate the consequences of the breakdown of diplomacy. These also underline the grave implications in cases where the UN Security Council is unable to fulfill its responsibilities of maintaining international

peace and security," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement. It was now critically urgent to stabilize the situation and restore peace, it was further stressed. The spokesperson said that for months, Pakistan had underlined the necessity of

international efforts to prevent the expansion of hostilities in the region and for immediate ceasefire in Gaza. On April 2, Pakistan had pointed to the dangers of an attack on the Iranian consular office in Syria as a major escalation in an already volatile region

Let the Daughters of Eve Live!



Nida Sultan Nagra.

liberating the daughters of Eves from the clutches of salacious, obscene and vulgar rascals, having their sprees without any fear of punishment. Why should they be restricted to homes? Aren't they the humans? Aren't they the citizens of this country? Don't they have emotions, feelings, wishes, desires and rights? Education is not their birthright? Chauvinistic people are bent upon sickening the nation and it is a shocking element that majority of the people listen to them and show agreement to their stupid suggestions. So called religious minded perverts have got a say and they try to have the strings in their hands. The point is that the females are not just the puppets. They are independent and free individuals and they have every right to raise their voices against the sex predators and they can't stay silent after getting harassed or molested.

It gives me immense pleasure to note that since very long, the top performers at colleges, universities and work places are the girls. They shine; they excel; they perform; and they stand tall all because of their talent, guts, ability, efficiency and performance. This is the most pertinent shut-up call to those who believe that girls should never get out for education, jobs, relaxation and enjoyment. We can't permit such mentally and emotionally troubled dictators to dictate their terms and ruin the lives of the gifted individuals. They have proved their individuality time after time and, I have a firm belief that future belongs to the daughters of Eve.

Talking about workplaces, I can't control my anger to see the deplorably shocking and heart-rending situations. I can't ignore the fact that the majority of the male colleagues are very sensible, cooperative, respectful, gentle and thoroughly professional, but at the same time the existence and presence of salacious, lascivious and shameless predators feels like the thorn to my side.

Why are women always subjects of gossip? Why do men find it easy to target women? Why do men never regard women as autonomous individuals rather, they see them as their property? The situation for women at the workplace is really heart-wrenching. Men often feel intimidated by the assertive women, and it is sad to see:

'A whole generation worked to empower women, but forgot to teach men how to live with empowered women.' They play their part very successfully in creating a living hell for the female community. They harass, molest, embarrass and discomfort the female

colleagues and finally force them to quit. The most disturbing factors that the higher management also fail to stop their advances and very cowardly and callously advise the daughters of Eves to remain silent, otherwise, they may cause infamy not only for themselves, but for the parents and the organization also. This is the kind of attitude which gives the despicable predators the courage to go on without fear or fright and stay happy with their inborn meanness, shamelessness and remorselessness. If such brutes are dealt with iron hands, they will never have the courage to exercise their obscenity so freely. They are abducted in the broad daylight by the bigwigs, ruling elites and powerful villains of the society, but the law enforcing agencies remain helpless and most of the time least interested in the miseries of the miserably parents. Justice seems like crying for the moon and the files remain locked in the lockers of those who are supposed to do the justice.

Crimes against the women are the most expected and the most accepted norms of this country and exploitation and humiliation is going on and on everywhere around at workplaces, educational institutes and behind the boundary walls even. Sisters, daughters, working ladies and house wives are supposed to be suppressed and justice can't be ensured. The female community all around our country has been waiting for the miracles, but they have forgotten that the miracles happen in centuries or never happen at all. Their wait may prove fruitless, but their efforts may be rewarded. So the solution is to stand tall and raise voice for their rights and privileges. Otherwise, they will remain in the pitch blind ditch of exploitation and injustice. Let's keep our hopes alive and we should believe that the responsible ones will act responsibly and initiate a sacred war against the power giants and the obscene scoundrels stopping them to treat the DoEs disdainfully, insultingly and inhumanly.

They are supposed to be stopped forcefully from considering the female community as the easy things to get. They deserve respect, consideration, support, appreciation and acceptance & recognition of their existence, roles and contributions. The good days will come and we will live in the country where the rule of law will ensure the survival of the exploited daughters of Eve. It seems like a miracle and let's pray that the miracle should happen soon.

Hamas-Israel negotiations and Regional Stability



Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer

The escalating intensity of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel is attached with the rising rhetoric from officials on both sides that suggest a troubling path towards a potentially devastating conflict. While the confrontations may indicate a path towards a large-scale war, it is an evident that both parties are acutely aware of the devastating toll such a conflict would exact on civilian populations in both Lebanon and Israel. The historical context of previous conflicts between Hezbollah and Israel underscores the magnitude of the potential consequences, including widespread destruction, loss of life and destabilization of the region. Despite the heightened tensions, there remains recognition albeit uneasy of the imperative to avoid a full-scale war and seek avenues for de-escalation and resolution. The complexity of the geopolitical scene which is intertwined with regional alliances and interests to underscore the importance of diplomatic efforts to defuse tensions and prevent further escalation. Ultimately, the recognition of the immense human cost of conflict underscores the necessity for all stakeholders to prioritize dialogue and diplomacy in pursuit of peace and stability in the region. According to Israeli officials, tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border have escalated significantly, with clashes intensifying and spreading in recent weeks. Israel has reportedly increased its military strikes, targeting not only areas within Lebanese territory but also conducting airstrikes against Iranian-affiliated sites in Syria, including the Iranian consulate in Damascus on April 1st. In response to these developments, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah delivered a speech on April 5th, affirming Hezbollah's commitment to continued border clashes with Israel and declaring that the group will persist in its attacks until the cessation of hostilities in Gaza. Nasrallah also warned Lebanon to brace itself for potential Iranian retaliation against Israel, emphasizing Hezbollah's preparedness for any escalation along the border and asserting that the group has yet to deploy its most potent weaponry. These developments underscore the precarious situation in the region, with the potential for further escalation and broader regional implications.

On April 7, the Israeli army made a significant announcement on its website, declaring the completion of yet another phase of the Northern Command's readiness for war along the Lebanon front. This announcement has intensified the concerns of analysts, who increasingly argue that prolonged border clashes heighten the likelihood of a broader conflict, potentially culminating in a ground invasion of southern Lebanon. Such a military operation would be strategically aimed at establishing a security corridor deep into Lebanese territory, pushing Hezbollah fighters beyond the Litani River. However, historical precedents cast doubt on the effectiveness of such endeavors. Israel's previous attempt to create a security corridor in south Lebanon, spanning from 1985 to 2000, ended without achieving the desired stability. Despite past reservations from Israeli political and military officials regarding ground combat in Lebanon, there has been a perceptible shift in attitude. Amos Harel suggests that given this shift, the scenario of a general war in Lebanon no longer appears implausible. Yet, the complexities of the region and the historical challenges associated with similar endeavors suggest that any such military action is fraught with uncertainties and risks, casting a shadow over Israel's aspirations for stability along its border with Lebanon. Israeli officials find themselves in a precarious position, carefully weighing two critical factors in their decision-making regarding a potential full-blown war with Hezbollah. Firstly, the prospect of such a conflict escalating into a broader regional conflagration cannot be overlooked, as it's highly likely that other members of the Iran-led "Axis of Resistance" would join forces against Israel and the US. This amplifies the risks and complexities involved, given the already strained dynamics in the Middle East. Secondly, the stance of the Biden administration adds another layer of consideration. With clear opposition to a significant escalation in Lebanon, Israeli initiation of such a war, particularly amidst US calls for cease-fires in Gaza and objections to Israeli actions in Rafah, could significantly strain the bilateral relationship with the United States. The intensifying skirmishes between Hezbollah and Israel, coupled with heightened rhetoric from both sides, signal a potential path toward a large-scale conflict, reminiscent of the scale of hostilities seen in Gaza. However, amidst this escalating tension, both Israeli and Hezbollah officials are cognizant of the devastating humanitarian toll such a war would exact on civilians in both Lebanon and Israel. Furthermore, there's a sober recognition within Israeli circles that the outcomes of a new conflict with Hezbollah are

uncertain, with lingering doubts about whether it would result in a resolution akin to the 2006 war, which led to the UN Security Council Resolution 1701, ultimately unimplemented by either side. Therefore, Israeli officials face a delicate balance, contemplating the risks of escalation, the implications for regional stability, the diplomatic ramifications vis-a-vis the US, and the potential human cost, as they navigate the complexities of their decision-making calculus concerning Hezbollah.

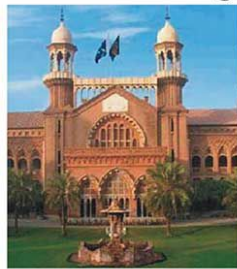
UNSCR 1701 stands as a pivotal framework aimed to defuse tensions and promote stability in the volatile region surrounding the Israeli-Lebanese border. Central to its provisions is the call for militants not affiliated with the Lebanese army or the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to withdraw approximately 25 miles north of the Israeli border, alongside urging Israel to relinquish its hold on occupied Lebanese territories and to cease violations of Lebanese airspace. Amidst this backdrop, key stakeholders including Lebanese officials, Hezbollah leaders, and Israeli authorities have expressed a collective inclination towards pursuing diplomatic avenues to resolve the persistent conflict along the border. Hezbollah's stance notably hinges on the cessation of hostilities in Gaza as a condition for their approval of any potential agreement.

The United States has emerged as a proactive actor, proposing a roadmap aimed at addressing the divergent demands of both sides through a series of security arrangements. Notably, this proposal falls short of a complete implementation of UNSCR 1701. It envisions Hezbollah's withdrawal, particularly its elite Radwan Forces, northwards to the Litani River, while concurrently advocating for heightened presence of the Lebanese army and UNIFIL in the vacated areas. Additionally, the US seeks to facilitate mediation efforts between the conflicting parties to address territorial disputes along the border, mirroring its prior successful intervention in mediating maritime border disputes. This multifaceted approach underscores the intricate dynamics at play and the concerted international efforts aimed at fostering lasting peace and stability in the region.

The fate of the ongoing indirect negotiations between Hamas and Israel, facilitated by Qatar, Egypt, and the US, is crucial for the region's stability. These talks aim to broker a ceasefire deal that would lead to the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. The outcome of these negotiations carries significant implications, not only for the Israel-Palestine conflict but also for wider regional dynamics.



LHC nullifies appointment of incumbent managing director of NTDC



Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE
The Lahore High Court has declared the appointment of the managing director of the National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC) null and void.

In the 10-page decision issued by Justice Shahid Karim, the court observed that advertisements were placed in newspapers for the position of MD of NTDC, and when the recruitment process commenced, the Public Sector Companies Rules, 2013,

was in effect. Following interviews, the NTDC board unanimously submitted the names of three candidates to the federal government. The petitioner, Khawaja Rafat Hussain, topped the list, while Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan, who was third on the list, was appointed as the managing director of NTDC, the court order noted.

It further stated that the Energy Ministry, in a summary to the cabinet, stated that the energy minister recommended Rana Abdul Jabbar's

appointment. The appointment process was conducted under the Companies Act, 2017, and the Public Sector Companies Rules, 2013, while the federal government has enforced the State-Owned Enterprises Act, 2023.

The petitioner's counsel argued that this law was passed by parliament on Jan 30, 2023, and the federal government appointed the MD of NTDC on Feb 8. Contrary to the 2013 law, the appointment should have been made under the 2023 law, which states that the federal government does not have the authority to make appointments in state-owned enterprises.

The federal government and NTDC's lawyers argued that the 2023 law does not apply to this appointment. They stated that the appointment process had already begun before the enforcement of the 2023 law, and it cannot be applied retrospectively. In its decision, the court stated that the argument of the federal government and NTDC's lawyers does not hold weight. The court declared the current MD's appointment at NTDC null and void.

SNGPL disconnected 62 connections, imposed Rs 1.5 million fine in crackdown against gas pilferers

Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE

During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad. It disconnected 62 connections and imposed Rs 1.5 million fine. In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas. In Multan team disconnected 11 connections on illegal use of gas. In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 21 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal use of gas and imposed fine of Rs 0.56 million against gas theft cases. In Sahiwal 03 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. In Faisalabad the team disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and imposed fine of Rs 0.102 million have on

gas pilfers. The regional team of Bahawalpur disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas while another 01 on use of compressor. In Gujranwala team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas while 01 on use of compressor. The team also imposed a fine of Rs 0.42 million against gas theft cases. The regional team of Gujrat disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.00031 million against gas theft cases. In Islamabad team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas. The team of Rawalpindi disconnected 06 connections on illegal use of gas and imposed fine of Rs 0.12 million against gas theft cases. In Mardan team disconnected 05 connections and booked an amount of Rs 0.3 million.

ASI dismissed for abuse of power & extortion from citizen

Soon Times Correspondent
SARGODHA
Former ASI Rasheed Gujjar locked up a citizen on a self-imposed charge and extorted a ransom of Rs. 45 lakh from him. An inquiry was conducted on the request of the citizen. In the inquiry

report, it was proved that Rasheed Gujjar had taken ransom of 45 lakh rupees, on the basis of which a case was registered against him in the Police Station Satellite Town Sargodha. As a result of departmental action, he has been dismissed from the job. Due to this grudge, he has made baseless allegations

against the Sargodha police officers which have no truth. Apart from this, the former ASI has received departmental and legal punishment many times in the police department and anti-corruption for receiving corruption complaints in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017 and 2020.

SHO Sahiwal PS breaks network of drug dealers in Vijh

Soon Times Correspondent
QUETTA

PPP leader Sharif Khan Khilji has resigned from the party and announced his inclusion in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

"I announce my resignation from the Pakistan Peoples Party. The party has become a party of the Zardari family, not of Bhutto," Khilji said, citing the reason behind his defection. He stated, "The election on February 8, 2024, was not an election but a selection. Despite the PPP's government in Balochistan, I am resigning. It is my heartfelt desire to help the poor."

Khilji stated that he joined the PPP out of necessity after leaving the PTI, adding that he



never entered politics for perks and funds. Khilji further elaborated, "There is a significant difference between the prime minister and the founder of PTI. We all have to stand up against the corrupt system. The Balochistan government also offered funds to prevent me from joining PTI."

Light to moderate rainfall turns Karachi's weather pleasant



Soon Times Correspondent
KARACHI
The weather of Karachi turned pleasant on Sunday after the port city received mostly light to moderate rainfall with some spells of heavy thundershowers in various areas.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has predicted another rain spell in Karachi on April 17 and 18 due to the presence of westerlies in the region.

The highest rainfall was recorded in Nazimabad at 21.2 mm while Gulshan-e-Hadid received 20 mm, Faisal Base 17, Masroor Base and Kemari 16 mm, North

Karachi and Saadi Town 15 mm, Orangi 14.4 mm, Korangi 14.5 mm, Old Airport 11.9 mm, DHA 5.5 mm while Surjani Town recorded 3 mm of rain.

The mercury following the showers is expected to vary between 28 to 30 degrees Celsius.

Radar showed heavy rain clouds moving from the West and South-West towards the East of Karachi while satellite data also predicted intermittent rain throughout the day.

With western winds prevalent across the country, rural districts of Sindh including Jamshoro, Dadu, Shaheed Benazirabad,

Qamber Shahdadkot are likely to experience thundershowers.

The metropolis saw cloudy weather on Saturday with a maximum temperature of 32.6 degrees Celsius with 66% humidity, while Mitthi in rural Sindh recorded the highest temperature at 39.5 degrees Celsius.

The PMD had predicted moderate rain and the gale in the city on Sunday, while earlier the Met Department predicted moderate rain and gale with thundershowers due to the formation of thundercells in the suburbs of the city on Saturday.

Power Suspension Schedules for Today

Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD

According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule today. From 07:00 AM to 12:00

Noon, Rawalpindi City Circle, NustRoad, Afandi Colony, Ratta, Lakhu Road, Radio Pak, Misrial Road, Japan Road Feeders under surrounding areas will remain closed. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

SOCIAL WELFARE & BAIT UL MAAL DEPARTMENT SARGODHA

INVITATION FOR BIDS
FOR FRAME WORK CONTRACT FOR PERIOD OF ONE YEAR FOR PROCUREMENT OF FURNITURE, MACHINERY AND OTHER ITEMS UNDER ADP SCHEMES 2023-25
TENDER NO. SWD/SGD/01/2023-24

1. Social Welfare & Bait ul Maal Department Sargodha, invites sealed bids from the eligible bidders for the Frame Work Contract for period of one year for Procurement of Furniture, Machinery and Other Items for following Schemes:

Sl.	Description of Items	Package Description	Package Wise Estimated Cost
1	Purchase of Furniture, Others and Machinery Equipment for the Development Projects.	PACKAGE-1 Furniture & Fixture	17,580,000
2	i) Establishment of Admin Block along with District Industrial Home at Sargodha.	PACKAGE-2 Machinery & Equipment	18,685,000
3	ii) Establishment of Multipurpose Hall in Social Welfare Complex Sargodha.	PACKAGE-3 Others	3,600,000
4	iii) Establishment of Pannah Gah at all Divisional Headquarters across the Punjab Phase-1 One at Sargodha		
	iv) Provision of Furniture & Equipment for institutions renovated through missing facilities Phase II including Sargodha Division and Faisalabad Division (Dar ul Amaan Sargodha, Manwali and Bhakkar)		
		Total	39,865,000

- Bidders may get the Bidding Documents from the office of the Divisional Director Sargodha on the submission of written application along with payment of non-refundable fee of Rs. 3000/- (Two Thousand Rupees only). Bidding Documents are available up to 24-04-2024. OR bidders can download the copy of the Bidding Documents from the website of Punjab Procurement Regulatory Authority (www.pprapub.gov.pk), however, the receipt of purchase of bidding document shall be required to annex with technical bid even if it is downloaded from PPRAA.
- The bidder is required to submit a 02% bid security guaranteed from any scheduled bank in favor of Divisional Director, Social Welfare & Bait ul Maal, Sargodha.
- Single Stage - Two Envelopes bidding procedure shall be applied as per rule 38(2) (a) of Punjab Procurement Rules, 2014.
- The envelopes shall be marked as "TECHNICAL PROPOSAL" and "FINANCIAL PROPOSAL" in bold and legible letters. Sealed bids are required to reach on or before 24-04-2024 positively at the Office of the Divisional Director, Social Welfare & Bait ul Maal, House No.79 Awan Colony, Jail Road, Sargodha. Late bids will not be entertained. The technical bids received till the stipulated date & time shall be opened at 11:30 A.M on the same date in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, who may choose to attend.
- Detailed terms & conditions and specifications are given in the Bidding Document.

NOTE: The procurement shall be conducted as per PPRAA Rules, 2014.

CONVENER PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE

DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR, SOCIAL WELFARE & BAIT UL MAAL, SARGODHA
DIVISION, SARGODHA
JAIL ROAD, SARGODHA: 048-9230542



STATE LIFE

INSURANCE CORPORATION OF PAKISTAN

TENDER NOTICE

TENDER NOTICE No. SLIC/PO/16/2024

THE SUPPLY/DELIVERY OF LAPTOPS, DESKTOP COMPUTERS, LASER JET PRINTERS WITH SCANNER FOR INFORMATION SECURITY AND REAL ESTATE DIVISION/DEPARTMENT, STATE LIFE PRINCIPAL OFFICE

Sealed technical & financial bids are invited in accordance with PPRA rules (through EPADS), under "Single Stage Two Envelope Procedure" from well recognized firms dealing in sale and services of IT equipment, for the supply of "Laptops Desktop Computers, Laser Jet Printers with Scanner along with Software" for real estate Division/Information Security Department, State Life Principal Office Karachi. Tender Notice along with tender documents can be seen/downloaded from PPRAA/SLIC website i.e. www.ppra.org.pk & www.statelife.com.pk also tender notice along with tender document has been uploaded on EPADS system as well. Bids will be received only from those firms who are registered with PPRA for E-Procurement on EPADS system for tendering in SLIC through their e-mail addresses which were provided by them to PPRA at the time of their registration. Filled tenders must be submitted through their e-mail address latest by 30-04-2024 before 11:00 a.m. Technical Bids will be opened on the same at 11:30 a.m.

(Muhammad Tajamul) Divisional Head Central Procurement Division State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan, Principal Office, 2nd Floor, State Life Building No.09, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed Road, Karachi Phone No.021-99204521

FOR RENTING OF OFFICE SPACES IN STATE LIFE BUILDINGS, PLEASE CONTACT THE GIVEN TELEPHONE NUMBER (051-9206017/053-9260340/091-9222000/021-9920285)

Search for Missing:

A case of abduction /disappearance of Saima wife of Razaq Mashah and Shahrana



Navab son of Razaq Mashah has been registered in Police Station Mahmood Abad District East Karachi According to the plaintiff of the case, Razaq Mashah, both of the lost went out from Karachi Awan Basti on 16-10-2022 at 15:00 hours but have not returned yet. Their search is ongoing. It is suspected that both of them are in Multan, Punjab. Therefore, if anyone has any information about the woman and the child in any city of Pakistan, including Karachi, or if they have been seen anywhere, please contact the following phone numbers. The name of the whistleblower will be kept confidential. Advertiser: SIP/O Jameel Ahmed Soomro/In. PS Mahmood Abad Karachi

Contact Numbers: I.O: 0333-2299168S.I.O: 0300-9255169
Mohr: 0314-2012616



Emerging teen powers Australia past Mexico into BJK Cup finals



Brisbane (Australia) Australia surged into the Billie Jean King Cup finals with a 4-0 victory over Mexico, handing Grand Slam champion Samantha Stosur a winning start to her reign as captain.

The seven-time champions took a commanding 2-0 lead into day two at Brisbane's Pat Rafter Arena, allowing Stosur to rest Anna Rodionova and hand a debut to 18-year-old Taylor Preston. She seized the opportunity with both hands, sweeping past the experienced Marcela Zacarias, 12 years her senior, 6-1, 6-1 to put the tie beyond Mexico's reach.

Daria Saville and Ellen Perez rubbed salt in the wounds by beating Mexican duo Jessica Hinojosa Gomez and Maria Fernanda Navarro 6-3, 6-1 in the dead rubber doubles.

"I'm just trying not to cry at the moment, to be honest," said Preston.

"It's a very, very amazing feeling and so grateful for the opportunity from Sam and the rest of the team to be able to play and close out the tie."

Zacarias was bidding to bank her 22nd Billie Jean King Cup match win and claim sole ownership of the record by a Mexican player.

But she was no match for the emerging teenager, who made her WTA Tour main-draw debut at the 2022 Rosalind Grammer Court Championships as a qualifier before an injury derailed her progress.

Sydney knife attacker had mental health issues, ideology not motive, police say



SYDNEY The man who fatally stabbed six people in Sydney had mental health issues in the past and there was no indication ideology was a motive in the attack in one of the city's busiest shopping centres, police said on Sunday.

The attacker, identified by police as Joel Cauchi, was known to police in the neighbouring state of Queensland, and police have spoken to his family after Saturday's attack. New South Wales Police Assistant Commissioner Anthony Cooke told a press conference.

Witnesses described how Cauchi, wearing shorts and an Australian national rugby league jersey, ran through the Westfield Bondi Junction mall with a knife, randomly attacking people.

Some shoppers and staff at the mall in Sydney's east tried to stop him and crowds sheltered in shattered shops.

Pereira knocks out Hill to retain UFC light heavyweight title



LAS VEGAS Brazil's Alex Pereira pulled off a stunning first-round knockout victory over Jamaal Hill to retain the UFC light heavyweight title while Zhang Weili beat Yan Xiaonan to retain the strawweight belt at UFC 300.

Pereira waved off what looked to be a low blow from Hill before landing a left hook that sent the American sprawling backwards onto the canvas. He then pounced to rain down blows and force the stoppage at the 3:14 mark of the first round.

"I told everyone the whole time, he's a strong guy, I cannot go away from my strategy, and that's exactly what I was doing... I was gauging the distance and the timing, and everything went perfectly," Pereira said in a post-fight interview in the cage.

Hill had won the title in January 2023, but an injury suffered playing basketball forced him to vacate in July and descend onto the canvas. He then fought UFC middleweight champ, took over the belt with a second-round knockout of Jiri Prochazka in November.

After coming through the fight relatively unscathed, Pereira said he would like to fight on the upcoming UFC card in Brazil in May.



Iran launches drone attacks on Israel

Iran warns countries against letting Israel use their airspace or territories.

WEB DESK Iran has launched multiple drone attacks on Israel, according to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), as the White House confirmed the attacks, what Iranian Press TV called "extensive drone strikes" by the Revolutionary Guards.

Iran has launched more than 100 drones toward Israel. IDF claimed. Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corp said that it had also launched missiles at "specific targets" in Israel as part of what it deemed "Operation True Promise".

Iran's mission to the UN said that the Iranian missile and drone attacks against Israel were in response to the strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus and added that "the matter can be concluded".

Iran's response came in response to an attack on the country's consulate in Syria earlier this month, which Iran blames on Israel. The attack claimed lives of several Iranian commanders.

Iran's Defence Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani issued a warning on Sunday, saying that Tehran will firmly respond to any country that "opens its airspace or territory for attacks on Iran by Israel."

Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels also launched multiple drones at Israel after Iran initiated a retaliatory drone assault against Israel, security firm Amnesty said late Saturday.

"Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were reportedly launched by the Huthis toward Israel. The UAVs were launched in coordination with Iran," the security company said.

"Israeli ports are assessed to be potential targets", it added and warned of "collateral damage" to shipping.

Speaking in a televised address late Saturday, Israel's army's spokesman, Daniel Hagari, said, "Iran launched UAVs from its territory towards the territory of the state of Israel."

Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon reopen airspace after Iran attacks

CAIRO (Reuters) - Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon have reopened their airspace after closing it late on Saturday as Iran launched drone and missile attacks against Israel, the three countries said on Sunday.

Jordan's state TV said the country had resumed air traffic operations, citing aviation authorities. The opening of its airspace came more than three hours earlier than scheduled.

Iraq's aviation authority said security risks had now been overcome.

Lebanon said its airport will resume its activities after the overnight closure, state TV reported.

Iran launched explosive drones and fired missiles at Israel late on Saturday - its first direct attack on Israeli territory in a retaliatory strike that raises the threat of wider regional conflict.

Jordan, which lies between Iran and Israel, had readied air defenses to intercept any drones or missiles that violated its territory, two regional security sources said.

US and British warplanes were involved in shooting down some Israel-bound drones over the Iraq-Syria border area, Israel's Channel 12 reported.



Israeli rally against government amid deadlock on Gaza hostages



TEL AVIV Thousands of Israelis rallied against their government, with some demanding Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu call off the half-year-old war in Gaza amid a deadlock in diplomatic efforts to retrieve hostages held there by Hamas.

Hamas-led gunmen seized 253 people during an Oct. 7 attack on Israel that killed 1,200 others, according to officials. Some hostages were freed in a November truce but Egyptian and Qatari-mediated efforts to secure another deal appear to have stalled.

As concern mounts in Israel for the wellbeing of the 129 remaining hostages, who cannot be contacted, their families and friends have organised increasingly vocal demonstrations against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rightist government.

They have dovetailed with activists who have long called for Netanyahu's ouster given his trial on graft charges - which he denies - and his attempts to overhaul the judiciary last year.

"Our country's near the abyss. We've already started to drive down and we must stop it. I'm here to gather the force to tell the people that they need to come out and they need to tell our government that it's time to stop," said Marva Erez, 45, who was among demonstrators in Tel Aviv.

Netanyahu said he will continue with the war to dismantle Hamas, despite alarm in Washington and other Western capitals at the civilian toll in Gaza, where medical officials say more than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed.

Hamas has said any new hostage deal must bring about an end to the Gaza war and withdrawal of all Israeli forces.

"There will be a (hostage) deal," Culture Minister Miki Zohar, a senior member of Netanyahu's Likud party, told Channel 12 TV. "But not at any price."

The anti-government protest in Tel Aviv was held separately to a smaller vigil for the hostages.

Hezbollah source says Israel struck position in east Lebanon



BEIRUT A Hezbollah source said Israel struck Sunday one of the Iran-backed group's buildings in Lebanon's east, close to the Syrian border, as tensions soared after Iran directly attacked Israel.

"The Israeli strike targeted an area... near Baalbek and targeted a two-storey building belonging to Hezbollah," a source within the Lebanese group told AFP, adding there were no casualties.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported that "an enemy air strike targeted a building" in the village of Nabi Sheet and "destroyed it".

An AFP photographer at the site saw the concrete and steel

wreckage of the building, levelled in the attack.

Earlier on Sunday, Hezbollah said it had twice launched barrages of rockets towards the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, after it joined in the major Iranian drone and missile attack against Israel.

The Iranian attack was in response to an April 1 air strike widely blamed on Israel that destroyed an Iranian consulate building in Damascus, killing seven Revolutionary Guards, including two generals.

Hamas ally Hezbollah has exchanged near-daily cross-border fire with Israel since the Palestinian militant group attacked southern Israel on October 7 triggering the war in the Gaza Strip.

Biden returns to Washington as Iran launches attack on Israel

WASHINGTON President Joe Biden reinforced solidarity with Israel after meeting with his national security team to discuss Iran's drone and missile attack on the US ally, which prompted concerns about a wider conflagration in the Middle East.

Biden cut short a weekend trip to his home state of Delaware and returned to Washington to meet with cabinet members and other top US officials.

"I just met with my national security team for an update on Iran's attacks against Israel," Biden said in a post on X after the meeting. "Our commitment to Israel's security against threats from Iran and its proxies is ironclad."

Iran launched dozens of drones at Israel that will take hours to reach their targets, Israel's military said, an attack that may trigger an escalation between the regional archenemies.

Tehran had vowed to retaliate for Israel's attack on Iran's embassy compound last week in Damascus that killed a senior commander in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' overseas Quds Force and six other officers.

The White House said Biden was being briefed regularly on developments in the region, where the American military shot down Iranian drone aircraft headed toward Israel, according to three US officials.

The meeting in the Situation Room, a crisis management center deep within the West Wing of the White House, was attended by Secretary of State



Anthony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, national security adviser Jake Sullivan and other officials, the White House said.

Earlier on Saturday, Austin spoke with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant to discuss "urgent regional threats," the Pentagon said, and reiterated full American support for Israel against attacks by Iran and its proxies.

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, relayed a similar message of US support to his own Israeli counterpart, Tzachi Hanegbi, he said in a post on X. Israel subsequently put its military on full alert and canceled all educational and other youth activities. On Friday, Biden warned Iran against retaliation even while predicting the attack may be imminent. "We are devoted to the defense of Israel. We will support Israel.



India's Modi says BJP poll manifesto focuses on creating jobs

NEW DELHI Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the 2024 election manifesto of his Bharatiya Janata Party focuses on creating jobs and boosting startups in the country.

India begins voting on April 19 in general elections that will be held in seven stages until June 1. Votes are due to be counted on June 4 and results expected the same day.

VOTERS' CONCERN Unemployment and inflation are the main concerns of Indian voters but Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strong leadership, his party's Hindu nationalist agenda and India's rising global stature will likely help his reelection bid, a survey shows.

The findings illustrate that benefits of India's world beating growth are not evenly spread for its 1.4 billion people as the creation of jobs, despite Modi's domestic manufacturing push over the last 10 years, is still a challenge.

Unemployment was the primary concern of 27% of the 10,000 voters surveyed by Lokniti-CSDS across 19 of India's 28 states, with rising prices coming second at 23%, the Hindu newspaper said.

India is the world's fastest growing major economy and its fifth-largest. But nearly two thirds, or 62% of those surveyed, said finding jobs had become more difficult in the last five years. Modi's second term as prime minister.

The unemployment rate rose to 5.4% in 2022-23, from 4.9% in 2013-14.

just before Modi swept to power, and nearly 16% of urban youth in the 15-29 years age group remained unemployed in 2022/23 due to poor skills and a lack of quality jobs, official data shows.

Although 22% said "the most liked action" of Modi's government was the construction of a grand Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Ram on a site that was contested by minority Muslims, only 8% said it was their primary concern.

Modi supervised the consecration of the Ram temple in January, a move increasingly used by his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in its election campaign to highlight the completion of a long-standing Hindu demand.

On Friday, Modi attacked the main opposition Congress party for refusing the invitation to the temple inauguration.

"Ram devotees of the entire world have seen this arrogance of yours... this is an election game for you," Modi said in a campaign speech in the federal territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Congress had refused to attend the inauguration, saying it had been converted into a "political project" of the BJP and that the consecration had been brought forward "for electoral gain".

At least 48% respondents said the temple would consolidate a Hindu identity, but a huge majority (79%) said India belonged to citizens of all religions equally.