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## Negative propaganda cannot undermine nation's pursuit of prosperity: COAS

### No instability to be tolerated in country's journey of prosperity: COAS

Soon Times Correspondent  
Islamabad

Urging the nation to reject "negative forces" together, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Friday said that negative propaganda and social media trolls could not distract the nation from marching towards the development and prosperity of Pakistan. Addressing the Green Pakistan Initiative conference, the army chief said: "Let us all reject negative forces together and focus on Pakistan's journey of development and stability." He said that the armed forces of the country with the support of the nation would fail all the inimical forces bent on impeding the country's development and prosperity. "We are all united team Pakistan - InshaAllah with the cooperation and support of the people, all efforts of those who distract and obstruct Pakistan's development journey will fail," he added.

Stressing the need for overpowering economic

challenges, General Munir said that complete independence without economic stability is not possible. "No instability would be tolerated in Pakistan's journey of prosperity and development," he warned. Last month, COAS Munir assured unwavering resolve of the Pakistan Army to support the government's initiatives aimed at the economic recovery of the country. He had made the remarks during a high-level meeting - with an agenda of "measures against the spectrum of illegal activities and criminal mafias" - held with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the chair. The meeting was attended by civil-military leadership in which measures against unlawful activities were discussed. The civil-military leadership had decided strict actions against those elements who were involved in any kind of illegal activities including corruption, smuggling power theft or running criminal mafias.

## LHC declares marriage with ex-wife's sister illegal without completing



Soon Times Correspondent  
LAHORE

In a landmark verdict on Friday, the Lahore High Court (LHC) declared a man's marriage with the sister of former wife illegal without completing the compulsory Iddat period. Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh issued an 11-page written decision on the interim bail application of Muswar Hussain who married his ex-wife's sister in just nine days after divorce. It was noted in the judgement that according to Islam, a person could not keep two sisters in marriage and the decision.

## Warrant issued for Achakzai's arrest over MPO violation, illegal occupation



Soon Times Correspondent  
QUETTA

A lower court on Friday issued a warrant for the arrest of Mahmood Khan Achakzai, the chief of the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP), over charges of illegal occupation and violation of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO). According to a Dunya News report, a judicial magistrate in Quetta issued the arrest warrant for Achakzai in connection with a case registered at the Gawalmandi police station. Reportedly a raid was carried out at the residence of Achakzai after he was pitted against Asif Ali Zardari by the opposition parties in the election for the position of president of Pakistan. Achakzai was not present at his house at the time.



## CM Maryam to grace another passing-out parade in uniform



Soon Times Correspondent  
LAHORE

Having donned the police uniform at a passing-out parade of lady constables and traffic assistants on Thursday, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is set to grace another passing-out parade, but this time in Elite Force uniform. The chief minister attending the passing-out parade at the Police Training College in Chuhung drew a lot of criticism, so much so that a lawyer moved a court against Maryam for wearing the police uniform.

In his petition to the sessions court in Lahore, Advocate Altaf Bajwa argued that according to the law, no individual was permitted to wear the uniform of state institutions. The applicant urged the court to issue order for the initiation of a case against Maryam Nawaz for donning the police uniform. Not only this, the Punjab police, in order to de-escalate the situation, were prompted to release a statement today (Friday) clarifying that the provincial chief executive was "entitled to wear police uniform" as per the Punjab Police Dress Regulations. Maryam will now wear the Elite Force uniform. The Elite Force's passing-out parade ceremony will take place at the Elite Force Training Centre in Bedian area this ongoing week.

## Govt extends stay of registered Afghan refugees until June 30

### Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs federal cabinet meeting

Soon Times Correspondent  
Islamabad

The government has extended the validity of the Afghan refugees' Proof of Registration Cards (PoRCs) that expired on April 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024, to facilitate those who have yet not left Pakistan voluntarily as it presses ahead with its push to boot out illegal foreigners, a statement said on Friday. A decision to this effect was taken in the federal cabinet meeting held at the PM House under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The cabinet was told that this extension would enable the PoRC cardholders to have access to schools, bank accounts, and other facilities during their stay in Pakistan. It must be noted that these PoRC cardholders will be forcibly sent back to their country in the third phase of the programme of repatriation of illegal foreign nationals living in Pakistan for ages. Pakistan has expelled over half a



million undocumented refugees in Law and Justice, the federal cabinet approved the establishment of an additional special court in Makran Division to deal with anti-narcotics cases in Balochistan province. The jurisdiction of this special court will be extended to the districts of Panjgur, Kech, Gwadar, Hub and Lasbela. The cabinet also directed the authorities to appoint the best judge in the special court and ensure effective prosecution. Moreover, during the meeting, the

## ECP releases notification of victorious candidates in by-election



Soon Times Correspondent  
ISLAMABAD

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has released the notification of victorious candidates in by-election held on April 21. As per ECP sources, the victory notification of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidates/Ah

Pervaiz Malik from NA-119, and Rasheed Ahmed Khan from NA-132 Kasur were released. Victory notification of Faissal Ameen Khan from NA-44 D.I. Khan has been issued. As per notification, PML-N's Adnan Alzal Chatta from PP-36 Wazirabad, Ahmed Iqbal Chaudhry from PP-54 Narowal, Saeed Akbar Khan from PP-93 Bhakar, Rana Alzaal Hussain from PP-139 Sheikhpura were declared victorious. In Lahore constituencies, the PML-N did the clean sweep as many party candidates were notified as winners in by-election.

## Pakistan in 'contact with US' on energy requirements, FO says



Soon Times Correspondent  
ISLAMABAD

Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Friday said Pakistan was in contact with the United States regarding the country's requirements for energy. Addressing her weekly media briefing in Islamabad, the spokesperson said she had seen the US's statement on Pakistan's willingness to get

energy from Iran. Earlier this week, a State Department spokesperson had warned Islamabad regarding "potential risk of sanctions" following the Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Pakistan. "We advise anyone considering business deals with Iran to be aware of the potential risk of sanctions," the spokesperson said.

Baloch, on the other hand, maintained that cooperation for trade on preferential basis was present between Pakistan and Iran to fulfil the former's crucial necessities. She said during President Raisi's three-day visit, the matter of Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline was discussed and it was also reflected in the joint statement later. Both countries cogitated about energy and electricity trade, she added.

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## Punjab Assembly session: Speaker forms committee to probe wheat import



Soon Times Correspondent  
LAHORE

Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has constituted a three-member committee to probe the wheat import during the tenure of the caretaker government. The Punjab Assembly session witnessed a heated debate over the wheat procurement issue

from both sides of the aisle. The lawmakers severely criticised the wheat policy of the government and demanded thorough investigation of wheat import during the caretaker government. The MPs said the food minister failed to formulate any policy regarding the wheat procurement. The opposition protested in the

## Pakistan's first Air Ambulance Service training session kicks off

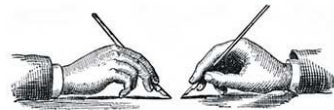
Soon Times Correspondent  
LAHORE

The inaugural training session for Pakistan's first Air Ambulance Service has been launched. Under the supervision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, a special session was held to review the progress of the service. Provincial Information Minister Azma Bukhari, the Punjab chief secretary, secretary finance, DG Rescue Services, and other officials attended the session.



During the briefing, it was announced that the training session for the first Air Ambulance Service had commenced. Emphasising the significance of the initiative, CM Maryam Nawaz expressed her determination to expand the operation of the

service. She underscored its crucial role in attending to emergencies and accidents in remote areas, affirming her commitment to leveraging all provincial resources for the welfare and betterment of the public. Stressing the priority of preserving human life, she asserted that the air ambulance service would be deployed during emergency situations and made available to other provinces as needed.



## World Veterinary day In Pakistan !!!

In the shadow of Pakistan's towering healthcare crisis, one group of unsung heroes remains largely overlooked: veterinary doctors. While the nation grapples with human health concerns, the vital role of veterinarians in safeguarding animal health and ensuring food security often goes unnoticed. Today world celebrates World Veterinary Day, a testament to the tireless service of these animal healthcare champions. In Pakistan, however, this day serves as a scathing indictment of a nation that hemorrhages neglect towards the very professionals who safeguard the health of our beloved creatures. Recent incidents highlight the dire need for Pakistan to reevaluate its treatment of these essential healthcare providers. In 2018, amidst the turmoil of conflict-ridden Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Saima embarked on a mission to vaccinate livestock against deadly diseases. Despite threats from

militant groups and the constant risk of violence, she continued her work, ensuring the health and well-being of countless animals in the region. In 2019, severe flooding ravaged parts of Sindh, leaving thousands of animals stranded and in need of urgent medical attention. Dr. Ali, along with a team of veterinarians, braved treacherous waters and hazardous conditions to provide emergency care to stranded livestock, demonstrating unwavering courage and compassion in the face of adversity. In 2020, an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease threatened to decimate livestock populations in rural Punjab. Dr. Azhar, a veterinary doctor, led a team of volunteers to vaccinate thousands of cattle, working tirelessly in hazardous conditions to contain the spread of the disease and save farmers from devastating losses. In 2021, a team of vets, including Dr. Ali Hassan, ventured deep into Baluchistan's rugged mountains to treat a

herd of endangered wild goats afflicted with a contagious bacterial disease. During the devastating floods of 2022, Dr. Zara Ahmed, a young vet in Sindh, waded through chest-deep floodwaters to reach stranded livestock. She risked contracting waterborne diseases but treated over 200 animals, preventing the outbreak of infections that could have further burdened flood-affected communities. The neglect of veterinary professionals is a reflection of broader systemic issues within Pakistan's healthcare infrastructure. While billions are allocated to bolster human healthcare services, veterinary medicine remains a neglected sector, relegated to the sidelines of national discourse. The consequences of this neglect are far-reaching. It not only impacts animal health but also poses a significant public health risk. Zoonotic diseases, those transmissible between animals and humans, thrive in environments with inadequate

veterinary care. Rabies, a deadly zoonotic disease, continues to claim lives in Pakistan due to a lack of proper animal vaccination programs. On World Veterinary Day, we must acknowledge the dedication of Pakistan's veterinary doctors. They are the silent guardians of animal health, often working tirelessly with meager resources. It's time for the government and private sector to step up. Increased investment in veterinary education, improved compensation packages, and readily available resources are crucial first steps. Pakistan cannot afford to remain oblivious to this crisis. The well-being of our animals, our economy, and ultimately, our own health, hinges on a robust veterinary system. Let us celebrate World Veterinary Day by not just offering platitudes but by taking concrete steps to empower these unsung heroes. Their tireless efforts deserve better.

## 27th Convocation of Sir Syed University held with traditional zeal

**Sir Syed University awarded 1,117 Bachelor's, 60 Master's, and one PhD degree**

**Youth will get non-refundable loans of one lakh to one crore for new ideas or unique business plans; Governor Kamran Tessori**



Karachi: Sir Syed University of Engineering & Technology (SSUET), organized its 27th Convocation with a traditional zeal that was attended by a large number of educationists, scholars, dignitaries including faculty and students. Governor Sindh, Mr. Muhammad Kamran Tessori was the Chief Guest of the event. Sir Syed University awarded 1,117 Bachelor's, 60 Master's, and 1 PhD degree. Position holders were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals for securing the highest marks in the respective disciplines. Addressing the convocation, Governor Sindh, Mr. Muhammad Kamran Tessori said, Sir Syed University is an ideological academic institute that serves as an institution of inspiration playing a vital role and contributing towards national development. It has equipped graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their professional endeavors. He said, we are going to give

non-refundable loans of one lakh to one crore to the youth who come up with new ideas or unique business plans. At Governor House, around 50,000 students are getting free information technology education in different trades and after completing a one-year diploma in IT, they will be able to earn 15 lakh to 20 lakh rupees per month. Speaking on this occasion, Chancellor SSUET, Jawaid Anwar said, even in the period of recession, a large number of students prefer to enroll in Sir Syed University, which is itself proof of the remarkable performance of our university. Due to the hard work and exemplary performance of the faculty and management, Sir Syed University has become the top priority for the new students. New business opportunities are being created and youth are being given priority in employment who can play an effective role in increasing the efficiency, production and profitability

of the enterprises. He said that digital technology has become a necessity for us in the 21st century and the growth of digital technology has a profound impact on human society. Sir Syed University has launched two new programs Data Science and Cyber Security Network. A new degree based on Business and IT subjects including Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing will also be introduced. Being aware of the present challenges, we are going to inaugurate the Cyber Security Center of Excellence at Sir Syed University very soon. Presenting SSUET's annual report for the year 2023-24, Vice Chancellor SSUET, Prof. Dr. Vali Uddin, said that Sir Syed University has now grown to 16 academic departments offering undergraduate, postgraduate, MS, and PhD programs with more than 7,000 students and around 350 faculty members, including 64 holding PhDs. The Department of Applied Computing

& Emerging Sciences has been formed under which various programs relevant to new emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, etc. will be launched. The university actively participated in Erasmus+ ICM programs, fostering collaborations with renowned European universities and developing collaborations with international partners such as Politechnica University of Bucharest and Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in ongoing projects. French, Russian, and South Korean delegations visited Sir Syed University to explore options for potential collaboration and partnership. The University awarded merit-based scholarships worth approximately 35 million rupees to 1,318 deserving students. The University has signed 102 MOUs to date. The University also signed MoUs with Kyungdong University, South Korea, Pokhara University, Nepal, and the University of Malaga, Spain. During the years 2023-2024, the SSUET faculty has published 175 research papers in various national and international journals. Registrar Cdre. (r) Syed Sarfraz Ali while conducting the event said that the vision for Sir Syed University is to transform it into a center of academic excellence and make it a world-class institution. Students were also honored with gold, silver and bronze medals including merit certificates for their outstanding achievements in their academic career. Anab Ali (Biomedical Engineering), Amina Siddiqui (Biomedical Science), Ayesha Khan (Computer Engineering),

Malik Tazeel (Electrical Engineering), Syed Muhammad Abdur Rahman ur Nabi (Electronic Engineering), Ilma Ameen (Computer Science), Muneeb Ahmed Khan (Information Technology), Ramna Nadeem (Software Engineering), Taikhoon (Civil Engineering), Syed Muhammad Jibrin Jilani (Civil Engineering Technology), Shrish Jawaid (Architecture) and Hafsa Tariq (Business Administration) received gold medals for securing 1st position. Recipients of silver medals for securing second position included Kinza Imran (Biomedical Engineering), Syeda Aiman Zehra (Biomedical Science), Ismail Zaheer Sheikh (Computer Engineering), Umer Farooq (Electrical Engineering), Sawera (Electronic Engineering), Wania Khan (Computer Science), Asma Shafi (Information Technology), Unsa Athar (Software Engineering), Muhammad Daniyal (Civil Engineering), Shaikh Muhammad Faizan (Civil Engineering Technology), Nida Tasneem (Architecture) and Asbah Abid (Business Administration), while Nabeeha Sahar (Biomedical Engineering), Fahna Noman Siddiqui (Biomedical Science), Neha Shakil (Computer Engineering), Umer Zaid (Electrical Engineering), Talha Mustafa (Electronic Engineering), Hanzala Bin Rashid (Computer Science), Kainat Jamil (Information Technology), Mukadus Jawaid (Software Engineering), Choudhary Muhammad Hazimullah (Civil Engineering), Saifullah (Civil Engineering Technology) and Muhammad Mashood Chohan (Architecture) were awarded

## Negative Impact of Social Media on Teenagers' Mental Health



Engr. Sayed Mazhar Ali Shah

Nowadays, everyone uses some type of social media. Teenagers on TikTok, influencers and small companies on Instagram and Facebook, or professionals on LinkedIn: social media is the first choice that springs to mind when seeking for new contacts in any industry.

When utilized correctly, social media may be quite beneficial. These platforms have the potential to improve anyone's life since they provide the most direct touch with the intended audience. But the many studies show that there are also negative impacts of social media on teenager's mental health. In recent years, research has begun to establish a causal relationship between teen social media use and decreased well-being or mood disorders, including sadness and anxiety. Researchers investigated

whether the platform's widespread adoption on college campuses in the mid-2000s enhanced symptoms related with despair and anxiety. The answer was clear yes.

Most social networking applications require that users be at least 13 years old. However, the US Surgeon General reports that approximately 40% of children aged 8 to 12 use social media applications, while 95% of youngsters aged 13 to 17 do so.

In fact, the United States Surgeon

General issued an advice on how social media impacts the mental health of adolescents and teenagers. From static results finds that the Teens who spend more than three hours each day on social media are twice as likely to develop despair and anxiety. Another bad impact of social media is a developing condition that you may not be aware of. Fear of missing out (FOMO) is a fast developing topic of research. It occurs when a person is worried that their friends are or will be doing something without

involving them, and it can lead to excessive checking of news feeds and physiological abnormalities.

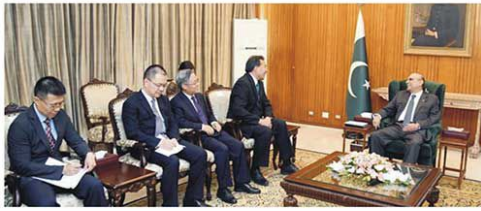
Self-image and body-image concerns appear to present themselves in a number of ways when using social media. Increased social media use, including appearance-related activities and selfies, has been linked to body image difficulties in young people, particularly females. Several social media platforms include tools and filters that allow users to change their look, which frequently leads to

individuals comparing themselves to others. People who spend the most of their time posting and scrolling are more likely to be susceptible.

There is a strong correlation between wellness and emotions. When social media participation and usage have an impact on mental well-being, many people prefer to disconnect from the actual world in favor of the online fantasy one, according to some study. The act of scrolling itself has been connected to dissociative states.



## President seeks stronger economic, cultural ties with China



Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad  
President Asif Ali Zardari has stated that Pakistan and China enjoy long-term strategic relations, which need to be further strengthened in the areas of trade, economy, agriculture, people-to-people

contacts, and culture. He underlined the need for both countries to continue to work together to take bilateral relations to new heights. The president expressed these views while talking to the visiting chairman of China International Development Cooperation

Agency (CIDCA), Luo Zhaohui, who along with his delegation called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Wednesday, the presidency said in a statement. The Ambassador of China to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Dr Jahanzeb Khan, and senior officials of the Chinese and Pakistani governments attended the meeting. While reiterating Pakistan's firm commitment to China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the president said that Pakistan considered CPEC of immense strategic importance and was fully committed to the timely completion of all CPEC projects. Highlighting the importance of Gwadar Port, he said that Gwadar Port would not only promote regional connectivity but would also make the transport of goods to China cost-effective.



Federal Minister Mohsin Naqvi interacting with general public during his visit to "Public Facilitation Center" in Islamabad on 26th April, 2024.

## Well-known librarians have a meeting at Gujjar Khan

Soon Times Correspondent Gujjar Khan:  
A meeting of well-known librarians from all over Pakistan is being held today at Gujjar Khan. The first annual meeting of library professionals from all over Pakistan will be held today on April 27 at Aspire Library Hall, Gujjar Khan. Organized by the Tehreek e Kutub Khana and Tameer o Tanzeem, in which well-known representative library professionals of Pakistan will specially

participate. Chairman of Pakistan Library Club Arshad Mehmood will be the chief guest. PLC President Dr. Amir Latif and Chief Librarian of Fazaia Library (FBC/EOW) PAF Nur Khan, Kashif Kamal will be the guest speakers. In the program, the Chairman Tehreek-e- Kutub khana and Tameer o Tarqi, Danish Raza Qureshi will highlight the organizational structure and the problems of libraries and Librarians in Pakistan.

## 'Need to develop definitive accounts of novel economic technologies.'



Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad  
We must develop definitive accounts of novel economic technologies.' This was the core message of a book launch for the edited volume titled "Non-Fungible Tokens: Multidisciplinary Perspectives," held at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad. Dr Usman W. Chohan, Advisor for Economic Affairs and

National Development, CASS, and the book's editor, presented the key findings of the edited volume, and urged all stakeholders in Pakistani society to be aware of emerging economic technologies for Pakistan's development. Focused on the blockchain-based technology known as Non-fungible Tokens (NFTs), the edited volume brought together 14 renowned authors from 10 countries spanning 8 academic disciplines, including economics, technology,

mathematics, law, and sociology, among others. Dr Chohan's presentation was accompanied by remarks from contributors to the edited volume Dr Hong Bao (China), Alesha Serada (Finland), Drs. Thapeli Matima & Nyane Mofokeng (South Africa), and Dr Carlos Yebra López (Spain). The speakers covered key aspects relating to the economics, technology, semantics, and sociology of NFTs as contained in their chapters. Senior Director Air Marshal Ferooz Habib (Retd) congratulated Dr Chohan on this seventh book at CASS and emphasised the role of innovation and technology in economic development. He urged young researchers to remain abreast of economic technologies and to make contributions to their advancement. Given the scope and detail covered in the collective research endeavour, he lauded the comprehensiveness of the book and expressed hope that the edited volume would serve as the definitive account of NFTs internationally for many years to come.

## Pakistan pushes for stopping Israeli war machine to end Palestinians' slaughter in Gaza

Islamabad Web Desk  
Pakistan has called on the United Nations and the world community to consider "further measures" against Israel to secure a ceasefire in Gaza and an end to its "plausible genocide" of the Palestinian people in the besieged enclave.



Speaking in the United Nations Security Council's ministerial-level debate on the Middle East situation, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, did not specify the measures but pointed out that Israel's war in Gaza has spread the conflict to adjacent regions and further escalation must be prevented. "Yet, unless Israel's war machine is stopped from further slaughter in Gaza, there is an ever-present danger that war and violence will spread and possibly engulf the entire Middle East and beyond," the Pakistani envoy said. "Today," he went on to say that the 15-member Council has "three urgent responsibilities – to halt Israel's genocidal war in Gaza; to prevent the further spread and escalation of war; and to revive the peace process towards a two-State solution to establish durable peace and security in the Middle East. Addressing the regional ramifications of the Gaza conflict, Ambassador Jadoon cautioned against the conflict's spread to neighbouring areas such as the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Iran. He urged all parties to exercise restraint to prevent further escalation. Ambassador Jadoon also underscored the timeliness of Palestine's re-submitted application for UN membership, which, he said, is in accordance with regional initiatives advocating for a two-

State solution. Expressing disappointment over the UN Security Council veto on Algeria's draft resolution for Palestine's full UN membership, he pointed to the overwhelming support signalling Palestine's rightful place in the international community. Ambassador Jadoon reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for Palestine's quest for self-determination, emphasizing that UN membership is a crucial step towards rectifying historical injustices and fostering conditions for meaningful negotiations. "Pakistan," he said, was committed to a two-state settlement based on the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds as the capital of a Palestinian State. On the opening day of the debate, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged an end to the deadly cycle of retaliation and called on the international community to work together to avert a full-scale regional conflict, first by ending hostilities in Gaza and ultimately by realizing the two-State solution. "This moment of maximum peril must be a time for maximum restraint," said the UN chief. Detailing limited progress and ongoing challenges despite Israel's recent commitments to improve aid delivery, he said Palestinians are facing widespread starvation and Israel must fully and actively facilitate humanitarian operations immediately.

## Punjab to have Environment Protection Authority to fight smog

Mariyum Aurangzeb shares initiatives to mitigate environmental risks



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE  
The Punjab government has announced formation of an "Environment Protection Authority" aimed at combating smog and enhancing environmental quality. Senior Provincial Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb stated that this authority would be tasked with enforcement of environmental protection regulations. Mariyum Aurangzeb disclosed the initiatives and plans of the Punjab government to mitigate

environmental crisis. A smog cabinet committee was established during a session chaired by Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz. A Smog Monitoring Sectoral Cell, comprising representatives of various departments, has been set up within the Department of Planning and Development. The minister emphasised that the groundwork for establishing a legal framework aligning with the CM's vision had commenced. An action plan had been devised for the immediate

enforcement of regulations across different departments, with a special force dedicated to environment protection to be formed, she added. She said digital data collection would be employed to assess the contribution of various sectors to smog control. The minister announced crackdown on sources emitting smog, harmful chemicals, and smoke, ensuring strict adherence to environmental regulations in industrial and transport sectors. Mariyum Aurangzeb also announced stringent measures regarding brick kilns, stating that no kiln would operate without the zig-zag technology. She said non-compliant kilns had already been sealed. Moreover, a fitness certificate will be mandatory for vehicles, and those emitting smoke or having faulty engines will face bans. A monitoring and certification system for vehicles with defective engines will also be implemented. Industries will be required to install 'emission control systems' to mitigate the release of harmful smoke and toxins.

## PTI to hold countrywide protests today against alleged rigging in elections

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE  
The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is set to stage nationwide protests today (Friday), alleging widespread rigging in elections. According to party sources, demonstrations are scheduled to take place across the country including Lahore. A spokesperson for the PTI has claimed that police



authorities are conducting raids on the residences of PTI Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs), Members of National Assembly (MNAs), and ticket holders. These actions, the spokesperson asserted, were aimed at obstructing planned protest rallies against alleged rigging in the recent by-elections. It's worth noting that the PTI had announced these countrywide protests in response to what they allege rigging and tampering in the by-elections held on April 21, as well as the purported theft of mandate in the general elections held on Feb 8. PTI criticises ECP  
A few days earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-

Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan criticised the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), accusing it of failing to conduct the by-elections on 21 national and provincial seats transparently. Speaking to reporters outside the Khattata polling station in Gujrat's PP-32 constituency, Gohar called the by-elections a farce, arguing that parliament should consist of genuine public representatives with popular support, rather than those installed through electoral malpractice. Gohar declared that the PTI would not recognise the results of the PP-32 constituency by-polls.



A delegation of Dawoodi Bohra community called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

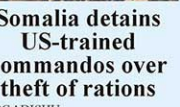


Son demands Spurs step up against Arsenal after Newcastle thrashing



Tottenham Hotspur must bounce back in Sunday's north London derby with Arsenal after suffering a 4-0 defeat in their last Premier League game at Newcastle United, Spurs captain Son Heung-min said.

Somalia detains US-trained commandos over theft of rations



SOMALIA'S government said it had suspended and detained several members of an elite, US-trained commando unit for stealing rations donated by the United States, adding that it was taking over responsibility for provisioning the force.

Another State Dept official resigns over US' Gaza policy amid growing student protests



WASHINGTON United States State Department's spokesperson for the Middle East and North Africa, Hala Khairat, has resigned in protest of America's policy on Gaza at least the third high-profile resignation from the department, as pro-Palestinian demonstrations at university campuses across the country grow.



Israel intensifies air strikes on Gaza's Rafah before ground operation

Medics in the besieged Palestinian enclave reported five Israeli air strikes on Rafah

CAIRO Web Desk Israel stepped up air strikes on Rafah overnight after saying it would evacuate civilians from the southern Gaza city and launch an all-out assault despite allies' warnings this could cause mass casualties.

Fire at Brazil guesthouse leaves at least 10 dead, 11 injured

SAO PAULO At least 10 people died and 11 were injured in the early hours of Friday morning in a major fire at a guesthouse in Brazil's southern city of Porto Alegre, said the Rio Grande do Sul state fire department, which is still searching for the missing.

Turkish court convicts Syrian woman over Istanbul bombing



ISTANBUL A Turkish court sentenced Ahlam Albashir, a Syrian national, to life in prison on Friday over a 2022 bombing that killed six people in Istanbul's main shopping street, a copy of the verdict obtained by Reuters showed.

people were given aggravated life imprisonment sentences for "disrupting the unity and integrity of the state" and "intentional murder." Turkey blamed Kurdish militants for the explosion, saying the order for the attack on Istiklal Avenue was given in Kobani in northern Syria, where Turkish forces have conducted operations against a Syrian Kurdish militia in recent years.

Shoigu says Russia and allies should step up military exercises in Asia



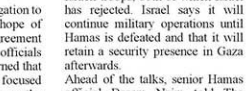
ASTANA Russia and its allies in Asia should expand joint military exercises as they face a direct threat from attempts by the United States to expand its security influence in the region, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Friday.

Ukraine's Zelenskiy calls for air defense systems as allies meet

WASHINGTON Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on Friday called for additional air defense systems to be sent to Kyiv to help protect against Russian strikes, adding that a pause in US funding had so that they do not approach our positions and borders.

Ukraine rebuild defenses and refit its forces as it recovers from a gap in US assistance, but it does not expect Kyiv to launch large-scale offensive operations against Russian forces in the near term. The influx of weapons could improve Kyiv's chances of averting a major Russian breakthrough in the east, just over two years since the start of Moscow's full-scale invasion, military analysts say.

Egypt sends delegation to Israel, its latest effort to broker a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas



CAIRO Egypt sent a high-level delegation to Israel on Friday with the hope of brokering a cease-fire agreement with Hamas in Gaza, two officials said. At the same time, it warned that Israel's "new vision" for a prolonged cease-fire in Gaza, an Egyptian official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the mission freely.