

Chief Editor Shah Muhammad Awan

Saturday April 27, 2024 Page: 4 Rs: 20 Vol: 2 Issue:209

**ABC** Certified

# 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 usal Ireject 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 support of the people, all efforts of those who distract and obstruct Pakistan's development will fail," he added.

added. Stressing the need for overpowering economic

challenges, General Munir said that complete independence without economic stability is not possible.

possible.
"No instability would be tolerated in Pakistan's journey of prosperity and development," he

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 in which measures against unlawful activities were discussed. The civil-military leadership in du decided strict actions against those elements who were involved in any kind of illegal activities including corruption, smuggling power theft or running criminal mafias.

Millio. **山北华** 

LHC declares marriage with ex-

wife's sister illegal without completing

on 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 Idda period.
Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh issued an 11-page
written decision on the interim bail application of
Musawar 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



QUETTA
A lower court on Friday issued a warrant for the arrest of Mahmood Khan Achakzai, the chief of the Pakhtunkfuva Milli Awami Party (FRMAP), over charges of illegal occupation and violation of the Maintenance of Public Order (MFO).
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 Asi/Ali Zardari by the opposition parties in the election for the position of president of Pakiststan. 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 chief minister attending the passing-out parade at the Police Training College in Chuhng drew a lot of criticism, so much so that a lawyer moved a court against Maryam for wearing the police uniform.

Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad
The government has extended the validity of the Afghan refugees? Proof of Registration Cards (PoRs) that expired on April 1, 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 the sessions court in Lahore court in Lahore, Advocate Aftab Bajwa argued that according to the law, no individual was permitted to we ar the uniform of state institutions

we ar the winform of state institutions. The applicant urged the court to issue order for the initiation of a case against Maryam Nawaz for domining 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 prowincial chief executive was regulated the Punjab Police Dress Regulational 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.

ages. Pakistan has expelled over half a

Pakistan.

It must be noted that these PoR 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

Friday. A seament 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 Shebbaz Sharif. The cabinet was told that this extension would enable the PoR cardholders to have access to schools, bank accounts, and other facilities during their stay in Pakistan. It must be noted that



million undocumented refugees in the repatriation programme's first phase from November 1 till date. The second phase was aimed at driving out refugees holding Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC).

Govt extends stay of registered

Afghan refugees until June 30

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs federal cabinet meeting

Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC). The ACCs were provided by the Pakistan government to Afghan refugees in 2017, after processing and registering them with Pakistan's National Database and Regulation Authority (NADRA). On the advice of the Ministry of

Law and Justice, the reaction carries approved the establishment of an additional special court in Makran Division to deal with anti-narcotics cases in Balochistan province. The jurnsdiction of this special court will be extended to the districts of Panigur. 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

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-Na waz (PML-N) candidates Ali

SOON

Pervaiz Malik from NA-119, and Rasheed Almed Khan from 1432 (1997) and Rasheed Almed Khan from 1432 (1997) and Rasheed Almed Khan from NA-44 DL. Khan has been issued Ameen Khan from NA-44 DL. Khan has been issued Abar Afral Chatta from PP-36 Wazira bad, Ahmed I plad Chaudhry from PP-34 Narowal Chaudhry from PP-35 Bhakar, Rama Afzaal Hussam from PP-139 Sheikhupura were declared victorious. Been alway and the same and t

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



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



**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

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th 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 MPAs said the food minister failed to formulate any policy regarding the wheat



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE The inaugural training session for Pakistan's first Air Ambulance Service has been

Ambulance Service has been launched.
Under the supervision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Navaz, a special session was held to review the progress of the service. Provincial Information Minister Azma Bukhari, the Punjab chief secretary, secretary finance, DG Rescute 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



Pakistan's first Air

service.

She underscored its crucial role in attending to emergeneics and accidents in romote 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.



# Haditorial & Opinion





# **World Veterinary day In Pakistan !!!**

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 service of these animal healthcare champions. In Pakistan, however, this day erves 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 evaluate its treatment of these essential healthcare providers.In 2018, amidst the turmoil of conflict-ridden Khyber mission to vaccinate livestock against deadly diseases. Despite threats from

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 including Dr. Ali Hassan, ventured deep into Baluchistan's rugged mountains to treat a

a contagious bacterial disease. During the devastating floods of 2022, Dr. Zara Ahmed. a voung vet in Sindh, waded through chestlivestock. 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 transmissible between animals and humans. thrive in environments with inadequat-

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



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 silver and bronze medals for gold, 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 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 thia 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 l 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

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 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 Politehnica University of Bucharest and Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in ongoing projects. French, Russian, and South Korean delegations visited Sir Syed University 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 Malagas. Spain. During the years 2023-Malaga, Spain. During the years 2023-2024, the SSUET faculty has published 175 research papers in various national and international journals.Registrar Cdre. (r) Sved 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 Tanzeel (Electrical Engineering) Syed Muhammad Abdur Rahman un Nabi (Electronic Engineering), Ilma Ameen (Computer Science), Muneeb Ahmed Khan (Information Technology), Ramna Nadeem (Software Engineering), Taikhoom (Civil Engineering), Syed Muhammad Jibran Jilani (Civil Engineering Technology). Sehrish 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), Faha 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 metal health.In recent years, research has begun to establish a causal relationship between teen social media use and decreased wellor mood disorders, including sadness and anxiety.Researchers investigated

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

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 statically 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



# City News



### President seeks stronger economic, cultural ties with China



oon Times Correspondent

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

tacts, and culture. He underlined the need for both countries to continue to work together to take bilateral relations to new

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 Pakistan 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 control to the timely

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 Chiva cost-effective.

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

A meeting of well-known librarians fro all A meeting of well-known librarians fro all over Pakistan is being held today at Gujar Khan. The first annual meeting of library professionals from all over Pakistan will be held today on April 27 at Aspire Library Hall, Gujar 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 Club Arshad Mchmood will be the chief guest, PLC President Dr. Amir Latif and Chief Librarian of Fazaia Library (FBCOEW) PAF Nur Khan. Kashif Kamal will be the guest speakers. In the program, the Chairman Tehreek-e- Kutab khana and Tameer o Taraqi, 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 'Nonfor the edited volume titled 'Non-Fungible Tokens: Multidisciplinary Perspectives,' held at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, Dr Usman W, Chohan, Advisorfor 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 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, semiotics, and sociology of NFTs as contained in their chapters. Senior Director Air Marshal Farooq 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 to remain abreast of economic technologies and to make contributions to 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.

# **Punjab to have Environment Protection Authority to fight smog**

Marrivum 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 environment quality. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb stated that this authority would be tasked with enforcement of environmental protection regulations. Marriyum Aurangzed 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

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.

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.

sectors.

Marriyum Aurangzeb also
announced stringent measures
regarding brick kilns, stating
at no kiln would operate without the
g-zag technology. She said non-

zig-zag technology. She said non-compliant kilns had already been sealed. compliant klins 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.

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

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

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 var, 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 faza conflict. Ambassador Jadoon cautioned

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,

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 signaling 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." Expressing disappointment over the UN Security Council veto on Algeria's draft

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 Palestimian State. On the opening day of the debate, UN Secretary-General Antonio Gutterres urged an end to the deadly cycle of retailation 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 "This moment of maximum peril must be a "This moment of maximum peril must be a time for maximum restraint," said the UN 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.

### 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.

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.

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

and provincial seats transparently.

Speaking to reporters outside the Khattala
polling station in Gujrat's PP-32
constituency, Gohar called the byelections 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.





# International & Sports News



#### 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

Newcastle United, Spurs captain Son Heung-min said. Spurs have enjoyed a two-week break since their heavy 4-0 loss at Newcastle on April 13 and Son has called for a strong response against Mikel Artets side. Arsenal know that anything other than a victory over their rivals could

Mikel Arten's side.

Arsenal know that anything other than a victory over their rivals could damage their tittle hopes after Manchester City climbed to second place and within a point of the leaders with a game in hand after defeating Brighton & Hove Albion "We have to be ready. It was an unacceptable result and performance (at Neweastle), as well from me." Son told British media. "As a group, we're talking a lot about this (Arsenat) game. Everybody knows how to step my." It will be a really good game to bounce back and obviously the motivation will be even higher than in other games so I think we've got to just work hard until the game and do our style of play. Then there's no doubt wecan bounce back." "We know what it means for the team and the club and also for the fans. So we're going to prepare well and play our style of game."



#### Somalia detains **US-trained** commandos over theft of rations

MOGADISHU

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.

The Danab unit has been a key pillar of U.S.-backed efforts to combat the all Queda-linked militant group al Shabaab. The United States agreed in February to spend more than \$100

Shabaab. The United states agreed than \$100 million to build up to five military bases for Danab.

Somalia's defence ministry said in a statement late on Thursday that it had notified international partners of the theft and would share the outcome of its invastigation.

its investigation.
A U.S. official said in a statement to
Reuters that Washington takes
seriously all accusations of
corruption.



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

US' Gaza policy amid growing student protests
WASHINGTON
United States State Department's spokesperson for the Middle East and North Africa, Hala Rharnti, 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.

Ms. Rharnt was also the Duba Regional Media Hub's deputy director and joined the State Department almost two decades ago as a political and human rights officer, the department's website showed.

Terseigned April 2024 after 18 years of distinguished service in opposition to the United States' Gaza policy. Diplomacy, not amis. Be a force for peace and unity, "Hala Rharnt wote in a procession of the United States' Gaza policy. Diplomacy, not arms. Be a force for peace and unity," Hala Rharnt wote in a continuous continuous continuous department spokesperson, asked about the resignation in Thursday's press briefing, said the department have briefly as a force for peace and unity," she added. A State Department spokesperson, asked about the resignation in Thursday's press briefing, said the department have views when it disagrees with government policies.

Under close questioning, Spokesperson vendant Patel refused to go beyond saying, "This is a personal matter," Nearly a month earlier, Annelle Sheline of the State Department's human rights tureau announced her resignation, and State Department official Josh Paul resigned in October.



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

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

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

an all-but assault usespite aims warmings in casualties. Medies in the besieged Palestinian enclave reported five Israeli air strikes on Rafah early on Thursday (Apr 25) that hit at least three houses, killing at least six people including a local journalist. We are afraid of what will happen in Rafah. The level of alert is very high." Ibrahim Khraishi, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, told Reuters on Thursday.

"Some are leaving, they are afraid for their families but where can they go? They are not being allowed to go to the north and so are confined to a very small area."

The Gaza Strip is about 40km long and between about 5km and 12km wide and is one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

world.

In the seventh month of a devastating air and ground war, Israeli forces also resumed bombarding northern and central areas of the enclave, as well as east of Khan Younis in the south. Israel's stated goal is to destroy Hamas, thought its unclear how they would do so. A United Nations team visiting a site for a staging area and pier for maritime aid operations was forced to take cover in a bunker on Wednesday after the area came under attack.

They were there for "some time," but there were no injuries.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war cabinet was moetime "to discuss how to destroy the last vestiges, the last quarter

meeting "to discuss how to destroy the last vestiges, the last quarter of Hamas' battalions, in Rafah and elsewhere", government spokesperson David Mencer said.

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



with CNN Brasil.

Junes da Silva said there is still no information on the possible causes of the fire. The facility did not have a license to operate as a guesthouse, nor did they have a fire-fighting plan, according to the fire department. In the building where the guesthouse operated, the rooms were very close together, making it easy for the flames to spread and difficult for the guests to escape, the fire department said.

#### 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 Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Friday. He was speaking at a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

(SCO), a security grouping that includes Russia, India, China, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and

Russia. India, China, Iran, Pakistan, Razakhstan, Uzbekistan Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

"I believe that everyone present shares the opinion that the deployment of military infrastructure in the region by the United States and its a lifes is unacceptable," Shoigusaid.

"Such intentions must be regarded as a direct threat to stability in the SCO space." SCO member states should expand the scope and geography of their military exercises, he told the meeting in the Kazakh capital Astana.

His speech highlighted Russia's intention to strengthen military ties with partners in Asia and resist any evosion of its influence there despite the intense demands on its army of the war it has been flighting for more than two years in Ukraine. At home, Shoigu's position is under greater-than-usual scrutiny after the arrest of one of his deputies this week in a bribery scandal, a development that threatens to weaken him politically.

Inhis speech, he accured the US-led QUAD and AUKUS bloes of trying to reshape the security structure in the Pacific to suit themselves, and said that increasing pressure was being exerted on China over Taiwan.

Shoigu said the main threat in Central Asia same from "radical terrorist groups located in Afghanistan". He said the United States was working to restore influence in the region that it lost after the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan in 2021.

### 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 verdiet obtained by

Reuters showed. Six Turkish citizens, two members each of three families, were killed in the attack on Nov. 13, 2022. The explosion also wounded about 100 people in the busy street packed

with shoppers and tourists.
The court imposed a total of seven life sentences on Albashir, who was previously identified by police as the person who planted the bomb. The case also involved more than 30 other defendants. Four of them were released from prison on Friday, while the court ordered 10 defendants to be tried separately as the individuals could not be found. Twenty other defendants were handed prison sentences ranging from 4 years to life. Of those 20, six

srupting the unity and integrity the state" and "intentional ider."

of the state" and "intentional munder."
Turkey blamed Kurdish militants for the explosion, saying the order for the attack on Istiklal Avenue was given in Kobani in northern kyna, where Turkish forces have conducted operations against a Kyinan Kurdish milita in recent years. That militia and the outlawed Kurdishan Workers Party (PKK) militant group, which has tought a decade-sold insurgency against the Turkish state, denied involvement in the attack. No group-claimed responsibility. Students clashing with police, tents set up on college campuses, across/America, Istanbul has been attacked in the past by Kurdish, Islamist and lefitst militants. A wave of bombings and other attacks began nationwide when a ceasefire between Ankara and the PKK broke down in mid-2015.

# 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 asid At the same time, it warned that a possible Israeli offensive focused on Gaza's city of Rafah — on the border with Egypt — could have catastrophic consequences for regional stability. Egypt's top intelligence official, Abbas Kamel, is leading the delegation and plans to discuss with Israel a "new vision" for a prolonged cease-fire in Gaza, an Egyptian Official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the mission freely.

As the war drags on and casualties

freely.

As the war drags on and casualties mount, there has been growing international pressure for Hamas and Isnael to reach an agreement on a cease fire.

Friday's talks will focus at first on a limited exchange of hostages held by Hamas for Palestiman prisoners, and the return of a significant number of displaced Palestinians to their homes in northern Gaza with minimum restrictions," the Egyptian official said.

said.
The hope is that negotiations will then continue, with the goal of a larger deal to ent the war, he said.
The official said mediators are working on a compromise that working on a compromise that and answer most of both parties' main demands.
Hamas has said it will not back down from its demands for a permanent cease-fire and full withdrawal of

Israeli troops, both of which Israel has rejected. Israel says it will continue military operations until relain a security presence in Gaza afterwards.

Ahead of the talks, senior Hamas official Basem Naim told The Associated Press "there is nothing new from our side," when asked about the negotiations.

Both Israeli and Egyptian delegation had arrived in Tel Aviv, but further details weren't immediately available.

Overnight, Lebanon's militant

available.

Overnight, Lebanon's militant
Hezbollah group fired anti-tank
missiles and artillery shells at all stratel military convoy in a dispatted
border area, killing an Israeli civilian.

Hezbollah said its fighters
ambushed the convox shortly.

Hezbolian said its lighters ambushed the convoy shortly before midnight Thursday, destroying two vehicles. The Israeli military said the ambush wounded an Israeli civilian doing infrastructure work, and that he later died of his wounds.

later died of his wounds.

Low-intensity fighting along the Israel-Lebanon border has repeatedly threatened to boil over as Israel has targeted senior Hezbollah militants in recent months.

Irans of thousands of people have been displaced on both sides of the border. On the Israeli side, the cross-border fighting has killed I occivilians and 12 soldiers, while in Lebanon, more than 350 people have been displaced on both sides of the horder. On the Israeli side, the cross-border fighting has killed I civilians and 12 soldiers, while in Lebanon, more than 350 people have been killed, including 50 civilians and 271 Hezbollah.

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

PLATFORM

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
helped Moscow seize the
initiative.

This year Prof.

helped Moscow seize the initiative.
"This year, Russian jets (havo) guided aerial bombs against Ukraine and we need the ability to shoot down the air combat aircad used to not approach our positions and borders." Zelenskiy said at the start of a virtual menile led by the United States on helping arm Ukraine.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the meeting would focus on Ukraine's air defense capabilities.
The meeting comes days after Congress emerged from a half-year of deadlock to approve a Sol billion aid package for Ukraine.



S1 billion in artillery, air defenses and other hardware would soon be heading to Ukrainian front lines. "While we were waiting for a decision on the American support,

the Russian army managed to seize the initiative on the battlefield,"

the initiative or a care of the care of th

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.

ASI

Publisher & Chief Editor Shah Muhammad Awan Printer Islamabad, Zoya Press Islamabad, Ithad Center Blue Area, Islamabad. Printer Sargodha, Fighter Press, Al-Turka 35 NB, Sargodha. Karachi Parwan Press, 3rd Floor, Handicraft Building, Abdullah Haroon Road, Karachi.