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Iran's President Raisi, possible successor to Khamenei, dies in helicopter crash

Supreme Leader Khamenei confirms Mohammad Mokhber as interim president, declares five days of public mourning



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
 Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, a hardliner seen as a potential successor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, died after his helicopter crashed in poor weather in mountains near the Azerbaijan border, officials and state media said on Monday.
 The charred wreckage of the helicopter which crashed on Sunday carrying Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and six other passengers and crew was found early on Monday after an overnight search in blizzard conditions.

Supreme Leader Khamenei, who holds ultimate power with a final say on foreign policy and Iran's nuclear programme, said First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, would take over as interim president, the official IRNA news agency reported.
 "I announce five days of public mourning and offer my condolences to the dear people of Iran," Khamenei said in a statement. Mokhber, like Raisi, is seen as close to Khamenei.
 Under the Islamic Republic's constitution, a new presidential election must be held within 50 days.
 Footage from Iranian state television

showed wreckage scattered on a foggy hillside, while separate images from IRNA showed Red Crescent workers carrying a covered body on a stretcher. All those aboard the helicopter were killed, a senior Iranian official had earlier told Reuters.
 Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani was appointed as acting foreign minister following the death of Amirabdollahian, IRNA said.
 State media reported that images from the site showed the US-made Bell 212 helicopter slammed into a mountain peak, although there was no official word on the cause of the crash. The dead also

CJP Qazi Faez Isa deposits expensive pen in Toshakhana



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
 Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa on Monday deposited an expensive pen gifted to him by the Muslim World League to the Toshakhana. The pen, named Bab-e-Kaaba, was gifted to the chief justice by the Muslim World League's Secretary Muhammad bin Abdul Karim Issa, who met him last month.

PTI founder Imran Khan, others acquitted in Azadi March vandalism case

Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
 The sessions court on Monday acquitted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan, lawmaker Zartaj Gul and others in the Azadi March vandalism case.
Judicial Magistrate
 Mureed Abbas Khan conducted Monday's hearing and announced the reserved verdict.
 In 2022, vandalism cases were registered by the Karachi Police agency against PTI founder Imran Khan, lawmaker Zartaj Gul, former PTI leader Asad Umar, Faisal Javed, Ali Nawaz Awan and Saifullah Niazi in connection with Azadi March.
 During the proceedings, Naem Panjtoha, the counsel for the PTI, argued before the judge that the FIR had been filed by an unauthorised person, adding that if the basis of an FIR was wrong, how the case could proceed.



The lawyer contended that the authority to file the case rested only with the person who imposed Section 144. He argued that no video evidence could be presented against Imran Khan in the instant case.
 The counsel maintained that FIRs were registered against peaceful protesters and 19 cases of the same nature were registered against Khan in different police stations.
 Panjtoha requested the court to acquit the PTI founder since the allegations made against him were baseless. He also informed the court that the cases instituted against Imran Khan were all politically motivated.
 The counsel insisted that the protest called by Khan was peaceful. He said trees had caught fire due to the police shelling and were not torched by any protester.

Judges' appointment: LHC summons Maryam Nawaz on May 24



Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE
 The Lahore High Court (LHC) summoned Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz Sharif on May 24 over the non-appointment of judges in special courts, ARY News reported.
 LHC Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan heard the case today.
 During the proceedings, Punjab AGP informed the court that a government committee had consulted with Punjab chief minister on the matter of judges' appointment, assuring that it had been prioritized for the upcoming cabinet session.
 However, LHC chief justice inquired about the timeline for

the next cabinet session. To this, the advocate general assured that the matter would be resolved in the cabinet session scheduled for Friday.
 Consequently, the court directed the Punjab CM and the cabinet to issue a notification regarding judges' appointment before the next hearing.
 The court warned it would summon Punjab chief minister in the next hearing if cabinet failed to issue a notification regarding judges' appointment by the required time.

ATC dismisses Parvez Elahi's bail petition in Jinnah House attack case



Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE
 An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has dismissed the bail plea of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Chaudhry Parvez Elahi in the Jinnah House attack case, deeming it premature.
 The decision was made by ATC Judge Arshad Javed during today's hearing.
 Parvez Elahi's counsel had argued that there was a looming possibility of his client's arrest in connection with the Jinnah House attack case. It was mentioned that the former chief minister had previously been detained on judicial remand in various cases.
 The petitioner pleaded the court to grant bail to Parvez Elahi in the Jinnah House attack case.

Pakistan mourns President Raisi's death; PM, president express sorrow



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
 Pakistan is observing a day of mourning today to express solidarity with the people of Iran following the shocking news of the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in the country's northwest.
 "Pakistan will observe a day of mourning, and the flag will fly at half-mast as a mark of respect for President Raisi and his companions and in solidarity with Brothers Iran," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wrote in a post on social media platform X, expressing shock over the demise.

"Had been anxiously following developments regarding the reported crash landing of President Raisi's helicopter. Was hoping for good news. Alas, this was not to be," PM Shehbaz remarked as he extended deepest condolences and sympathies to the Iranian people on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan.
 Shehbaz prayed that may Allah grant the martyrs a high place in Jannat al-Firdous and give patience to their families and the Iranian nation for this tragedy.
 "Pakistan had the pleasure of hosting President Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on a historic visit less than a month ago.

They were good friends of Pakistan," the premier added in his post.
 President Raisi visited Pakistan back in April and had productive talks with the country's civil and military leadership, vowing to strengthen bilateral trade ties by expanding the trade volume to \$10 billion.
 Iranian state media confirmed the martyrdom of Raisi and his companions Monday morning after the helicopter carrying the Iranian president along with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and others crashed in the Varzagan region in the northwest province of East Azerbaijan Sunday evening.

Tarar rules out unilateral legislation for establishment of Digital Media Authority



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
 Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Monday the government had no intention of unilateral legislation regarding the establishment of Digital Media Authority in the country.
 "All journalist organizations and press clubs will be taken into confidence on the matter," Tarar said while

of the existing building. The minister assured that provision of annual grant for NPC would be ensured.
 The government was well aware of the problems of the administration of the National Press Club, he said.
 The government intended to ensure continuous grant of provision to NPC, he said, adding he would meet the finance minister and discuss the issue of annual grant allocation for the press club in the financial budget.
 President Azhar Jatoi said the government should solve the problems of the press club on a priority. He said the journalists were facing many challenges in the present era.

'Not your mandate', law minister tells IHC after stern remarks in missing poet case



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
 Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar Monday told the judiciary, albeit with "all due respect", that it did not have the mandate of dragging senior military officers and government officials to the court in the case of a missing poet.
 Islamabad High Court's Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani had moments before issued stern remarks against security

agencies as authorities failed to recover missing Kashmiri poet and journalist Ahmed Farhad Shah.
 During the hearing of the case the judge not only issued hard-hitting remarks against military officials, but warned that the court would summon the prime minister and his cabinet if the poet was not recovered.
 "This is not the mandate of the court, the court is a platform for providing justice in line with the law and Constitution," Tarar said during a press conference in Islamabad, as the rift grows between institutions.

CJCSC, Australian chief discuss defence and security cooperation



Soon Times Correspondent
RAWALPINDI
 Chief of Defence Forces Australia General Angus J. Campbell called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza in Rawalpindi on Monday.
 During the meeting, the two senior military leaders engaged in comprehensive discussions on defence and security cooperation, regional dynamics, and global security challenges, said Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement.
 Both the sides reiterated resolve to further strengthen and enhance security and defence cooperation between the two countries.
 The Australian dignitaries appreciated the professional

standards of Pakistan Armed Forces, their achievements in fight against terrorism and continued efforts for regional peace and stability.
 Earlier upon arrival, General Angus J. Campbell was presented Guard of Honour by a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent.
 General Angus J. Campbell is on official visit to Pakistan for 13th Round of Pakistan-Australia, Defence and Security Talks and 10th Defence of 1.5 Track Security Dialogue. Related Topics

Pakistan, Turkiye Bilateral Trade

Pakistan and Turkiye on Monday, vowing to strengthen bilateral and regional cooperation in multiple spheres, agreed to take the annual bilateral trade from existing \$1 billion to \$5 billion. In a joint press stakeout following their "extensive" delegation-level talks, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told the media that they had reviewed bilateral cooperation including trade, investment, connectivity and defense. In his remarks, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar said the bilateral cooperation in all areas, was improving and measures were being taken to take the trade volume to \$5 billion. Terming Pakistan and Turkiye "two countries and one nation," Dar said the strategic and comprehensive bilateral relations were manifested by elaborate institutional mechanisms and high-level exchanges

and visits at the level of political leadership. He said both sides also discussed the Pakistan-Turkiye High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) scheduled to take place in Islamabad in the near future to carry out a comprehensive review of cooperation including a holistic review of the strategic economic framework. The deputy prime minister said that Pakistan and Turkiye had a history of defense cooperation and that both countries always supported each other on core issues, also during national calamities and disasters. Highlighting bilateral cooperation on Islamophobia, he told the media that consequent to their joint efforts, the OIC, in its recent summit, agreed to appoint Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Mehmet Pacaci as secretary-general's special envoy on Islamophobia. Ishaq Dar also thanked Turkiye for its

continuous support on the issue of Kashmir and reiterated Pakistan's support for the legitimate struggle of the people of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Discussing the Gaza situation, both leaders agreed on an immediate need for a permanent ceasefire and the establishment of an independent Palestine state to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East. Mentioning the tragic helicopter crash in Iran killing President Ebrahim Raisi along with the country's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and others, Ishaq Dar called it a "very sad day" for Muslim Ummah. He said the delegation-level talks started with condolence and Fateha for the departed souls and prayer for patience for the bereaved families. In his remarks, Hakan Fidan told the media that Pakistan was a strategic partner of Turkiye as there had been an

unshakeable friendship and brotherhood between the two people who always supported each other. He said the delegation-level talks identified the ways to strengthen ties and exploit the potential besides the steps to take the bilateral trade to \$5 billion from the current \$1 billion. He said both sides decided in principle to broaden and strengthen ties in trade, defense, investment, banking science and technology and innovation. Fidan said the situation in Afghanistan also impacted Pakistan and they expressed their common desire for permanent peace and stability in the country. Discussing the Palestine situation, he said Israel had crossed all limits of the human rights violations in Gaza. Both sides agreed to proceed with a close cooperation with international partners including the OIC on the issue.



Chairman Rayatullah Khan (Khan Baba) and Country Head Sadia Khan (Khan Bibi) of the World Peace Jirga Program (WPJP) organized a significant seminar at the Islamabad Club.

Soon Times Correspondent
Islamabad

Chairman Rayatullah Khan (Khan Baba) and Country Head Sadia Khan (Khan Bibi) of the World Peace Jirga Program (WPJP) organized a significant seminar at the Islamabad Club. The event featured an oath-taking ceremony for newly appointed members from various regions including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Islamabad. The distinguished chief guests for the seminar were Sana Ullah Ghuman, Secretary General and Director Operations of Pakistan National Heart, and Colonel Doctor Talat Shabbir, Director of the China-Pakistan Strategic Studies Center at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. Mir Asghar Ali Panhwar was appointed for the Director Business Promotion WPJP, Islamabad, Talib Hussain nominated as a Coordinator WPJP, Business

Affairs, Islamabad, Shmeem Awan Coordinator WPJP, Women Empowerment, Islamabad, Farman Ali Coordinator Health WPJP, Islamabad, Husna Khattak Project Coordinator WPJP, Islamabad, Quratulain Jadoon Project Manager WPJP, Islamabad, Ghani Ur Rehman Coordinator WPJP, District Kurram, Sardar Ashan Ahmad Gujjar President WPJP, District Gilgit-Baltistan, Fozia Rehman General Secretary WPJP, District Sindh, Sayed Bahar Hussain Fakhri Coordinator WPJP, All Merged Districts, FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Anjad President WPJP, Sindh, Malik Muhammad Saleem Office Secretary, WPJP Karachi Division, Syed Asad Abbas Abdi Coordinator WPJP, District Sindh, Muhammad Javed Deputy Chairman WPJP, Pakistan, Imran Deputy Chairman WPJP, Sindh, Muhammad Yaqoob Director Project Affairs WPJP,

Islamabad were nominated for key positions within WPJP. WPJP also announced an upcoming donor conference scheduled for early June 2024 at the Convention Center. This conference aims to bring together government officials and potential donors. Following this, international-level donor conferences are planned to be held in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, reflecting the global interest in investing in Pakistan's future. WPJP continues to be actively involved in tackling various challenges such as education, healthcare, and women's rights. The organization also focuses on addressing the issues faced by overseas Pakistanis. Through these efforts, WPJP reaffirms its commitment to advancing Pakistan's development agenda and promoting peace and prosperity across the nation.



Group photo of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister of Turkiye Hakan Fidan in Islamabad on 20th May 2024.

"Towards Meaningful and Enlightening English"



Mushtaq Ahmed Rahu

"Towards Meaningful and Enlightening English" Mastering English Through Grammar, Vocabulary and Composition by the legendary English teacher is a literary gem that stands as a beacon for aspiring candidates preparing for recruitment tests, teachers' appointment exams, and various competitive examinations, including CSS & CCE. This comprehensive book offers a holistic approach to enhancing language skills, focusing on grammar, composition, error detection, vocabulary, precise writing, writing skills, and essay writing.

One of the standout features of this book is its meticulous attention to fundamental grammar rules. The author, with a masterful command of the English language, delves into the intricacies of grammar, providing clear explanations and practical examples. The book serves as an invaluable resource for those seeking to refine their grammatical proficiency, offering a systematic breakdown of grammar concepts essential for competitive exams.

The section on composition is a true highlight, showcasing the author's expertise in guiding readers through the art of effective writing. The book not only imparts essential techniques for crafting coherent and compelling compositions but also nurtures creativity and originality in expression. Aspiring candidates will find this section particularly beneficial, as it equips them with the tools to communicate ideas persuasively and eloquently.

The Error detection segment is a crucial skill in any competitive examination, and "Towards Meaningful and Enlightening English" excels in providing a structured approach to identifying and rectifying errors. The book presents a wide array of exercises that challenge readers to sharpen their error-spotting abilities, ensuring they are well-prepared for

words, idioms, and phrases, fostering a nuanced and sophisticated command of the English language. The inclusion of contextual examples ensures that readers not only expand their vocabulary but also comprehend how to use these words effectively in different scenarios.

The speaking English tips component adds a creative dimension to the book. Leveraging the narrative form, the author skillfully demonstrates the art of effective communication. This not only enhances language proficiency but also instills the ability to convey ideas in a captivating manner, an asset for any teacher or professional communicator.

The author's emphasis on honing writing skills extends to the section on essay writing. With insightful tips and model essays, the book equips candidates with the tools to tackle essay prompts effectively. The inclusion of essays on a variety of topics ensures that readers are well-prepared for the diverse themes that may appear in recruitment and competitive exams.

"Paragraph Writing Unleashed" is a practical guide that demystifies the process of crafting cohesive and compelling paragraphs. Through clear and concise instructions, the book covers essential aspects such as topic sentences, supporting details, and transitions, empowering readers to express their ideas with clarity and coherence. What sets this book apart is its emphasis on creativity and individual expression, encouraging writers to develop their unique voices while adhering to established conventions.

The inclusion of diverse prompts and exercises stimulates creativity and facilitates practice, making it suitable for learners of all levels. Whether any student, professional, or aspiring writer, "Paragraph Writing Unleashed" provides the tools and guidance needed to unleash the full potential of written expression.

Precis writing, an often overlooked skill, is given due importance in this comprehensive guide. The book demystifies the art of precis writing, offering step-by-step guidance on summarizing passages while retaining their core meaning. This section is a valuable resource for candidates aiming to ace the precis writing component of competitive exams.

comprehension and reinforces learning.

Whether any student, educator, or language enthusiast, "Terms of Language" serves as an invaluable reference tool that enriches understanding of the intricate workings of the English language.

"Cloze Test Mastery" is an indispensable resource for honing language proficiency skills, particularly in the context of competitive examinations and assessments. The book presents a wide array of cloze test exercises, each strategically designed to challenge and improve comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar. What sets this book apart is its progressive difficulty level, allowing learners to start from the basics and gradually advance to more complex exercises.

The detailed explanations provided for each exercise aid in identifying areas of weakness and offer insights for improvement. Whether anyone preparing for standardized tests or simply aiming to enhance language skills, "Cloze Test Mastery" is a valuable tool that equips you with the strategies and techniques needed to excel.

In conclusion, "Towards Meaningful and Enlightening English" is a must-have for anyone aspiring to excel in recruitment tests, teachers' appointment exams, and CSS/CCE. The book is the gift of the author's 50 years of rich experience of teaching English Grammar and Composition at college and university levels. The legendary English teacher's expertise shines through, providing a holistic and enlightening approach to mastering the nuances of the English language. This book not only serves as a guide for exam preparation but also as a companion for a lifelong journey towards meaningful and eloquent expression in English. The book has received an overwhelming response, and feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive, with many lauding the book's user-friendly approach and its practical applicability. Some have highlighted the efficacy of the provided exercises in reinforcing concepts, while others have praised the book for demystifying complex grammar rules.



Commissioner Directs Highways officers to Complete Under Construction Bypass

Soon Times Correspondent
Sargodha: Commissioner Sargodha Division Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti has directed the highways officers to complete the remaining work of the under-construction bypass from Jhal Chakian to Faisalabad Road within a week and open it for heavy traffic. He said that boards should be installed in the city that after a week heavy traffic will be banned from entering the city. He issued these orders while inspecting the under-construction bypass on Monday. He checked the quality of the material and directed the contractor to complete the work quickly. The Commissioner said that the Jhal Chakian Bypass had been dilapidated for a long time due to which heavy traffic had to pass through the city. But now its construction will also facilitate the people of the inner city. He clarified that strict action will be taken against heavy traffic passing through the city after the construction of the bypass. On this occasion, SE Highways Mansoor Arshad, XEN Farman Mekan and Deputy Director Technical Rana Shahid Inam were also with him.

DC Sargodha makes detailed visit to Bhalwal & Kotmomin



Complex Bhalwal. He inspected various departments and checked the attendance and availability of employees. He met the petitioners during the inspection of the Land Record Center and inquired about the behavior of the staff and the services provided. He visited the patients and reviewed various departments during the inspection of Tehsil Hospital. He also inspected the Government Revenue Land Site. During his visit to Tehsil Kotmomin, the Deputy Commissioner also visited the Assistant Commissioner Complex, ADLR office, THQ besides visiting Chak No. 19 and reviewed the activities carried out under Clean Punjab. He met the local dignitaries and emphasized the need for them to take ownership of Clean Punjab. The Deputy Commissioner also planted a tree in the Tehsil Complex. Assistant commissioners and other officers of the respective Tehsils were also present on this occasion.

Soon Times Correspondent
Sargodha: Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Aurangzeb Haider Khan made a detailed visit to Tehsil Bhalwal and Kotmomin on Monday. He started his visit from Assistant Commissioner



Sindh Police briefs FPCCI to support endeavors to maintain law & order

Soon Times Correspondent
Karachi: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has extended his full support to Sindh Police in maintenance of Law & Order from the platform of the apex body. We have a common objective of safe, vibrant and prosperous Sindh and, business community is the real stakeholder and at the receiving end of these challenges. Therefore, it is in our own interest to support Sindh Police in its tremendous show of courage and sacrifices, he added. It is pertinent to note that Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, led a high-profile delegation of senior members of FPCCI and prominent business personalities to the office of IG Sindh Police, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Memon. Mr. Imran Yaqoob Minhas, AIG Karachi; various DIGs and other top ranking officials were also present on the occasion. Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon informed that IG Sindh briefed FPCCI delegation on the performance of Sindh Police for the period of January 2024 to May 15, 2024; during which 1480 encounters took place in the province resulting in killing of 146 criminal suspects and 7696 arrests. Mr. Magoon also appreciated the fact that daily crime reports have declined to 160 by mid-May as compared to 242 in January 2024. He also paid his tributes to the martyrs and ghazis of Sindh Police. Media can play a pivotal role in projecting the soft-image of Karachi and Sindh to the world. Mr. Asif Inam, Mr. Aman Paracha, Mr. Asif Sakhi and Abdul Mohamim Khan, VPs FPCCI, were also part of the delegation. Mr. Abdul Mohamim Khan, VP FPCCI, called for continued engagement, liaison and follow-up; to which IG agreed to strengthen the linkages between police and business community. Mr. Ghulam Nabi Memon, IG Sindh Police presented the commemorative shield to Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon.

Food Authority Officer threatens to kill lawyer for pursuing case

Soon Times Correspondent
Sargodha: Food authority department officer threatened to kill lawyer for pursuing case. He armed himself and reached his house. Aneeq Dawood of the Food Authority Department stopped Anil Shahid Bhatti Advocate outside his house and threatened to kill him for becoming an opposing counsel and beat up school going girls with him. While threatening messages were also sent on the mobile phone, on which Anil Shahid Bhatti Advocate gave a written application to the Cantt police station. The Cantt police station has started legal

proceedings. On the other hand, the District Bar Sargodha has demanded immediate arrest and legal action against Food Authority Department Officer Aneeq Dawood, who threatened to kill Anil Shahid Bhatti and beat up the girls who were with him.

The people of Azad Kashmir should be granted all rights: Shujauddin Shaikh

Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE: The people of Azad Kashmir should be granted all rights according to the promises and agreements made with them. This was said by the Ameer of Tanzeem e Islami, Shujauddin Shaikh, in a statement. While expressing concern over the violation of the promise made with Azad Kashmir regarding the prices of flour and electricity, the Ameer said that when this agreement had been going on with our Kashmiri brethren for a while, that electricity unit rates would not exceed the cost price and flour would also be provided at subsidized rates, then why were prices increased under pressure from the IMF, violating the promise and agreement? Kashmir is the starting point of all major rivers flowing into Pakistan, so the demand of Kashmiris for cheap electricity is legitimate. The



Ameer said that thankfully negotiations between the protesters and the government were successful, and the government has reinstated subsidies in accordance with the agreement regarding flour and electricity rates in Azad Kashmir, saving the country from a major crisis. However, the question remains that who ordered rangers to storm Azad Kashmir even after the government and protesters had reached an agreement, potentially sabotaging the security situation. The fact is that America and India are always conspiring against Pakistan's security. Those responsible for using excessive force against civilians should be taken to task, exactly. It is imperative to structure the country's economic system according to Islamic teachings.

Another flight carrying Pakistani students from Kyrgyzstan reaches Islamabad

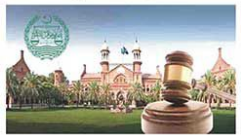


Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD: Another flight carrying Pakistani students from Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek, arrived at Islamabad International Airport on Monday after a mob attack injured several international students, including Pakistanis. Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Balistan Engineer Amir Muqam welcomed the students at the airport on special instructions from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Talking to the media, the minister said that the prime minister immediately took steps to protect Pakistani students after the incident and that he himself was monitoring the situation. Amir Muqam inquired about the students' well-being, stating that whoever wants to return to the country will receive all kinds of assistance from the government of Pakistan. The minister revealed that more flights will bring the students back home. The protection of the life and property of Pakistanis will be ensured in every case, he added.

"Our first priority is the safety of Pakistani students," Muqam said, adding that he had gathered information from the students about the tragic incident in Bishkek and addressed their problems. "Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan are children of the nation," he said, expressing gratitude to Allah Almighty that the students returned home safely. On Sunday, more than 350 students landed in Lahore and Islamabad, with 180 students on board each plane. The turmoil was sparked by a viral video showing a dispute over dues between locals and some foreigners, believed to be Arabs, which escalated into attacks on student hostels and residences. Kyrgyzstan is a popular destination for education, especially in the medical field, attracting a large number of students from the subcontinent, including Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Pakistani students returning from Bishkek on Sunday shared nightmarish accounts of mob attacks, threats, and injuries—both psychological and physical—lamenting that they felt left out in the cold by indifferent authorities.

LHC gives Punjab government ultimatum for judges' appointment

Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has issued an ultimatum to the Punjab government regarding the appointment of judges. Chief Justice Shehzad Ahmed Khan presided over a hearing on the Punjab government's petition to transfer cases from LHC's anti-terrorism court 1 Rawalpindi to another court. During the proceedings, the advocate general Punjab informed the court that a government committee had consulted



session, expressing dissatisfaction with the absence of immediate action. The chief justice ruled that either a special cabinet meeting should have been called or the government committee should have appeared before the court after completing its task. In response, the advocate general assured that the matter would be resolved in the cabinet session scheduled for Friday. Expressing dismay over the absence of the government committee in court, Chief Justice Khan deemed it disrespectful.

the Punjab chief minister on the matter of judges' appointment, assuring that it had been prioritised for the upcoming cabinet session. However, Chief Justice Khan inquired about the timeline for the next cabinet

Julian Assange: WikiLeaks founder fights US extradition with free speech argument



LONDON
WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's lawyers told London's High Court on Monday that he should not be extradited to the United States over the mass leak of secret US documents as he may not be able to rely on his right to free speech.
Hundreds of protesters gathered outside the court ahead of what could be the culmination of 13 years of legal battles, with two judges due to declare whether they are satisfied by US assurances that Assange, 52, can rely on the First Amendment right if he is tried for spying in the US.

Saudi king to be treated for lung inflammation, state news agency says



DUBAI
Saudi King Salman will undergo treatment at Al Salam Palace in Jeddah for a lung inflammation, the state news agency - hours after he underwent medical tests.
Citing the royal court, the state news agency said the 88-year-old king would be treated with antibiotics until the inflammation subsides.
Due to King Salman's health issue, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto Saudi leader, postponed a visit to Japan that had been scheduled to begin on Monday, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said.



New Taiwanese president calls on China to stop its threats

Taiwanese fighter jets flew in formation over Taipei after Lai's speech.

TAIPEI
Taiwan President Lai Ching-te asked China on Monday to stop its military and political threats, saying in his inauguration speech that peace is the only choice and that Beijing had to respect the choice of the Taiwanese people.
Lai, addressing the crowd outside the Japanese-colonial-era presidential office in central Taipei, repeated a call for talks with China, which views the proudly democratic island as its own territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring it under Beijing's control.
"I also want to urge China to stop intimidating Taiwan politically and militarily, and to take on the global responsibility with Taiwan to work hard on maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the region, to ensure the world is without the fear of war breaking out," he said. "We also want to declare this to the world: Taiwan makes no concessions on democracy and freedom. Peace is the only option and prosperity is our goal for long-term peace and stability."
There was no immediate reaction from China, which repeatedly called Lai a "separatist" risking war in the run-up to his election in January.
Taiwan has faced pressure from China, including regular air force and navy activities near the island, since the election victory by Lai, 64, who is widely known by his English name, William.

Mexican presidential candidates spar over security in final debate

MEXICO CITY
Mexico's major presidential candidates squared night in a debate focused on security, with the ruling party hopeful defending the outgoing president's policy even as her main rival harshly criticized both for record levels of violent crime.
Former Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum of the leftist ruling Morena party pledged continuity with the largely non-confrontational security policies of her mentor, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, while also touting her crime-fighting record as leader of the sprawling capital.
"I'm the only one who can show results in security," said Sheinbaum, arguing that the murder rate on her watch dipped as she hired more police while also supporting social programs aimed at what she described as easing the underlying causes of crime.
Sheinbaum, a scientist, ran Mexico City from 2018 to 2023 when she stepped down to run for president, and earlier in her career served as the capital's environment minister under then-Mayor Lopez Obrador.

ICC seeks arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu war crimes in Gaza



(Web Desk)
The International Criminal Court is seeking arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity over the war in Gaza, the court's chief prosecutor Karim Khan told CNN's Christiane Amanpour in an exclusive interview on Monday.
Khan said the ICC is also seeking warrants for Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, as well as two other top Hamas leaders — Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri, the leader of the Al Qasem Brigades and better known as Mohammed Deif, and Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' political leader.
The warrants against the Israeli politicians mark the first time the ICC has targeted the top leader of a close ally of the United States.
The decision puts Netanyahu in the company of the Russian President Vladimir Putin, for whom the ICC issued an arrest warrant over Moscow's war on Ukraine.
A panel of ICC judges will now consider Khan's application for the arrest warrants.
The charges against Netanyahu and Gallant include "causing extermination, causing starvation as a method of war, including the denial of humanitarian relief supplies, deliberately targeting civilians in conflict," Khan told Amanpour.
When reports surfaced last month that the ICC chief prosecutor was considering this course of action, Netanyahu said that any ICC arrest warrants against senior Israeli government and military officials "would be an outrage of historic proportions," and that Israel "has an independent legal system that rigorously investigates all violations of the law."

Sports & Showbiz

Gary Kirsten joins Pakistan ahead of England T20I series



Pakistan's new white-ball head coach Gary Kirsten has joined the national side in the United Kingdom ahead of the upcoming T20I series against England.
South Africa's Kirsten, welcomed by the team's senior manager Wahab Riaz, skipper Babar Azam and assistant coach Azhar Mahmood, was presented with the team's training shirt in Leeds.
The development comes after the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) last month announced the appointment of new coaches for the limited-over format and Tests.
While Kirsten will serve as the Men in Green's head coach in T20I and ODI formats, Australia's Jason Gillespie will perform his duties as the team's red-ball coach in Tests.
Kirsten represented South Africa in 101 Tests and 185 ODIs from 1993-2004, where he accumulated 14,087 runs with 34 centuries. On his appointment, he said that his goal as the team's white-ball coach would be to ensure the team operates at its optimal level.
He previously coached India from 2008-2011 and helped them to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2011 title as well as the number one position on the ICC Test Team.



Showbiz stars offer commiseration on death of Iran president



(Web Desk)
The tragic news of the death of Iranian President has also saddened the people of Pakistan due to a strong bond of connection between the two brotherly nations.
Not only the masses, showbiz stars also expressed commiserations for the departed soul.
Celebrities took to their social media accounts to express their condolences on this sad event.
Many showbiz stars including actors Usama Khan, Ghana Ali, Madhira Rizvi and head Shaista Lodhi shared their condolences on this untimely demise.
Madhira Rizvi called the death of Iranian president a great loss for the Muslim Ummah.

Mauricio Pochettino: What's the future of Chelsea manager amid good performance

Sports Desk
Argentinian football manager Mauricio Pochettino has garnered considerable support from his team players however, whether Chelsea to retain him as a coach remains unknown.
Pochettino's men triumphed over Bournemouth Sunday by 2-1 at Stamford Bridge, with Goalkeeper Djordje Petrovic appreciating the management skills of the Argentine coach.
Several players came to the 52-year-old manager and praised him for his supervision of his team.
Pochettino confirmed the uncertainty of his stay with Chelsea after his team finished sixth in the Premier League.
Chelsea's Serbian goalkeeper Petrovic while speaking about his manager noted: "For me, personally, I really believe him and the whole coaching staff because they believed in me and gave me the chance. They supported me a lot and they have a relationship with the players where everyone is important, so that is a good thing for everyone."
The West London-based improved its position on the European level because of its good performance in



the season half of the season.
Chelsea finished sixth in the Premier League and as of now, they are set to play in the UEFA Europa League for next season. However, if Manchester United beat Manchester City in the FA Cup final, they will make their way to the Europa League while Chelsea will be demoted to the UEFA Conference League.
The Serb added: "We knew it before but something happened there. There was an energy there with the players in the team and on the bench. We started to play the second half against Villa amazing and after that we continued for the next five games."



Sanjay Leela addresses Heeramandi's historical errors

(Web Desk)
Sanjay Leela Bhanjali has addressed the criticism surrounding the historical inaccuracies in his latest project Heeramandi.
This Netflix series marked the acclaimed director's debut on OTT platforms and has elicited a mixed response from audiences and critics alike.
Criticism was prominently towards the authenticity of its portrayal of the pre-independence era spanning 1920s to 1940s.
Speaking to Baradwaj Rangan, Bhanjali acknowledged the concerns but stood by his creative choices.
He explained that his style of filmmaking is inherently "subtle, delicate, and larger-than-life."
Bhanjali emphasized that his focus is on crafting an emotionally compelling and visually grand narrative, rather than adhering strictly to historical accuracy.
He elaborated: "In my mind, it was the most romantic place to be in. I come from that world."
"I've always watched films with puns and prostitutes around in the theatres."
"My cinema will always have that dramatic touch and that larger-than-life approach, which is not subtle, which is not delicate, but it is heartfelt."
"If I had a dignity of it being told on the screen because I work on the visual of it."
"It has to be worthy of being there because I'm reliving a certain moment of my life, of this life, maybe past life... they are different."
"I am responsible for giving my audience an experience, and I will give them the fullest of mine."
"I'm not here to make money, I'm here to make a film. I'm here to make an experience for you."
Sanjay Leela Bhanjali also discussed the recurring presence of sex workers in his projects.
He said: "I feel they are women who have a lot of enigma, a lot of mystery."
"The courtesan, or the tawaif, or the prostitute... they are different."
"But they always exude a certain kind of power which I find very interesting to look at... I found that very fascinating, that these women are very interesting."
"Where they sing, they dance. Where they express themselves, their joy and their grief in music and dance."
"They understand the art of living, the importance of architecture, the use of fabric, and the kind of jewellery they wear. They are connoisseurs of art."
"Who are we? We are artists. Whatever you might call them, I still need them."
"When I used to go to school, I was fascinated by those faces. Those four middle-class women in the ration line do not interest me."