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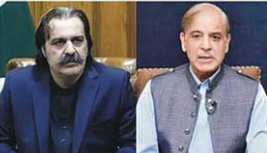
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In letter to PM, Gandapur expresses concern over exclusion of KP projects from PSDP



Soon Times Correspondent PESHAWAR
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has written a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif regarding the exclusion of 91 development projects of the province from the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). In the letter, Gandapur stated that the Planning Committee's decision was deeply disappointing, observing that the exclusion of 91 development projects from the PSDP would significantly impact the province. The CM termed the exclusion of ongoing development projects a violation of the decisions made during meetings of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as well as the National Economic Council (NEC). In the letter, Gandapur also mentioned the decision taken during the NEC meeting, where emphasis was placed on prioritising the completion of ongoing projects.

PM Shehbaz congratulates Narendra Modi on taking oath as prime minister



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday congratulated his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi on taking oath as the India's premier. Taking to his personal account on X, formerly Twitter, PM Shehbaz wrote: "Congratulations to @narendramodi on taking oath as the Prime Minister of India." The Pakistani premier's felicitation for his Indian counterpart came a day after he took oath as prime minister for the third consecutive time and retaining the coveted position. Modi was sworn in as premier on Sunday for a record-equalling third term but this time his Bharatiya Janata Party is not in a strong position.

AJK poet Ahmed Farhad transferred to Rara Jail on judicial remand



Soon Times Correspondent MUZAFFARABAD
The Sessions Court on Monday sent AJK poet Ahmed Farhad to jail on judicial remand. During the proceedings, Farhad was presented before the court by police upon the completion of his remand. An incomplete challan was also submitted to the court. The court ordered that Farhad be transferred to jail on judicial remand. It also directed that he should be produced again in court on June 24. Following the court orders, the arrested poet was transferred to Rara Jail.

PM Shehbaz attends funeral prayer of Capt Faraz Ilyas

Funeral prayer attended by Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar, IG Punjab, many senior military officers



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday attended namaz-e-janaza (funeral prayer) of shahed Captain Faraz Ilyas in Kasur, who was martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) attack in District Laki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The funeral prayer was attended by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, the Punjab Police IG and a number of senior military officers, civil authorities, relatives and residents of the area. Captain Faraz, 26, belonged to a village Rai Kalan in Kasur. He, along seven Pakistan Army soldiers, laid his life valiantly while performing his duties in Laki Marwat on Sunday. The soldiers were martyred after their vehicle was hit by an IED. PM Shehbaz also met with the martyred captain's parents and expressed condolences. He renamed native village of the martyred officer as 'Faraz Ilyas Shabed' and announced to transform the village into a model village. The premier told the parents that the sacrifice of their son would not go in vain and prayed for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude. "Under the Quranic teachings, a shabed has an elevated place in Jannah," he said, adding that a large number of jawans of armed forces had laid down their lives for the motherland. The PM said that the nation was proud of its brave sons and the coward terrorists could not succeed in shaking their strong resolve.

PTI should compete with Maryam Nawaz in governance not debate: Azma Bukhari

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE

Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari stated that Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz was getting on the nerves of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI), reference to her opponent political party's incompetence to beat Maryam Nawaz in governance. She gave response on the statements of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Saif, said Maryam Nawaz was violating basic human rights to satisfy her ego by using the police for political revenge.



Azma Bukhari stated if PTI wants to compete with Maryam Nawaz, do compete in governance not debate. Punjab information minister also warned of May 9 incident' accused on hiding under the guise of politics. She claimed that PTI was planning of another May 9 like incident, saying they haven't accepted their mistakes nor ashamed of their acts.

Punjab government issues gazette notification of controversial Defamation Law 2024

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE

Punjab government has issued the gazette notification of Punjab Defamation Law 2024. The bill has become law and applicable on every citizen in Punjab. Under the Punjab Defamation Law, the offender will pay fine of 3 million before trial. On evidence of accusation, social media account of offender will be blocked. Tribunals will be formed that will announce the verdict within 180 days. No one can share opinion including journalists, lawyers on ongoing cases in tribunal. High courts benches will hear the cases of personalities holding constitutional offices. Dissemination of fake news, disinformation on print, electronic and social media is prohibited under this law. Earlier, the Governor House confirmed signing the Defamation Bill by Acting Punjab Governor Malik Ahmed Khan. The Punjab Defamation Bill 2024 was passed by the Punjab Assembly on May 20, which was sent to Punjab Governor Sardar Saif Haider for approval. The Punjab Defamation Act 2024 has been challenged in the Lahore High Court hours after it was signed by Acting Punjab Governor Malik Ahmed Khan. The petition has been filed in the Lahore High Court by journalist Jafar Ahmed Yar and Raja Riaz through Advocate Nadeem Sarwar. In the petition, the Punjab chief minister and governor through principal secretary.



Attempts to disrupt Pakistan-China ties will be foiled: Tarar

Defends Punjab Defamation Act, arguing if one can apologise before courts in other countries, then why not in Pakistan



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Monday said the enemies could not digest the development in Pakistan, as he promised to foil the efforts made by political rivals and external forces. He also noted that some forces wanted to disrupt Pakistan-China relations and were working on the nefarious agenda of creating a situation where there could not be any peace in the country. The minister promised to extend complete security to the Chinese

nationals living and working in Pakistan while rooting out the menace of terrorism forever. Referring to his recent visit to China as member of a delegation accompanying Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he said an agreement had been reached on upgradation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor CPEC. However, Tarar stressed that political stability was a prerequisite for economic stability, as he criticised those aiming at creating uncertainty in Pakistan.

YOU CAN'T BE BIGGER THAN PAKISTAN
Tarar told a press conference that no political leader could be bigger than Pakistan with reference to PTI founding chairman Imran Khan, as he questioned the "clean chat" being given through court proceedings. He said a so-called leader had humiliated Pakistan around the globe, but the things were changing, as Pakistan was a historic juncture leading to development and prosperity.

Budget 2024-25: PM Shehbaz Sharif to review development programmes in NEC meeting

The 13th five-year plan — 2024-2029 — will also be presented for approval in NEC meeting

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will chair a meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC) at the PM House today to finalise the development programme for the next financial year. The development programme for the current financial year will also be reviewed during the meeting which will be attended by the four provincial chief ministers as well as the representatives of the federation and provinces. The NEC, during the meeting, is set to green light economic targets for the upcoming financial year 2024-2025, while the 13th five-year plan — 2024-2029 — will also be presented for approval. The economic growth target



The investment target is proposed to be 14.2% of GDP. The national savings target would be at 13.3% in the next financial year. According to sources, the federal government has prepared a five-year (2024-2029) plan for determining important economic goals. Macroeconomic framework has been made part of the plan. The federal government has decided to approve the five-year plan in the budget of next financial year. Under the five-year plan, important economic goals will be determined. The sources said macroeconomic framework, energy, balance of payments, development budget, food and agriculture, population, poverty and governance reforms are part of the plan.

for the next fiscal year is proposed to be 3.6%, the publication said while the economic growth target for the current fiscal year (2023-24) was set at 3.5%. The average inflation target for the new fiscal year is proposed to be at 12%. The average inflation target for the current fiscal year was 21%. A target of 2% growth for agriculture sector for new financial year is proposed. The target for agriculture for the current financial year was 3.5%. The industrial sector growth

is proposed to be 4.4% in the next financial year. The target of industrial sector was 3.4% for the current financial year. The services sector growth target in the new financial year is proposed to be set at 4.1%. The target for this sector for the current fiscal year was 3.6%.



Pre-Hajj flight operations

Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, announced the successful conclusion of the pre-Hajj flight operations with the departure of the final flight from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia. The last Saudi Airlines flight, carrying 380 Pakistani pilgrims, marked the end of the month-long operation as it departed from Islamabad to the holy land on Monday. In his message to all those who

contributed to the success of this phase, the minister expressed his satisfaction with the successful completion of the pre-Hajj flight operations. "This achievement is a testament to the meticulous planning and coordination of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony and other stakeholders," he stated. The minister emphasized that the smooth operation was the result of the tireless efforts of the ministry's staff, who worked

diligently to ensure the comfort and safety of the pilgrims. He also highlighted the various initiatives taken by the ministry to facilitate the pilgrimage, including the introduction of discounted long and short packages. The minister expressed his gratitude to the pilgrims, the airlines, and the ministry's staff for their cooperation and dedication in making the pre-Hajj flight operations a success. He underscored the

importance of the Hajj pilgrimage, which is a sacred duty for Muslims worldwide, and pledged to continue working towards ensuring a smooth and enjoyable experience for all pilgrims. The flights were operated by various airlines, including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Saudi Airlines, SereneAir, and AirSial, to transport pilgrims from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia.

Exploring global cybersecurity challenges; A comparative analysis of national strategies

By Syeda Pakeeza Batool

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies along with the surge in cyber threats has promoted states throughout the world to design and implement effective cybersecurity plans. This research article explores the global security challenges and provide a comparative analysis of national strategies, highlighting the diverse approaches adopted by different countries to safeguard their digital infrastructure. According to a 2023 report by cybersecurity ventures, the global cost of cybercrime is projected to reach \$10.5 trillion annually by 2025, up from \$3 trillion in 2015, underscoring the escalating financial impact of cyber threats. The United States, for instance, has emphasized a multi-layered defense strategy that integrated public-private partnerships, advanced threat detection and a strong legislative framework. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) plays a pivotal role in developing cybersecurity standards, which are widely adopted across various sectors. In 2023, the U.S. government allocated \$18.78 billion for federal cybersecurity spendings, reflecting the prioritization of this domain. In contrast, the European Union has pursued a more unified approach through directives like General data protection regulation (GDPR) and The Network and information systems directive (NIS2), focusing on both data protection and critical infrastructure security. The EU's strategy underscores the importance of cross-border cooperation and harmonization of cybersecurity policies among member states, with an investment of \$1.89 billion in cybersecurity under the horizon Europe program for the 2021-2027 period.

China's cybersecurity strategy characterized by stringent state control and comprehensive legislation such as the cybersecurity law of 2017, reflects its broader political and social governance model. This law mandates data localization, extensive monitoring and stringent penalties for non-compliance highlighting a securitized approach to managing cyberspace. China allocated approximately \$3.6 billion for cybersecurity in 2023, indicating significant state investment in this sector. Conversely, Japan grappling with the cybersecurity implications of its advanced technological infrastructure has prioritized the protection of critical information infrastructure through the basic Act on cybersecurity and the establishment of the National Center for Cybersecurity (NISC). Japan's strategy is marked by an emphasis on public awareness and international collaboration, particularly in the context of major international events like the Tokyo Olympics. In 2023, Japan committed \$275 million towards enhancing its national cybersecurity framework. Russia's cybersecurity approach, deeply intertwined with its national security strategy involves comprehensive cyber defense capabilities and an emphasis on digital sovereignty. The Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor) plays a crucial role in monitoring and controlling the digital space, while policies like The Sovereignty Internet Law aim to isolate the Russian internet segment from global networks, reflecting a defensive posture against perceived external threats. In 2023, Russia's cybersecurity expenditure was estimated at around \$340 million. India on the other hand is navigating the complexities of a rapidly digitizing economy and the associated cybersecurity challenges. The National Cybersecurity Policy (NCSIP) of 2013 although criticized for its lack of comprehensiveness marks a significant step towards establishing a coordinated cybersecurity framework with initiatives aimed at capacity building, research and development, and fostering a culture of cybersecurity awareness. India allocated \$100 million to cybersecurity initiatives in 2023, indicating a growing recognition

of its importance. The Middle East presents a unique cybersecurity landscape with countries like Israel and Saudi Arabia adopting distinct strategies reflective of their geopolitical contexts. Israel renowned for its cybersecurity prowess, leverages its technical innovation ecosystem, robust intelligence capabilities and strong private sector collaboration. The establishment of Israel National Cyber Directorate (INCD) exemplifies a centralized approach to cybersecurity governance. In 2023, Israel's cybersecurity exports exceeded \$11 billion demonstrating its global leadership in this field. Saudi Arabia focusing on diversifying its economy through vision 2030, has implemented the National Cybersecurity Authority (NCA) to enhance cyber resilience across sectors. The Kingdom's strategy is characterized by significant investments in cybersecurity infrastructure, talent development and international partnerships. Saudi Arabia allocated \$800 million towards cybersecurity in 2023. In Southern Asia, Singapore stands out with its comprehensive cybersecurity strategy encapsulated Singapore Cybersecurity Strategy 2021, which emphasizes building a resilient infrastructure, creating a safer cyberspace and fostering international cooperation. The Cybersecurity Agency of Singapore (CSA) plays a pivotal role in orchestrating national efforts and ensuring a proactive cybersecurity posture. Singapore invested \$750 million in its cybersecurity infrastructure in 2023. Similarly, Australia's cybersecurity strategy 2020 underscores a proactive approach to cybersecurity with a focus on protecting critical infrastructure, enhancing cyber skills and fostering international collaboration. The Australian Cybersecurity Center (ACSC) serves as the central hub for threat intelligence and incident response. Australia's cybersecurity budget for 2023 was \$920 million.

Recognizing Palestine Marks New Era in Diplomacy



Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer

Ireland, Spain and Norway recently decided to recognize Palestinian statehood. This move could potentially help revive the idea of a two-state solution which is a long-sought international goal that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strongly opposes. Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez clarified that this decision should not be seen as an action against Israel. Despite Netanyahu labeling it a "reward for terrorism" Sanchez views it as a step towards peace. Other European countries might follow suit adding to the over 140 nations that already recognize Palestinian statehood.

between diplomatic actions and on the ground realities. Even though more countries recognizing Palestinian statehood could be a symbolic win for Palestinians, it is uncertain if this will lead to real progress towards peace especially with strong opposition from key players like Israel and the United States. For these recognitions to be effective, Europe needs to present a unified and strong front which is difficult given current geopolitical dynamics. The decision by Ireland, Spain and Norway was expected due to their national debates and growing public support for action supporting Palestine. Politically, this is notable because other European countries, such as Malta, Slovenia and Belgium have hesitated to take similar steps. Belgium has been vocal about Palestinian rights during its presidency of the Council of the European Union however national elections and other factors have made it cautious. National election cycles and the upcoming election of a new European Parliament have influenced how European governments handle the sensitive Middle East issue, depending on their domestic politics and the views of their ruling parties.

The decisions by Ireland, Spain and Norway's involvement (though not an EU member) are significant for breaking the EU's diplomatic unity rather than for their legal impact. Most of the few EU members that recognized Palestinian statehood did so in 1988 before joining the EU and were mainly former Warsaw Pact countries. Before the recent declarations only Sweden had departed from the EU's general stance on Palestine, doing so in 2014. The current Swedish government's different stance compared to the previous one shows how volatile this

issue can be. There is still no consistent, unified approach among all 27 EU member states that goes beyond national political cycles and short-term agendas. Even though there has been some agreement within the EU since the conflict started, reaching a comprehensive EU-wide consensus is still far off.

It would be too cynical to dismiss the entire EU diplomatic effort after the October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorist attack as futile. The EU High Representative Josep Borrell has worked hard to coordinate a common European position during critical moments of the conflict, sometimes with success. The Spanish and Belgian EU presidencies have tried to convince Israel that resuming peace talks is a key to defeating Hamas politically not just militarily. Despite Israel's ongoing military campaign which has killed tens of thousands, EU leaders like Germany and France have become more critical of Israeli policy. French President Emmanuel Macron even said in February that recognizing Palestinian statehood is no longer a taboo for Paris.

However, the EU has not yet united around measures that would apply real pressure especially in trade and economic relations. The EU is the largest provider of aid to Palestinians and Israel's biggest trade partner. Recently, sanctions were seriously discussed for the first time at an EU foreign ministers' meeting but no agreement was reached. It's important for the EU to stay involved in resolving the conflict by engaging with Arab countries, but its effectiveness is limited by internal differences and political cycles. With pro-Israel Hungary taking over the EU Council presidency in July, achieving a common and meaningful EU position will remain a challenge.

CHALLENGES TO NUCLEAR DETERRENCE STABILITY IN SOUTH ASIA

Munazza Akbar

South Asian region became nuclearized in 1998, this phenomenon received international attention immediately. Due to traditional hostility, international community was concerned on the introduction of nuclear weapons in South Asia. There are many factors at international, regional and local level which impacts deterrence stability in South Asia.

Due to rivalry of two nuclear states, the strategic environment in South Asia is constantly changing. It is very important to maintain credible deterrence at all level, because there is no likelihood that acquisition of nuclear weapons is renounced by both the states. India wants to become a

global leader and it aspires to accumulate maximum power by strategic partnerships with technologically advanced states. Relations are conflictual at political level. India is trying to manage the conflicts while Pakistan wants to resolve the conflicts. Global players in-discriminatory behaviour is threat to strategic stability. It is the responsibility of Pakistan to make sure that deterrence is stable. There are different challenges to deterrence stability in South Asia. This article focuses on challenges like shifts in doctrines, role of international factors, regional challenges like terrorism and non-state actors, technological challenges like cyber technology, technical issues like accidental launching of missiles and local challenges like leadership roles. All these factors challenges deterrence stability in South

Asia. International actors specially US have a key role in South Asian strategic environment. Due to failure in Afghanistan, Pakistan's relations with US have been unreliable. Pakistan joined American alliance during cold war but it turned out to have more disadvantages than advantages given the US imposition of arms embargo after 1965 war to appease India. Indo-US nuclear deal signed in 2008 and Pakistan has strongly been critical of this deal. This deal recognizes India as a nuclear power but continues to exclude Pakistan from nuclear club. In order to counter China, US tends to expand economic and military capabilities of India. This deal allows India to carry nuclear trade and

enhance fissile material stockpile, so the stability of region will be destabilized. All these developments will push Pakistan towards Chinese camp which does not clearly fall in line with what the US want vis-a-vis its China Strategy. Technological advancements and developments of weapons useful in counterforce role lead India to denounce no first use policy. All these developments can lead to conflict escalation in South Asia. All these developments give India a false sense of security and there are chances of low casualty strikes by India and it is great threat to strategic stability in South Asia. India is continuously expanding its nuclear program which shows shifts in Nuclear Force Posture of India which is based on counter force

targets. India claims that all war preparation are against China but anything against China is also double against Pakistan. There are many other ways to achieve foreign policy goals but both states are inclined to use military means. Hackers or individuals with technological expertise can be hired to carry out such sophisticated attacks by one state against the other. A well-known example of this is the Stuxnet program used by Israel and United States against Natanz Nuclear facility in Iran. The program destroyed the centrifuge of the Iranian facility and halted its operations, posing a delay in Iran's nuclear capacity for years. In this case, there are allegedly states involved but in the case of the cyber-attack on the Kudankulam Nuclear plant in India, a group of hackers was hired for the

task. In this case, the objective was to acquire information on thorium-based nuclear fuel. In the case of India and Pakistan, the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities signed on 31st December 1988 is still in effect, yet it does not ensure that a cyber-attack will also be prevented by the force of the agreement. There can be several objectives behind a cyber-attack. As densely populated as Pakistan is, the aftermath of a possible reactor meltdown can be catastrophic. Terrorism and Non-State actors are threat to strategic stability in South Asia. Attacks on Indian Parliament and military base camp in 2001 and 2002 respectively brought India and Pakistan crises to their peak. Both states mobilized their forces along the

international border. There was exchange of nuclear threats that were to be employed in the case of escalation. Both sides withdrew their forces due to existence of nuclear deterrence. Attacks in 2008 on Mumbai were also linked to Pakistan-based terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Taiba. In 2016 Indian soldiers were killed and in Uri and Indian Air Force base in Pathankot was also attacked. India claimed successful launching of surgical strikes in Pakistan's territory but these claims were rejected by Pakistan. In 2019, 40 Indian soldiers were killed in Pulwama in a suicide attack. India claimed to attack terrorist in Pakistan. Pakistan retaliated and shot down Indian aircrafts. There were risks of escalation which could pose serious threats to strategic stability in South

bank. Terrorist attacks and non-state actors causes strain in the relations of states which could lead to the escalation. There are no policies to control escalation and there are no determined nuclear thresholds, so terrorist incidents posed serious threats to strategic stability. There is a continuous series of blame game, India blames Pakistan for sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir while Pakistan believes that India is exploiting the issue of terrorism. To isolate Pakistan and undermine its image, India always tries to raise the issue of terrorism at multilateral economic forums. Leadership in India is also exploiting this situation and they are promoting rivalry between both states just for their vote



Rai Kalan, District Kasur: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offers Fatiha at the grave of Captain Muhammad Faraz Ilyas who was martyred in Lakki Marwat. June 10, 2024.

LHC's Registrar Office accepts petition challenging Punjab Defamation Law 2024

Acting Punjab Governor Malik Ahmed Khan signed the controversial Defamation Bill

Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE
The Lahore High Court's Registrar Office declared the petition challenging the Punjab Defamation Law 2024 admissible and accepted the petition for hearing. Earlier, LHC's Registrar Office raised objections to the petition against the Punjab Defamation Law 2024. It accepted the plea after the petitioners removed the concerns. The petition was filed in the LHC by journalist Jafar Ahmed Yar and Raja Riaz through Advocate Nadeem Sarwar. In the petition, the Punjab chief minister and governor through principal secretary and Punjab government have been made parties. The petitioners have taken the stance that the defamation law violates the constitution and law. In the presence of the defamation



ordinance and the defamation act, a new law cannot be made, they contend. The petitioner said the government did not make consultations with the journalists while enacting the new law. He said the defamation law was brought in haste to curb freedom of journalists and media. The petitioners prayed to court to declare the defamation law null and void and stop its implementation till a final decision on the

petition. The bill has become law. The Punjab Defamation Bill 2024 was passed by the Punjab Assembly on May 20, which was sent to Punjab Governor Sardar Satim Haider for approval. The governor refused to sign the bill while expressing some reservations. After that the Punjab government held a meeting with the governor, which bore no result. Earlier, the Governor House confirmed signing the Defamation Bill by Acting Punjab Governor Malik Ahmed Khan. The Ministry of Law has issued the notification of law in its gazette. After issuance of the notification, the defamation law has formally come into force in Punjab and is applicable on every citizen.

U.S. and Pakistan Shape the Future of Higher Education



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Andrew J. Schofer today inaugurated the three-day International Summit on Higher Education alongside the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, and professors from the University of Utah. The USAID-

funded summit brings together over 180 Pakistani and American university leaders and faculty to collaborate, exchange knowledge, and build partnerships to improve the quality of higher education and student employability. The summit is part of USAID's \$19 million Higher Education System Strengthening Activity that supports 16 Pakistani public

universities to improve higher education management, market-relevant instruction, and student support services. In his opening remarks, Chargé d'Affaires Schofer emphasized the crucial role of higher education institutions in driving Pakistan's economic development. "Higher education institutions have an essential role to play in Pakistan's development. When universities deliver equitable education, provide youth with employment-ready skills, and lead in applied research and innovation, both individuals and society prosper," he stated. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, appreciated this robust partnership between the University of Utah and Pakistani universities to exchange ideas and share innovations across borders.

PPP vows to play role in 'withdrawal' of Punjab defamation law

PML-N-led Punjab govt did not consult allies, stakeholders on budget 2024-25, claims PPP leader

Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE
s Punjab Defamation Bill, 2024, led to protests by opposition, journalists and rights bodies, (Pakistan Peoples Party Central (PPP) Punjab General Secretary Syed Hassan Murtaza said on Monday that his party would play its part in the "withdrawal" of the controversial law.



"PPP was neither taken on board regarding the Punjab defamation law nor budget preparations," Murtaza said while speaking to journalists in Lahore. He added that the Bilawal-led party's legal team was working on the disputed legislation and will make efforts to convince the provincial government to withdraw it. The PPP senior leader claimed that his party was informed about the defamation bill when it was presented before a committee. "PPP was never willing to be part of that legislation," he added. He further clarified that Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider's foreign visit had been planned before the legislation was tabled and passed in the provincial assembly. The bill would have

been approved anyhow even if the governor sent it back to the House, he added. The defamation law had been passed by the interim governor of Punjab which belongs to the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), said Murtaza. He claimed that the citizens and the journalists were not satisfied with the Punjab government's steps despite pinning hopes on better performance from the administration led by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. Murtaza appealed to the provincial government to protect the poor segment from exploitation. He criticised the PML-N-led government for not holding consultations with its allies and stakeholders for the budget 2024-25. He alleged that the Punjab government

failed to table a comprehensive plan for addressing the issues of the labourers, salaried persons, students and other segments in the budget proposals. Commenting on the Punjab defamation bill, another PPP leader and Sindh Information Minister Sargeel Memon said that his party's Punjab governor did not sign the controversial law. He added that the PPP would never introduce a bill that would compromise the press freedom. He blamed the former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government led by ousted prime minister Imran Khan for introducing same genre of law which was named after the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) during his tenure in the name of legislating against harassment and hate speeches. Memon said that his party is firmly standing for press freedom and the journalist fraternity. He stated that the PPP government took stern actions against those who tried to target the journalists — including the slain journalists Wali Khan Babar, Aziz Memon and Nasrullah Gadani — and arrested all culprits behind the killings.

Talpur reviews performance of Irrigation Department

Soon Times Correspondent

Mirpurkhas:
The meeting of District Council Mirpurkhas was held at District Council Hall Mirpurkhas under the chairmanship of Chairman Mir Anwar Ali Khan Talpur. In meeting the performance of Irrigation Department and Agriculture was reviewed. Expressing his anger, he presented a resolution condemning the non-participation. In the meeting, Chairman Mir Anwar Talpur took notice of the lack of water and said that the biggest problem of irrigation is lack of water. He has instructed the relevant authorities of the irrigation department to take appropriate measures. He said that due to the floods in Mirpurkhas in 2022 problems were faced due to lack of natural drains and canals in proper condition. There is a shortage of fertilizer, seeds and agricultural standard



medicines in Mirpurkhas. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Agriculture officers to solve the relevant problems for the better production of crops. On this occasion, District Council members Khadim Hussain Behrani, Ashraf Sattar Khaskheli, Javed Jamejo and others members expressed their views. They said that there is a shortage of 14000 kiccks of water. Paddy crop has been planted in Mirpurkhas due to which there is a problem of water shortage.

Bharath hands over cheque to special children on the direction of CM Punjab

Soon Times Correspondent

Sargodha:
The Minister for Communication and Works Malik Sohail Ahmed Bharath visited the house of special children in the Sargodha district, who made a portrait of the Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif and presented it to her during an event organized in Lahore some days back. On the direction of the Chief Minister of Punjab, the Minister for Communication and Works, Malik Sohail Ahmed Bharath, visited their house along with the Deputy Commissioner of Sargodha. He handed over a one lakh

cheque to each special student. The Minister for Communication and Works also thanked special students Abdul Rehman and Rimsha Sajjad, students of the Special Education School in Sargodha, for making the portrait of CM Punjab. "The Punjab Government has been focusing on the education of special children and will not leave them behind in the field of progress," he added. He further said that Special Children are not less than anyone in regard with abilities. He also appreciated the parents and teachers who are playing important role in their education.



The Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Austria, Mr. Muhammad Kamran Akhtar, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aitwan-e-Sadr, on 10-06-2024.

IHC orders federal government to pay 3m to father of missing person

Soon Times Correspondent

ISLAMABAD
The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered the federal government to pay 3 million to father of missing person, Haroon. IHC's Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case of recovery of missing person Haroon Muhammad disappeared from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 15 years. Additional Attorney General Munawar Iqbal Duggal and petitioner's counsel Iman Mazari appeared before the court, during the case hearing.



IHC ordered the federal government to compensate the father of missing person with 3 million. The court directed to pay the compensation to father of missing person before the next hearing. IHC issued the orders to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa inspector general (IG) through home secretary for compensation. During the hearing, advocate Iman Mazari contended that the applicant's family has been getting threats for filing the case.

IESCO Power Suspension Schedules for Today & Tomorrow

Soon Times Correspondent

Islamabad:
According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule:
On 11th June, From 07:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Rawalpindi City Circle, F Block Feeder, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, CBR-I Feeder, On 12th June 2024, From 07:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Rawalpindi City Circle, Raja Sultan Feeder,

Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Doctor Town Feeder and surrounding areas will remain closed. Moreover due to the installation of PLC on Chakwal-C.S Shah Transmission Line, power supply will be provided from alternative sources at 132KV CS Shah Grid Station, however necessary Load management can be done if required. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

UN Security Council set to vote on Gaza ceasefire deal today after US call



WASHINGTON
The United States announced on Sunday it has requested a UN Security Council vote on its draft resolution backing a plan for an "immediate ceasefire with the release of hostages" between Israel and Hamas. Diplomatic sources said the vote is planned for Monday, but has not yet been confirmed by South Korea, which holds the Security Council presidency for the month of June. "Today, the United States called for the Security Council to move towards a vote... supporting the proposal on the table," said Nate Evans, spokesman for the US delegation, without specifying a vote date.



Russia appears to make headway in key Ukrainian town of Chasiy Yar

Web Desk
Russian forces appear to be making headway towards their longstanding goal of capturing the strategic Ukrainian town of Chasiy Yar, according to reports on Sunday from both sides of the more than two-year-old conflict. Chasiy Yar stands on high ground about 20 km (12 miles) to the west of Bakhmut, a town Russian forces seized a year ago after months of battles that flattened nearly all its buildings. It is seen by both sides as a potential staging point for Russia to advance on the key cities of Kravtorsk and Sloviansk. Ukrainian media outlet Ukrainska Pravda quoted a military source and a blogger as saying that Russian forces had begun occupying a district of the town alongside a canal. "Over the past week, there have been more than 1,500 instances of shelling of the outskirts of Chasiy Yar from the north to the south," it quoted its source as saying.



Hamas claims 3 hostages were killed in Israeli operation in Gaza

Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades said three hostages were killed, including a US citizen.

CAIRO
Hamas' armed al-Qassam Brigades said in a video posted on its Telegram channel on Sunday (June 9) that three hostages were killed, including a US citizen, in an Israeli military operation on Saturday in which some hostages were freed. The group did not release the names of those said to be killed, but the video showed what appeared to be three unidentifiable corpses using censor bars over their faces. Israel rescued four hostages held by Hamas in a hostage-freeing operation in central Gaza's al-Nuseirat on Saturday which killed 274 Palestinians. A Hamas assertion on Saturday that some hostages were killed in the operation was dismissed shortly afterwards as a "blatant lie" by an Israeli military spokesman. The Palestinian death toll is the worst over a 24-hour period of the Gaza war for months and includes many women and children, Palestinian medical staff. **ISRAELI CHEERS RESCUE OF 4 HOSTAGES** Israelis on Sunday cheered the rescue of four hostages from war-torn Gaza while Palestinians counted the cost, with Palestinian officials saying 274 people were killed and hundreds wounded during the day's raid. Special forces fought gun battles with Palestinian militants on Saturday in central Gaza's crowded Nuseirat refugee camp area as they swooped in to free the captives from two buildings and then flew them out by helicopter. The Israeli military said the extraction team and captives came under heavy gun and grenade fire, which killed one police officer, while Israel's air force launched strikes that reduced nearby buildings to rubble.

Mexico ruling party wins lower house super-majority but falls short in Senate

MEXICO CITY
Mexico's ruling Morena party and its allies have won a super-majority in the lower house of Congress but not the Senate, the party's president said on Sunday, falling just short of the two-thirds majority needed in both houses to change the constitution. Preliminary results from the June 2 vote, which elected Claudia Sheinbaum as first woman president of Mexico in a landslide, had showed her party, Morena, and its allies coming close but missing out on the two-thirds majority. Ultimately, Morena's coalition, which includes the Green Party and the Labor Party will control 83 seats in the 128-seat Senate, just shy of the 85-seat super-majority threshold. Morena President Mario Delgado said in a social media post. In the 500-member lower house of Congress, the ruling leftist coalition will have 372 seats, above the 334-seat super-majority threshold. Delgado said: "With a super-majority in the lower house and a majority in the Senate, we will deepen the transformation to keep building a country with well-being and shared prosperity," Delgado said. Mexico's INE electoral authority had said it would recount 60% of votes. Mexican opposition leader Xochitl Galvez.



Italy's PM Meloni comes out on top in EU vote, strengthening her hand



ROME
Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's arch-conservative Brothers of Italy group won the most votes in the European parliamentary election over the weekend, results showed, boosting her standing both at home and abroad. With 96% of the ballots counted, Brothers of Italy won 28.8% of the vote, more than four times what it took in the last EU election in 2019 and exceeding the 26% it secured in the 2022 national ballot, when it rose to power. "I am proud that Italy will present itself to the G7, to Europe with the strongest government of all. This is something that has not happened in the past but is happening today, it is a satisfaction and also a great responsibility," Meloni said early on Monday from the party's headquarters. The opposition centre-left Democratic Party came in second with 24%, while another opposition group, the 5-Star Movement, was third with 9.9% of the vote – its worst showing at a country-wide level since its creation in 2009. The EU ballot indicated that Meloni's ruling coalition, made up of parties that stretch from the centre-right to the far-right of the political spectrum, had seen its support edge up to more than 47% from just under 43% in 2022. "I am proud that the majority governing this nation has been able to grow together. This is an extremely important thing for me and for us. The message from Italians is: 'Go ahead', and if possible with greater determination," Meloni said. Forza Italia, founded by the late Silvio Berlusconi, was in fourth place with 9.7%, surpassing the anti-immigrant League, which had 9.1% of the vote, pressuring leader Matteo Salvini who has pushed his party hard right, antagonising its old guard.

Sports & Showbiz

Mohsin Naqvi rudely awakened to need for 'major surgery' in Pakistan team



NEW YORK
(Web Desk)
Awakening from a deep slumber after suffering two consecutive losses to the cricket teams of the US and India, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi emerged on Sunday with insights that should have been evident prior to the commencement of the extended version of the Twenty20 World Cup. Unsurprisingly, Naqvi asserted that he understood "what was going on in the team" and "the reasons behind the loss to arch-rivals India". However, this realisation dawned only after Pakistan endured a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Indian side. Naqvi's acknowledgment that the team's performance was currently at its lowest level coincided with the disappointment of millions of Pakistanis who had placed high hopes on the Babar Azam-led Green shirts. "The defeat against India was disappointing in general," said Naqvi, who also holds the all-important portfolio for Interior Ministry, during media interaction with journalists at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York. Naqvi emphasised that this poor performance clearly indicated the necessity for a "major surgery". Stating what was obvious to almost every cricket-lover prior to the tournament, the PCB chief remarked, "I'm now certain that a major surgery is required."

Yumna Zaidi, Usama Khan set to captivate audience in new drama serial

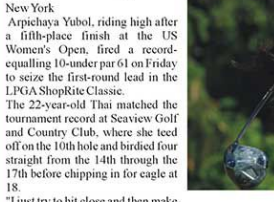
(Web Desk)
Yumna Zaidi and Usama Khan are set to captivate audience once again in an upcoming drama serial, promising to recreate the magic they delivered in the film Nayab. Yumna Zaidi and Usama Khan, two acclaimed Pakistani television and film actors, boast a considerable fan base due to their exceptional talent and captivating performances. Fans love their work as well. Yumna Zaidi is currently reaching the heights of popularity, she is a super famous and successful Pakistani female actor who boasts an amazing following of 9 million on Instagram.

Sonakshi Sinha to marry Zaheer Iqbal on June 23



(Web Desk)
Bollywood star Sonakshi Sinha will be marrying her partner and actor Zaheer Iqbal in Mumbai on June 23, India Today has learnt. Actor Sonakshi Sinha is getting married to her partner and actor Zaheer Iqbal on June 23 in Mumbai. Sonakshi and Zaheer have been going steady for a long time but never spoke about each other publicly. However, their appearances together and sweet social media posts have been proof of their bond. Earlier this month, Zaheer had shared cute photos of the two while wishing a happy birthday to Sonakshi, and captioned the post, "Happy Birthday Sonzzzz."

'Happy' Arpichaya fires sizzling 61 for LPGA ShopRite Classic lead



New York
Arpichaya Yubol, riding high after a fifth-place finish at the US Women's Open, fired a record-equaling 10-under par 61 on Friday to seize the first-round lead in the LPGA ShopRite Classic. The 22-year-old Thai matched the tournament record at Seaview Golf and Country Club, where she teed off on the 10th hole and birdied four straight from the 14th through the 17th before clipping in for eagle at 18. "I just try to hit close and then make birdie, and the ball is in the hole," she said of her eagle. "Then I just (said) 'OK, today is looking good.'"

She bagged four more birdies coming in -- at the third, fourth, sixth and seventh -- and had a two-shot lead over South Korean Jenny Shin heading into the weekend of the 44-hole event. "I feel like I just started to play happy golf. Like, every hole," Arpichaya said. "Because I feel my confidence is coming back from last week in the US Women's. It was the greatest week in my life and it made me more confident for this week." The first top-10 finish of Arpichaya's LPGA career came out of nowhere last week. She had missed six straight cuts heading into her debut appearance in the Open but closed with rounds of 68 and 69 at Lancaster Country Club in Pennsylvania to finish in fifth behind winner Yuka Saso of Japan.

خوشخبری

گورنمنٹ انسٹیٹیوشنل ایجوکیشن سنٹر مہمانواری داخلے جاری ہیں

گورنمنٹ انسٹیٹیوشنل مہمانواری میں ساتواں سہ ماہی امتحان، جسماں ہفت روزہ ہفت روزہ اور تاجپنجا بچوں کی تعلیم و تربیت کے لئے حکومت پنجاب نے آپ کے شہر میں سٹرک قائم کیا ہے، جہاں مندرجہ ذیل سہ ماہی امتحان ہوگا۔

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فری ایڈمیشن ٹیسٹ

800 روپے ماہوار وظیفہ
داخلہ فری ہوگا
ضروری کوائف مہمانواری

(1) تین روزہ امتحان (2) صرف والدین پرست کے کیپر اور ذرا شائستگی کا رول کاپی
(3) سچے کھاتے کا رول فری فرانسپورٹ کے دفتر سے جاری کردہ فارم
(4) سابقہ سکول چھوڑنے والے کا سرٹیفکیٹ (5) گورنمنٹ سے منظور شدہ معذور سرٹیفکیٹ

منجانب: محمد حفیظ ڈسٹرکٹ فوکل پرسن
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