

Daily SOON TIMES

Thursday
June 13, 2024
Page: 4 Rs: 20
Vol: 3 Issue: 166
Islamabad
www.soontimes.pk

ABC Certified

Simultaneously Publishing from Islamabad, Sargodha & Karachi

+92 321 888 1135

Govt to allocate Rs4 bln for E-Bikes



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:
Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday said the federal government was allocating Rs 4 billion to promote E-bikes and Rs 2 billion for roll-out of energy-efficient fans in the country to cut carbon emissions from transport sector and increase the energy consumption.
The Finance Minister in his speech unveiling the Budget 2024-25 said Pakistan was facing adverse impacts of climate change and the government was working on initiatives to promote climate mitigation efforts.
Senator Aurangzeb said the leading efforts of the government to address the climate crisis included the establishment of the Pakistan Climate Change Authority intended to implement climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.
Moreover, a National Climate Finance Strategy was being prepared that would be finalized by October 2024 that would help devise strategies to bring global climate finance to Pakistan which would help undertake initiatives to reduce carbon emissions, he added.

IMF bailout beats populism in tax heavy Rs18 trillion Budget 2024-25

Govt aims for 3.6% GDP growth; sets challenging tax revenue target of 13 trillion rupees to strengthen case for IMF deal



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:
Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in his debut Budget 2024-25 speech on the floor of the National Assembly only confirmed that a long-term loan deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to bail out Pakistan's economy outweighs the relief directly needed by the inflation-broken masses, whose incomes have hit rock-bottom in recent years.
Torn between fears of losing popularity, ensuring economic stability, and riding out sticky stagflation, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led coalition government seems to be on its knees before the IMF to get the next bailout going.
This year's budget, much like the

previous one, is generally viewed as being micro-tailored to meet the IMF requirements to secure the bailout.
Aurangzeb, a first-time finance minister, unveiled the budget in the National Assembly amid a noisy protest by the opposition lawmakers belonging to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Itehad Council — who stood on their desks, raised anti-government slogans and tore the copies of the Finance Bill 2025.
"Despite the financial and political challenges during the past one year, the government's progress on the economic front has been impressive," the finance minister said in his opening remarks.
We have heard the talk of all political parties to sit together in

the country's interest several times. Today, the nature has provided Pakistan with another chance to walk on the path of economic progress and we can't afford to waste this opportunity," he said while requesting all the MNAs to cooperate with the government putting the country on the path of progress.
"A while ago, Pakistan's economy faced a difficult situation as the State Bank's reserves were enough for only less than two weeks of imports. The value of the rupee depreciated by 40%, economic progress was almost nil, and inflation had reached a level that the people were going below the poverty line at a fast pace. Coming out of this situation seemed difficult," said the minister.

Punjab chief minister launches Traffic Response Unit in Lahore

M Maryam sets deadline to improve flow of traffic in Lahore

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE:
Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday launched the Traffic Response Unit in Lahore. On this occasion, the chief minister inspected bikes of the traffic response unit. She had a conversation with wardens and inquired about the training and other matters.
She also observed the message through public address in case of a traffic jam. After the launch of the Traffic Response Unit, a special meeting was held on traffic management under the chairmanship of CM Maryam Nawaz.
The chief minister set a deadline to improve the flow of traffic in Lahore. Maryam Nawaz directed to provide alternative place to wheel-chairs for making traffic flow smooth.
She also directed to ensure lane line discipline in all cases and launch an awareness campaign for rickshaws and motorbikes to keep them in their respective lanes. During the meeting, implementation on Intelligence Traffic Signal Management System in Lahore was reviewed. She directed authorities concerned to make effective and sustainable planning to solve the issue of



encroachments along roads. CM Maryam also ordered to restore the screens installed for traffic guidance. In the meeting, CTO Ammara Azhar giving a briefing said the special traffic response unit will reach the traffic jam areas on call to 15.
The special unit consisting of 50 heavy bikes and 100 wardens will take immediate action to clear the traffic mess. For this purpose, the Traffic Response Unit has been given special training for a month.
The CTO further said that the Traffic Response Unit was also given first aid training by Red Crescent. Public address system and first aid box will also be installed on each motorbike. The traffic wardens will also make recording through a special camera.

PML-N woos PPP to attend budget session

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) finally decided to attend the budget session as a high profile delegation of PML-N visited Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at his chamber in National Assembly.
Earlier, the parliamentary party meeting of PPP was held with Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in the chair in which it was decided that the PPP will not attend the budget session today (Wednesday).
MNA Shazia Marri of PPP said that the PML-N violated its earlier commitments related to the PSDP and therefore we have decided not to participate the budget session.
Senior PPP leader Syed Khurshid Shah said that they were not informed about the budget and the government did not take them into confidence



regarding agreements with the IMF and China.
Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and senior cabinet member Rana Tanveer Hussain visited Bilawal Bhutto's chamber in NA to convince the PPP to participate in the budget session.
The federal government is all set to present its first growth-oriented budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, with an estimated outlay of over Rs18,500 billion on Wednesday.
The budget for fiscal year 2024-25 would be presented in the National Assembly by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb

Sindh budget to be presented on June 14



Soon Times Correspondent Karachi:
The Sindh government is set to present its budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 on June 14.
According to the sources, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah will present the provincial budget for the upcoming financial year.
At least 10% to 15% increase in the salary of Sindh's government employees will be proposed in the budget, said the sources.
They added that no money will be allocated for new development schemes in Sindh's budget and that funds for development projects will be released for ongoing projects. The federal government, on the other hand, will unveil the upcoming budget for the next financial year, 2024-2025, today.
As per analysts, the budget sets ambitious fiscal targets as it looks to strengthen the case for a new bailout deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Reuters reported.

Cabinet approves 25% increase in govt employees' salaries

Said increment approved for the employees in Grade 1 to 16. 20% hike approved for salaries of Grade 17 to 22 employees



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:
The federal cabinet on Wednesday approved 25% increase in the salaries of government employees, sources said. The said increment has been approved for the employees in Grade 1 to 16. Meanwhile, the government also gave the approval for an increase of 20% in the salaries of grade 17 to 22 employees, sources said.
Moreover, the federal cabinet also greenlit a 15% hike in the pensions of retired employees. The federal cabinet had earlier in the day approved the budgetary

proposals for the coming fiscal year 2024-25.
The cabinet meeting also chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the special cabinet committee deliberated on the budget proposals and accorded its approval to the Finance Bill 2024.
The cabinet meeting also okayed the budgetary proposals to be presented before the National Assembly for its onward consideration.
The federal government is set to unveil the much-awaited Rs18.5 trillion budget for fiscal year 2024-25 today as it aims to secure the new

International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout, according to a News report.
Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb will present the budget in the National Assembly and in this regard, the ministry has completed its preparations.
The budget comes a day after the government said economic growth of 2.4% expected in the current year would miss a target of 3.5%, although revenues were up 30% over last year, and the fiscal and current account deficits were under control.

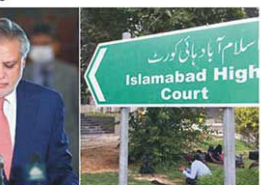
Security forces 'carried out over 7,000 anti-terror ops' in less than 3 months



Soon Times Correspondent RAWALPINDI:
Pakistan's security forces have carried out as many as 7,745 anti-terror operations from April 1 to June 10 in their bid to curb the scourge of terrorism faced by the country.
These operations were carried out in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh — of which the most 4,902 were conducted in Balochistan followed by 2,701 in KP and 142 in Sindh, the sources added.
With a total of 181 militants killed in these operations, 128 were neutralised in KP, whereas, 51 and two were gunned down in Balochistan and Sindh, respectively.

Cabinet Division submits response on plea challenging Ishaq Dar appointment as deputy PM

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:
The Cabinet Division has submitted the response in Islamabad High Court (IHC) on plea challenging Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's appointment in additional office of deputy prime minister.
IHC's Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed against Ishaq Dar's appointment as deputy PM.
The Cabinet Division has submitted the response on the case today.
The response stated that "deputy PM's role is of honorary nature and there is no established office for this position".
Petitioner's counsel Riaz Hanif Rahi asserted that Ishaq Dar was beneficiary of this case and files of such cases stay untouched.
Counsel implied that role of Ishaq Dar as deputy PM wasn't under the constitution and people were holding dual charges in 126 offices under the premises of IHC. He added



that more than 50 petitions against dual appointments were filed in the courts.
Counsel requested to court to form larger bench on dual appointments cases for good governance of institutions.
Riaz Hanif stated that Ishaq Dar hold two key positions, foreign minister and deputy PM, similarly, chief commissioner Islamabad also hold additional charge of Capital Development Authority (CDA) chairman.

'No permanent friends or foes in politics': PTI's Gohar calls for dialogue



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Mahmood Khan Achakzai and Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Aim-e-Pakistan (TAP) chief leading the negotiation efforts.
"We seek elections free from rigging and a robust judiciary," Gohar said.
The PTI chairman confirmed ongoing discussions with Maulana Fazlur Rahman, head of a Juniat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl, expressing hope for his support.
Gohar mentioned additional meetings with the JUI-F leader, noting, "Consensus is essential for national stability."
The PTI leader highlighted the party's unique negotiation style, asserting, "Achakzai will act as he sees fit."
Gohar dismissed any prior "guarantees" by PTI founder Inam Khan, saying that the political process will continue.
He concluded by expressing optimism about the role of allies, "If they wish to advance this issue, it would be much better."

Kumrat Valley's Tourism Initiative

Dr. Abdelouahab Zaid, Secretary General, Khalifa International Award for Date Palm & Agriculture Innovation met Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to United Arab Emirates (UAE) today. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss collaboration between Pakistan and the

United Arab Emirates aimed at strengthening Pakistan's capacity in date palm cultivation, production and processing technology. They discussed preparations in the context of upcoming Date Palm festival in Pakistan, scheduled to be held in the last quarter of 2024. The Secretary

General reaffirmed support of Khalifa Award for development and strengthening of date palm cultivation sector in Pakistan. Ambassador Tirmizi appreciated the support of Khalifa International Award and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to collaborate for organizing the festival

in Pakistan as well as implementation of earlier signed MoU between the two sides. Pakistan's Federal Ministry of National Food Security & Research and Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agriculture Invocation UAE have signed an MoU in February 2024.

Is China Readjusting Belt and Road Vision?



Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaher

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) proposed by China in 2013 is a comprehensive development strategy aimed at enhancing connectivity and cooperation across the Eurasian continent and beyond. This ambitious initiative encompasses both the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, focusing on infrastructure development, trade, investment and cultural exchange. The BRI seeks to revive ancient trade routes and foster economic integration among participating countries through the construction of roads, railways, ports and energy infrastructure. It spans over 100 countries, involving diverse regions from Asia to Europe, Africa and even Latin America, with China providing financing and technical expertise. While hailed by some as a transformative force for global development and connectivity, the BRI has faced criticism and scrutiny, including concerns over debt sustainability, environmental impact and geopolitical implications. Despite these challenges, the BRI continues to shape regional and global economic dynamics, reflecting China's growing influence on the world stage.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a colossal global infrastructure development strategy spearheaded by China, aiming to enhance connectivity and cooperation between Asia, Europe and Africa. Launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, BRI encompasses a network of roads, railways, ports, pipelines and digital infrastructure spanning over 100 countries, aiming to revive ancient trade routes and foster economic integration. China's ambitions behind BRI are multifold. Primarily, it seeks to address domestic economic challenges by exporting excess industrial capacity, creating new markets for Chinese goods and services and facilitating the internationalization of the Chinese currency the yuan. Additionally, BRI enables China to assert its geopolitical

influence, particularly in regions where it has strategic interests, by forging stronger diplomatic ties, securing access to key resources and markets and enhancing its soft power through cultural and educational exchanges. However, BRI has drawn criticism for its opaque financing mechanisms, environmental concerns, debt sustainability issues and accusations of fostering dependency among participating countries. Despite these challenges, China remains steadfast in its commitment to BRI, viewing it as a centerpiece of its foreign policy and a vehicle for shaping the global order in the 21st century.

Corruption presents a significant challenge to the success and integrity of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This expansive project, aimed at fostering economic development and connectivity across Asia, Africa, and Europe, is susceptible to corruption due to its vast scale, complex infrastructure projects and involvement of multiple stakeholders. Corruption within the BRI manifests in various forms, including bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and kickbacks, among others. Such illicit practices undermine the transparency and fairness of project procurement processes, leading to inflated costs, substandard infrastructure and delays in implementation. Moreover, corruption erodes public trust in the initiative, discourages foreign investment and hampers sustainable development efforts in partner countries. Addressing corruption within the BRI requires robust governance mechanisms, enhanced transparency, accountability measures, and effective enforcement of anti-corruption laws. Without decisive action to combat corruption, the BRI risks failing to achieve its objectives of promoting regional cooperation and economic growth, ultimately hindering the prospects of shared prosperity among participating nations.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has experienced shifts in its trajectory, leading to discussions about the scale and focus of its ambitions. While the BRI was initially conceived as a vast infrastructure development project spanning continents, recent trends indicate a more

nuanced approach. China seems to be recalibrating its BRI strategy, focusing more on quality over quantity and addressing concerns about debt sustainability and environmental impact. This shift reflects both internal factors, such as economic restructuring and domestic priorities and external pressures, including criticism from recipient countries and geopolitical challenges. While some argue that China's BRI ambitions are shrinking, it may be more accurate to describe them as evolving, with a greater emphasis on sustainability, efficiency, and cooperation with international partners. This recalibration suggests a maturing of China's global engagement strategy rather than a retreat from its ambitious vision.

China's scaling back of its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) holds significant consequences, both domestically and internationally. Domestically, this shift reflects recalibration in China's economic strategy, prioritizing sustainability and risk management. By reducing the scale of BRI projects, China aims to mitigate financial risks associated with debt-trap diplomacy and address concerns over environmental degradation. However, this downsizing may also lead to a slowdown in economic growth as BRI projects have been instrumental in driving infrastructure development and fostering trade opportunities. Internationally, the contraction of China's BRI ambitions could reshape global geopolitics and economic dynamics. Countries heavily reliant on Chinese investment may face economic challenges while those wary of Beijing's influence may see this as an opportunity to diversify their partnerships. Moreover, the recalibration of the BRI may alter perceptions of China's global leadership ambitions, potentially prompting other major powers to fill the void left by China's retreat. Overall, the consequences of China's shrinking BRI ambitions are multifaceted, with implications spanning economic, geopolitical and environmental domains.

Influences of So called Capitalist in sindh.

Shaman Otho Mohranvi

Yes sindh is the center of education where education reached to japan through our so called educated politician and nationalists. When there was a dark age people were like in the caves and hadn't knowledge how to create a positive atmosphere, but when a people were in the phobia of so called capitalist no one was there except Karl Marx then marxism theory was being applied upon the lower class a large number of labours were trained there in industries and factories and then a new movement appeared in the shape of "Renaissance", Renaissance movement not only trained the people but also created a positive

society and now a day same movement is changing the world with so many new things like we have a best educational system when all institutions are in the phobia of authority and there is a few number of people are promoting the best quality education. Education not only creating a positive aspects to society but a good guide too. Religious, political, social and economical circumstances can't be complete without the rudimental roots of education and through education the roots of nation can be complete with the sustain and education. When all the things are respirating their last souls than there is a education which is promoting the nation with the high spirit. Criticism, literature and poetry can fresh the minds of a weak

and lazy people with their emotional tones and with revolutionary slogans. We have to change the society instead of measuring the capitalist we have need to produce doctors, engineers, advocates, teachers and artists as they can do their best to make a new revolutionary and scientific society in which we have to drownd the capitalists. In this crucial time we have to make resistance and make a strong society and produce a lot of witty minds and thinkers and we can do these all with the education and it can be change if we work with sincerity for our society and we can reach on our destination and destinatin isn't away if we have full emotion and energy to do all these we bring a Enlightenment with education.

First 100 days of National Assembly 'slow-paced': Fafen

- In the first 100 days, only a money bill has been approved.
- In 23 NA sessions, on average 230 members were present.
- Out of 336 seats, House still remains short of 26 members.

The performance of Pakistan's 16th National Assembly, which concluded its first 100 days following the oath-taking of legislators on February 29, has been described as "slow-paced despite high attendance".

According to a report published by the Free and Fair Election Network (Fafen), the assembly's focus on "parliamentary transparency and gender responsiveness" was described as a defining characteristic of NA's first 100 days.

The report added that the House encouraged bipartisanship by allocating nearly 54% of the time used for points of order to the opposition.

Following the February 8 general elections, the Pakistani government descended into instability as no political party secured a clear majority. However, several of the winning parties formed an alliance with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), forming a coalition government at the Centre. The PML-N, therefore, formed the federal government with the support of eight parties, including the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Pakistan Muslim League Quaid (PML-Q), Itehad-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Pakistan Muslim League Zia (PML-Z), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and the National Party (NP). The House, however, still remains short of 26 members.

Plenary proceedings According to Fafen, at least 23 sessions have been conducted in the lower house of the Parliament up until now, spanning over 66 hours and 33 minutes. The speaker and



deputy speaker chaired 84% of the proceedings.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has, so far, attended only two sessions, which makes up 10% of his attendance as compared to former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's 29% in the first 100 days of his ousted government.

Fafen added that the assembly elected its standing committee on May 17 after a month-long delay. In the first 100 days, only a money bill has been approved by the House.

Participation and business The Fafen report highlights that at least 159 members, or 51%, actively participated by sponsoring agenda items or participating in discussions out of the 310 members, 61% of which were females and 49% males.

On average, 230 members were present in one session, with a maximum attendance of 302 and a minimum of 176.

The House addressed 76% of its business, including 20 legislative bills, 93 questions, 28 calling attention notices (CANs), and 11 resolutions.

First speech by leader of the House In his maiden speech, PM Shehbaz outlined his government's plans for foreign relations, agriculture, economic affairs, tax reforms, energy, human development, and

law and order, the Fafen report maintained.

Specific commitments, it added, included providing high-quality seeds to farmers, creating export zones, broad tax reforms, renewable energy projects, scholarships for students, and addressing terrorism as well as the issue of missing persons in Balochistan.

Transparency and accessibility The report underscored that the details from the assembly proceedings are available on the National Assembly's website, but live streams or video recordings remain limited and largely restricted.

Additionally, the citizens' access to the Common Man's gallery has been restricted on the pretext of security concerns, read the report.

Gender sensitivity The NA, in general, displayed a gender-sensitive and responsive outlook towards female issues, stated the Fafen report, while the House censored the use of inappropriate language against women lawmakers by adopting a Treasury-sponsored resolution. The lower house of the Parliament also constituted a Parliamentary Committee on Gender Mainstreaming to solicit recommendations on women's empowerment.

Incompetence of Municipality Administrator results in loss of crores of rupees

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha:
Street lights were installed by the municipality on various streets of Sargodha, making the markets beautiful and bright. But due to the incompetence of the Sargodha municipality administrator, the street lights kept switched on during day and night due to which they have started getting damaged. Street lights have been completely switched off on several highways, which has plunged the roads into darkness. This is also increasing the crime rate. The street lights installed at a cost of crores of rupees were damaged within a few days due to



continuous switching on, which is the responsibility of the administrator municipality. Traders, citizens and people of

different schools of thought say that the administrator Sargodha municipality had only to order the lights to be turned on and off, due to which street lights worth crores of rupees have been damaged after a few days of installation. On the other hand, Sargodha municipality authorities say that switching off or lighting street lights is the responsibility of WAPDA authorities. It was told several times but it did not pay attention and the corporation's bill has also increased.

Govt is using all resources To develop skills of youth: Haral

Soon Times Correspondent Bhera:
Assistant Commissioner Mudassar Mumtaz Haral has said that youth are the capital of our future. The government is using all possible resources to develop their skills. They should focus on sports and academic books along with technology. He was speaking to members at a reception in his honor at Bhera Press Club Registered. On reaching the club, the members, under the leadership of Sahibzada Abrar Ahmad Bagvi and club president Shaheen Farooqi, welcomed him. Assistant Commissioner Mudassar Mumtaz Haral said that cleanliness and sports play an important role in developing any society. Members associated with Bhera Press Club have always helped the



management by pointing out problems in a positive manner. He urged the public to plant a tree and protect it.

Former Cricketer Abdul Razzaq visits Dr. Faisal Masood Teaching Hospital



Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha:
Former famous cricketer Abdul Razzaq visited different wards of Dr. Faisal Masood Teaching Hospital, Sargodha. He visited the patients. On this occasion, Additional MS Dr. Nayar Abbas Khan, AMS Nursing and Establishment Dr. Kashifa Bhatti and Senior Surgeon Dr. Usman Imtiaz, YDA General Secretary Shah

Hasan Wasim were also present. On this occasion, former well-known cricketer Abdul Razzaq expressed his happiness after seeing the arrangements of the hospital. He said that Dr. Faisal Masood Teaching Hospital is the only hospital in Punjab where all medical facilities are provided to the patients. At the end, he also cut the cake.

Smugglers attack ANF team; 2 personnel & a civilian died in firing

Soon Times Correspondent Rawalpindi:
During the operation against drug trafficking, the ANF team was fired upon by the smugglers. As a result of the firing, 3 people including 2 ANF personnel were martyred. An attempt was made by the ANF to stop the suspicious vehicle at Turkai toll plaza near Jhelum. The accused tried to escape instead of stopping the

vehicle. During the pursuit, the accused opened fire on the ANF team. As a result of firing, an ANF personnel and a civilian were martyred on the spot. A personnel was shifted to DHQ Hospital Jhelum with serious injuries. The injured ANF personnel could not survive due to his injuries. Head Constable Gulzar and Lance Naik Mazhar are among those martyred.

3 Sanitary workers died in water disposal; Arora takes quick action

Soon Times Correspondent Lahore:
During the cleaning process of water disposal, sanitary workers fainted due to toxic gas in Bhalwal, Tehsil of Sargodha. Three of the four sanitary workers died on the spot while one is in a critical condition. All four

workers were shifted to THQ Bhalwal. Provincial Minority Affairs Minister Ramesh Singh Arora contacted DC Sargodha by telephone. He said that a full and transparent investigation should be conducted into the accident. Provision of medical facilities to the surviving worker should be ensured. In

all circumstances, efforts should be made to save the life of the worker. Try to shift him from THQ to DHQ. He added, when an individual meets an emergency, his entire family is affected. Punjab government is ensuring the protection of human rights.

Officers & Citizens attend funeral of martyrs of landmine blast

Soon Times Correspondent Rawalpindi:
Subedar Major Muhammad Nazir (50 years old, resident of Skardu district), Lance Naik Muhammad Anwar (34 years old, resident of Ganche district), Lance Naik Hussain Ali (36 years old, resident of Ghazir district), Sipahi Asadullah (33 years old, resident of Multan), Sipahi Manzoor Hussain (27 years old, resident of Gilgit district), Sipahi Rashid Mehmood (31 years old, resident of District

Rawalpindi), who were martyred in a landmine blast in Lakkhi Marwat district on June 9, 2024 have been laid to rest in native areas with full military honours. A large number of serving officers and personnel, relatives of the martyrs and local people participated in the funeral prayer. Pakistan's security forces are determined to end the menace of terrorism and their sacrifices strengthen our resolve.

Journalist Imran Riaz 'arrested' from Lahore airport

Individuals in plain clothes detained senior journalist while he was departing to Saudi Arabia for Hajj

KARACHI:
Anchorperson Imran Riaz Khan was apprehended at Lahore airport in the early hours of Wednesday as he was departing to Saudi Arabia for Hajj pilgrimage, his lawyer Advocate Azhar Siddique stated. "He was arrested by unidentified individuals accompanied by law enforcement personnel," Siddique disclosed, noting a scuffle occurred during the incident. "Imran Riaz has been granted bail in all the cases registered against him," stated the anchorperson's counsel.



name was removed from the Exit Control List (ECL) on Tuesday. The plea requested the court to accept the petition and direct the police, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Secretary Interior, and the Anti-Corruption Establishment to present details of the FIR under which the anchorperson was apprehended. On June 3, Imran Riaz was reportedly stopped from boarding a flight to depart for Hajj pilgrimage at the Islamabad airport. Imran later decided to take the matter to the court. Earlier this year, Riaz was arrested in a corruption case regarding the Dhribi Lake contract in Chakwal and later granted bail by a special court. However, he was rearrested in another case related to violence outside PTI founder Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence. On March 10, an anti-terrorism court granted him post-arrest bail against surety bonds worth Rs200,000.

without explanation" and then "transferred him to an undisclosed location." "No information has been provided regarding the FIR used for the applicant's arrest on the night of 11.06.2024, hence, it is necessary for the respondents to appear before this court and disclose which FIRs have been filed against the applicant, leading to his unlawful and arbitrary arrest," it stated. The petition also mentioned that Riaz's

Budget 2024: Govt to abolish import tax exemptions for luxury vehicles



Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad:
The PM-led federal government decided to abolish import tax exemptions for imported luxury vehicles in the budget for the fiscal year 2024-25. In a move to discourage the import of high-end cars and boost local industry, the federal government proposed a decision to abolish the import tax exemptions for imported luxury vehicles. The decision also includes increasing taxes and duties starting from Rs 50,000 in imported vehicles. The federal excise duty on cement has been

increased from Rs 2 to Rs 3 per kg, reflecting the government's effort to generate more revenue from the construction sector. The government has decided to end sales tax exemptions and concessional rates, opting instead to impose a standard rate of sales tax on multiple items. Furthermore, the budget introduces put withholding tax on scrap materials such as copper, coal, paper, and plastic. Similarly, the government has abolished import duties on imported glass products, likely to support local industries reliant on these materials.

PM Shehbaz vows to ensure complete eradication of polio

Announces state of the art constructions of Qaid-e-Azam Health Tower In the Federal Capital

ISLAMABAD (Web Desk)
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed authorities concerned to depute the most capable health professionals in Health Ministry and its relevant department to provide best medical facilities to people. Chairing a meeting in Islamabad today (Wednesday) to review matters related to health sector, he announced state of the art constructions of Qaid-e-Azam Health Tower in the Federal Capital. He also directed to prepare an action plan related to the establishment of health tower under the public-private partnership.



Prime Minister vowed to eradicate polio from the country by utilizing all resources in collaboration with all stakeholders. Shehbaz Sharif directed relevant authorities to conduct a third-party audit of the nursing schools and colleges and Drug Regulatory Authority under the Ministry of Health. He also directed the authorities concerned to conduct audit of all the nursing schools and colleges across the country. He also instructed to set up a plan of action to separate Drug Pricing from DRAP. A detailed briefing was also given to the Prime Minister about health related issues.

The Prime Minister said despite establishing the highly standard hospitals, medical and nursing universities, state of the art laboratories and diagnostic centers will also be established in the health tower. Expressing concerns over the emergence of new polio cases in the country, the

IESCO Power Suspension Schedules for Today

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 13th June, From 07:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Rawalpindi City Circle, Pind Hoon, Haidri Chowk Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, River Garden-II Feeder, From 06:00 AM to



09:00 PM, GSO Circle, Tipu Road, FFC, Favara Chowk, Pakistan Railway Feeders. Moreover Due to the installation of PLC on New Rawat-Chakwal Transmission Line, power supply will be provided from alternative sources at 132KV Chakwal Grid Station, however necessary Load manag...

North Korea's Kim boasts of 'invincible' ties with Russia amid talks of Putin visit



SEOUL North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has said his country is an "invincible comrade-in-arms" with Russia in a message to President Vladimir Putin, state media KCNA said on Wednesday, amid speculation over Putin's impending visit to North Korea. Marking Russia's National Day, Kim said his meeting with Putin at a Russian space launch facility last year elevated the ties of their "century-old strategic relationship". The message came after Russia's Vedomosti newspaper on Monday reported Putin would visit North Korea and Vietnam in the coming weeks.

'Immense' scale of Gaza killings amount to crime against humanity, UN inquiry says



GENEVA Both Israel and Hamas committed war crimes in the early stages of the Gaza war, a UN inquiry found on Wednesday, saying that Israel's actions also constituted crimes against humanity because of the immense civilian losses. The findings were from two parallel reports, one focusing on the Oct 7 Hamas attacks and another on Israel's military response, published by the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI), which has an unusually broad mandate to collect evidence and identify perpetrators of international crimes committed in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel does not cooperate with the commission, which it says has an anti-Israel bias.



Hamas responds to Gaza ceasefire plan seeking some changes; US 'evaluating' reply

As talks were underway, Israeli planes and tanks continued to pound Palestinian enclave overnight

CAIRO Hamas' response to a proposed Gaza ceasefire deal "opens up a wide pathway" to reach an agreement, Izzat al-Risq, a member of the militant group's political bureau, said in a statement on Wednesday (Jun 12). The movement's response is "responsible, serious and positive," he added. Hamas said on Tuesday that it gave mediators its reply to the United States-backed ceasefire proposal, seeking some "amendments" to the deal. It appeared the reply was short of an outright acceptance that the US has been pushing for but kept negotiations alive over an elusive halt to the eight-month war. The foreign ministries of Qatar and Egypt - who have been key mediators alongside the US - confirmed that they had received Hamas' response and said mediators were studying it. "We're in receipt of this reply that Hamas delivered to Qatar and to Egypt, and we are evaluating it right now," White House national security spokesman John Kirby told reporters in Washington. Hamas spokesman Jihad Taha said the response included "amendments that confirm the ceasefire, withdrawal, reconstruction and (prisoner) exchange". Taha did not elaborate. But while supporting the broad outlines of the deal, Hamas officials have expressed wariness over whether Israel would implement its terms, particularly provisions for an eventual permanent end to fighting and full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in return for the release of all hostages held by the militants. Even as the US has said Israel accepted the proposal, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has given conflicting signals, saying Israel will not stop until its goal of destroying Hamas is achieved. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has been in the region this week trying to push through the deal - his eighth visit since Hamas' Oct 7 attack ignited Israel's campaign in Gaza.

Russian air attacks cause industrial facility fire in Kyiv region, injure several



KYIV Russia launched missile and drone attacks on Ukraine early on Wednesday, causing a fire at an industrial facility, damaging residences and injuring several people across six regions, local authorities said. Ukrainian military said it shot down five out of six missiles and all 24 drones launched during Russia's overnight attack. Ukraine's air defence systems destroyed all air weapons on their approach to the capital, Serhiy Popko, head of Kyiv city military administration said on the Telegram messaging app. The debris damaged an industrial facility in the Kyiv region, causing a fire, region governor said. Over 105 people were using 30 pieces of equipment to put out the fire as of Wednesday morning. The attack injured one resident and damaged a private residence, a garage, a gas station and a storage unit, the governor said. Dnipropetrovsk governor said the attack injured three people and damaged nine private residences, reporting that Ukrainian military shot down 11 drones over his region. Air raid alerts lasted several hours across all of Ukraine, starting soon after 00:00 GMT and including in regions bordering NATO-member Poland. Polish and allied aircraft have been activated as a precaution, the Operational Command of the Polish armed forces said on the social media platform X. That is often the case when Russia launches an air attack on Ukraine's western regions.

Fire in Kuwaiti building housing workers kills 41, deputy PM



DUBAI A fire that broke out in a building housing workers in the city of Mangaf in southern Kuwait early on Wednesday has killed at least 41 people, the country's deputy prime minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah said during a visit to the site. The deputy PM accused real estate owners of violations and greed, saying those factors contributed towards the incident. "Unfortunately, the greed of real estate owners is what leads to these matters," said Sheikh Fahad, who also runs the interior and defense ministries. The fire was reported to authorities at 6:00 a.m. local time (03:00 GMT), Major General Eid Rashed Hamad said. "The building in which the fire occurred was used to house workers, and there was a large number of workers there. Dozens were rescued, but unfortunately there were many deaths as a result of inhaling smoke from the fire," another senior police commander told state TV. "We always alert and warn against cramming too many workers into housing accommodation, he said, without providing details on the workers' type of employment or place of origin. The fire was contained and authorities were investigating its cause, officials said.

Sports & Showbiz

Rizwan equals this Indian cricketer's T20I record after triumph over Canada



Pakistan claimed their maiden victory in the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024 on Tuesday as they defeated Canada, keeping hopes alive for the Super 8 stage. Babar Azam and Co emerged victorious after chasing down the 107-run target in 17.3 overs in the must-win clash at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium. The Green Shirts earned the crucial two points with the win which came as a breather for the team after back-to-back losses. Men in Green had a shaky start as they failed to score a boundary in the first four overs. Saim Ayub soon departed for the pavilion after scoring just six runs, leaving the Green Shirts 20-1 in 4.2 overs. However, Pakistan continued to play with caution as Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan formed a 63-run partnership. Along with the win, Pakistan's opener Rizwan also managed to achieve a magnificent feat during the match with his run-a-ball knock of 53. Rizwan's achievement levels him with India skipper Rohit Sharma's record of hitting most fifty-plus scores as an opener in T20 Internationals. Both Rizwan and Rohit have surpassed a total of 30 fifty-plus scores as openers in the shortest format.



Titmus shatters 200m freestyle world record weeks before Olympics

Brisbane (Australia) Ariarne Titmus shattered fellow Australian Mollie O'Callaghan's 200m freestyle world record Wednesday, touching in 1:52.35sec - just weeks before defending her Olympic title in Paris. Titmus hit the wall at Australia's Olympic trials in Brisbane ahead of O'Callaghan, who also went under her previous world record of 1:52.85, finishing in 1:52.48. Titmus went out hard and held on as O'Callaghan pushed her to the limit. "Looking at the results, it's unbelievable. I'm really happy to finally produce a swim in the 200 that I feel like my training reflects," said Titmus. "I think just the field that we have is why we are swimming so fast. "We push each other every day. We have five girls under (trainer) Dean (Boxall) in that final is unbelievable. It's a credit to him and the programme." Titmus stunned American great Katie Ledecky to clinch gold in Tokyo three years ago. She will head to Paris as a red-hot favourite alongside O'Callaghan, who smashed Italian great Federica Pellegrini's 14-year-old world record last year. The pair share eight of the 10 fastest times in history, with Ledecky, Canadian phenomenon Summer McIntosh and Hong Kong's Siobhan Haughey all in the chasing pack. So far, McIntosh is the only other swimmer to go under 1:54 this year. Lani Pallister and Brianna Throssell came third and fourth in Brisbane to position themselves to be part of an ominously fast 4x200m relay team. Titmus has been in top form in Brisbane, swimming the second-fastest 400m freestyle of all time on Monday as she also prepares to defend that Olympic title. She is also the world record-holder in that event.

Why Sonya Hussyn rejected movie with Emraan Hashmi



KARACHI (Web Desk) Popular Pakistani actor Sonya Hussyn has disclosed that she once rejected a movie with Bollywood actor Emraan Hashmi. She recently made this remark in an interview to a private channel where she talked frankly on various topics. She said she would like to do a movie with fellow actor Ali Zafar instead of Farhad Khan. On the question of rejecting Bollywood movies, she revealed of receiving offers of three movies. "One of the offers I got was of working in a movie with Imran Hashmi". "I rejected the movie due to a few limitations by my family and I was also underage at that time", the actor remarked.

T20 World Cup 2024: Australia humble Namibia to qualify for Super 8



Sports Desk In a superb display of the game, Australia outlasted Namibia after chasing the target of 73 runs in just 5.4 overs at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, North Sound, Antigua, on Wednesday. With the win, Australia also qualified for the Super 8 stage of the cricket event. Namibian bowlers could only claim the wicket of David Warner, who scored 20 off 8 balls before being dismissed. Travis Head and Mitchell Marsh remained unbeaten with 34 and 18 runs respectively. Travis hit 5 fours and 2 sixes. Earlier, Australia won the toss and invited the rivals to bat but who were all out after scoring only 72 runs in 17 overs. Achieving the milestone, Australia's Leg-spinner Adam Zampa became the first Australian male cricketer to claim 100 wickets in T20I cricket. He achieved this feat with 4-12 figures in four overs. Australian bowlers overpowered the batters throughout Namibia's innings. Pacer Josh Hazlewood took two wickets for 18 runs in four overs. Marcus Stoinis also contributed with two wickets as Namibia was dismissed in 17 overs.