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Punjab govt presents Rs5.4 trillion 'tax-free' budget

Budget includes a salary increase of 20 to 25 per cent and a 15 per cent rise in pensions



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE:
Punjab Finance Minister Mian Mujtuba Shujaat Rehman presented the provincial 'tax-free' budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 with a total outlay of \$ 4.4 trillion amid protest by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).
The finance minister laid before the House a Rs 5446 billion budget with a surplus of Rs 630 billion. He said that 77 new mega projects will be launched under the annual development programme.
The Punjab government also proposed a raise of up to 25 percent in its employees' salaries while the pension of retired employees is proposed to be raised by 15 percent. A minimum wage of Rs 37,000 for workers has been proposed.
He said that the total revenue collection is estimated at Rs 4643.4 billion while Rs 3,683.10 billion is expected to be received under the National Finance Commission

(NFC) Award.
The provincial receipts are estimated at Rs 960.30 billion (54 percent higher than the current fiscal year) for the financial year 2024-25.
Mian Mujtuba Shujaat Rehman said that Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) has been given a revenue collection target of Rs 300 billion (25 percent higher than FY2023-24), the Board of Revenue Rs 105 billion (six per cent higher), and Excise Department Rs 57 billion (25pc higher), while under the head of non-tax revenue, Rs 488.40 billion collection is estimated which is 111pc higher than the FY2023-24.
The finance minister termed the provincial budget 'tax-free, progressive and pro-business' in the given circumstances.
In his budget speech, Shujaat Rehman claimed that no new taxes are imposed while existing taxes are not increased in the budget.

Defamation bill not to affect working journalists, Azma Bukhari



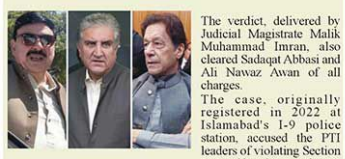
Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE:
Punjab Chief Minister, Maryam Nawaz, has signed the provincial budget document for 2024-25. Senior provincial minister, Maryam Awanzaib, Chief Secretary, Finance Secretaries of Punjab and other officials were also present on the occasion. The Punjab government has tried its level best to ensure facilities for the masses.

IHC orders de-sealing PTI's central secretariat



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:
In another relief to the former ruling party, the central secretariat of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was de-sealed on Thursday following a directive from the Islamabad High Court (IHC).
Last month, The Capital Development Authority (CDA) sealed the secretariat located in Sector G-8/4 of the federal capital for violating building by-laws as part of its crackdown on illegal constructions and encroachments.
The illegal constructions were demolished with a heavy contingent of police present outside its premises.
Following this, PTI laced into the government and protested against the CDA operation in Islamabad.
Earlier, Justice Sardar Jibz Ishaq Khan had appointed a bailiff to ensure the implementation of the court's order to unseal the PTI office. In compliance with the court's instructions, the bailiff facilitated the reopening of the office.
After reserving the verdict on June 3 against PTI's petition, the IHC today allowed PTI to reopen the party's central secretariat.

Imran, Qureshi, others acquitted in Azadi March case



The verdict, delivered by Judicial Magistrate Malik Muhammad Imran, also cleared Sadaqat Abbasi and Ali Nawaz Awan of all charges.
The case, originally registered in 2022 at Islamabad's I-9 police station, accused the PTI leaders of violating Section 144 and involvement in acts of vandalism.
In a related decision, the court has acquitted PTI leader Shehryar Khan Afridi and other party workers who were charged with arson and vandalism during the events of May 9. The court's ruling marks a significant turn in the legal proceedings against PTI members.

PM Shehbaz calls on Fazl To muster support for budget, political crisis

The PM stresses the need for supremacy of democracy and constitution

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has asked Maulana Fazlur Rehman to form a committee to resolve political issues with mutual cooperation.
The PM visited JUI-F chief Maulana Fazl and Maulana Attaur Rehman and Maulana Abdul Wasay were also present.
PM Shehbaz Sharif lauded religious services of Fazl who always promoted peaceful struggle for the democratic values.
During the meeting, the PM suggested Maulana Fazl to form a committee to resolve of political crisis with mutual cooperation.
According to sources, the PM also sought support of Fazl for the federal budget 2024-25. Fazl pointed out his party reservations



about Feb 3 elections results. electoral system. Shehbaz Sharif PM asserted that they were striving for the supremacy of constitution, democracy and transparent strengthened democracy.

CJSC Sahir Shamshad meets defence minister, military leaders during Turkiye visit



Soon Times Correspondent ISTANBUL
Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza has met with Turkish Minister of Defence General (R) Yasur GULFER and General Metin Gurak, during his official visit to Turkey.
He also met with Commander General Staff General Selcuk

Economic indicators showing improvement in economy, Atta Tarar



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attalullah Tarar asserted that inflation rate was decreasing gradually and all the economic indicators were indicating that economy was improving.
Addressing a press conference, Atta Tarar stated that country's economic indicators were improving during their incumbent government. He insisted that last years were

hard when Pakistan was near to default.
Federal minister claimed that Pakistan will rank among the top economies of the world one day. He added that the developed countries were acknowledging the progress of Pakistan.
He said there has been record reduction in inflation and the foreign exchange reserves were enough for two months' worth of imports.
He stressed that provision of IT skills were crucial for young people as 68 pc of population comprised of youth. He acknowledged that youth workforce was in-demand in IT, minerals and other sectors.
Atta Tarar affirmed that government has been taking effective measure to provide resources to youth. Federal minister insisted that government's main focus was education.
He also highlighted the performance of PM Shehbaz, provision of laptops to students during his tenure as Punjab chief minister.

Pakistan welcomes UN report on Palestine; reiterates call for Israel's accountability

Dar called for an urgency of an unconditional ceasefire, lifting of the siege



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Pakistan on Thursday reiterated its call for holding Israel accountable for its grave crimes in Gaza and urged the global conscience to force Israel towards an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and bringing an end to the war on the Palestinian people.
"Pakistan believes the time has come to hold Israel accountable for its grave crime. In this context, Pakistan notes positively the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2753 and expresses hope for a permanent and sustainable ceasefire and an end to the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza," Foreign Office spokesperson Muzammat Zahra Baloch said at her weekly press briefing.
She said that Pakistan welcomed the June 12 report of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel. "The findings of the commission of

inquiry have confirmed reports of Israeli war crimes, including starvation as a method of warfare, murder or willful killing, intentionally directing attacks against civilians, forcible transfer, torture, and inhuman and cruel punishment," she remarked.
The report called the Israeli authorities responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the military operations and attacks in Gaza since 7 October 2023. Based on the interviews with victims and witnesses, hundreds of submissions, satellite imagery and forensic medical reports, the report calls for holding Israel accountable.
Calling this week important for Pakistan's diplomacy for Palestine, she apprised the media of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar's visit to

PTI to stage protest rallies nationwide today

Fake cases against PTI leadership will be condemned



Soon Times Correspondent PESHAWAR
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah has announced the plans of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to hold protest rallies nationwide for release of PTI founder Imran Khan.
Zahir Shah Toru has disclosed that nationwide protests will be staged on June 14.
He also stated that KPCM has also announced the plans for protests across all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
Fake cases against PTI founder Imran Khan and leadership will be condemned in the protests.
KP Minister Zahir Shah affirmed that there will be no violation of constitution and law.

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Impact Of Global Warming On Glaciers

The Embassy of Pakistan in France and Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, along with environmentalist and filmmaker Luc Hardy, organized an event "Glacial Shift: Unveiling Pakistan's Unique Climate Challenge" at UNESCO Headquarters on 11 June 2024. A documentary "Ice Giants: Discovering the Karakorum" produced by Luc Hardy and directed by Bertrand Delapierre on Pakistan's magnificent glaciers and the way those icy giants were responding to global warming was premiered. It was followed by an interactive panel discussion comprising renowned experts in the field including Valerie Masson-Delmotte, palaeoclimatologist, Patrick Wagnon, glaciologist, Fanny Brun, glaciologist together with Luc Hardy and moderated by famous journalist Francois Carrel. The event was

attended by a large audience from all walks of life, including Permanent Delegates/Ambassadors, climate change experts, environmentalists, mountaineering enthusiasts, researchers, think tanks, students, media and general public. In his opening remarks, Ambassador/Permanent Delegate Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said that the purpose of the event was to raise awareness about the impact of global warming on glaciers and to identify concrete steps to safeguard these icy giants for future generations. He noted that glaciers across the globe were retreating in every region - from Alaska to Europe to Andes to Asia - with severe consequences for populations and ecosystems, and aggravating the risk of natural disasters and food security. While many glaciers in the Karakorum were behaving

differently in gaining mass, known as the Karakorum Anomaly, the threat posed by global warming was real and imminent, that required committed and collective response of the international community for effective fulfillment and implementation of the climate obligations. Elaborating on the policies and actions, he noted that Pakistan has invested significantly in understanding and monitoring our glaciers, established state-of-the-art early warning systems for glacial lake outburst floods, safeguarding communities and infrastructure. He proposed actions including usage of scientific research and data at sub-regional and regional level; promoting international collaboration for sharing knowledge and expertise among different regions; and engaging local communities for grass root

conservation efforts and enhancing adaptive capacities to combat climate change. He added that this was an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and innovation, and to showcase how countries could adapt to the changing climate while fostering sustainable development, economic growth, and social wellbeing. The Chief Guest, Ms. Vera El Khoury, Chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board, welcomed Pakistan's proactive approach on climate change and appreciated its national environment policy. She remarked that this event was a steppingstone for the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation in 2025 and urged the countries to come together to limit the global temperature rise and protect the future generations from the consequences of climate change. During the panel discussion.

FUTURE OF PAK-US RELATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY EVOLVING DYNAMICS



Hamna Obaid

As Pakistan and the United States look to the future, their bilateral relationship stands at a critical juncture, shaped by an evolving geopolitical landscape and domestic challenges. With the rise of China as an emerging super power and a close ally of Pakistan, the dynamics of Pak-US relations demand a strategic recalibration. This relationship, historically rooted in security concerns, must now adapt to a broader spectrum of economic, diplomatic, and regional factors. Considering contemporary situation, the most rational approach for Pakistan is to maintain its strategic relationship with China as well as maintaining good relations with the US.

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan has been a significant turning point, ending a chapter of intense military cooperation but opening up new avenues for collaboration. The immediate priority for both nations remains ensuring regional stability and preventing the resurgence of extremist groups. This shared interest in security provides a strong foundation for future engagements.

However, the overarching context is the US-China rivalry. Pakistan's strategic partnership with China, exemplified by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has brought

substantial investments and infrastructural development to Pakistan. For the US, counterbalancing China's influence without alienating Pakistan is a delicate task. The US can offer competitive economic incentives and technological partnerships to provide Pakistan with alternatives, thereby fostering a more balanced geopolitical stance??

Economic cooperation is a promising area for strengthening Pak-US ties particularly considering Pakistan's economic crisis. Recent high-level dialogues have highlighted mutual interests in trade, energy, and education. The US can enhance its economic footprint in Pakistan by investing in sectors such as technology, renewable energy, and higher education. This approach not only addresses Pakistan's developmental needs but also aligns with US strategic interests by providing an alternative to Chinese investments?.

For instance, initiatives like the US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor aims to enhance educational exchanges and research collaborations, fostering goodwill and capacity building between HEC and universities of USA. Similarly, supporting Pakistan's renewable energy projects can help mitigate climate change impacts while reducing Pakistan's energy dependence on any single country??.

Diplomatic engagements are crucial for managing the complexities of Pak-US relations. Regular high-level dialogues and people-to-people exchanges can build trust and understanding. Moreover, multilateral platforms offer opportunities for collaboration on global issues such as climate

change, health, and counterterrorism. By engaging Pakistan in these forums, the US can encourage a more balanced foreign policy stance from Islamabad. In 2023, US and Pakistan held their ministerial discussions in 7 years under the US-Pakistan Trade and Investment Framework (TIFA), the primary mechanism for overcoming barriers to bilateral trade and enhancing commercial relationships.

Pakistan's internal economic and political stability is vital for any sustained bilateral relationship. The US can play a supportive role by providing development aid, facilitating trade access, and encouraging governance reforms. Such efforts can help Pakistan navigate its economic crises and political instability, creating a more conducive environment for bilateral and multilateral cooperation??. Challenges to February 2024 elections are still unresolved and in such situation, cooperation is the way-out.

The future of Pak-US relations hinges on a pragmatic approach that recognizes the complexities of the current geopolitical environment. By focusing on diversified cooperation in economic, security, and diplomatic domains, both countries can build a resilient and balanced relationship and can revitalize their ties. The strategic competition with China presents challenges, but it also offers opportunities for the US to engage Pakistan more constructively and comprehensively. As both nations navigate this intricate landscape, a relationship rooted in mutual respect and shared interests will be essential for fostering regional stability and global cooperation.

The Future of Singapore's Economic Diplomacy: Strategies for a Globalized World

Malaika Shahbaz

Singapore is a worldwide financial hub and a pillar of stability in Southeast Asia, having successfully employed economic diplomacy to strengthen its international reputation and drive economic progress. As we look ahead, Singapore's economic diplomacy will change in reaction to global upheavals, technological advancements, and regional dynamics. This article investigates the future of Singapore's economic diplomacy and its potential implications for the country and the world.

Adapting to a Multipolar World

The global economic environment is becoming more multipolar, with influence shifting from traditional Western countries to emerging markets in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Singapore, strategically located at the crossroads of important commercial routes, is well positioned to benefit from this transformation. Singapore, which is already a major player in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is expected to strengthen its regional economic links. Singapore can strengthen regional integration and collective economic resilience by developing tighter ties with its ASEAN counterparts.

Furthermore, Singapore's participation in key trade accords such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) would be critical to negotiating the complexity of a multipolar world.

Promoting the Digital Economy and Innovation

As the global economy grows more digital, Singapore's economic diplomacy will most likely centre on supporting digital trade and innovation. The city-state is already a digital economy pioneer, thanks to its modern infrastructure and favourable regulatory framework. Initiatives like the Smart Nation programme demonstrate the government's commitment to using technology to drive economic growth.

In the future, Singapore is likely to lobby for international cooperation on digital standards, cybersecurity, and data privacy. Singapore can contribute to

foster innovation and cross-border digital trade by promoting a rules-based digital economy. Partnerships with top tech hubs, as well as involvement in global digital economy conferences, will strengthen Singapore's impact in determining the future of the digital economy.

Embracing the Green Economy and Sustainability

Sustainability is emerging as a fundamental theme in global economic strategy, and Singapore is no different. The city-state's Green Plan 2030 lays forth ambitious goals for lowering carbon emissions, expanding green spaces, and boosting renewable energy. Singapore's future economic diplomacy is anticipated to emphasize green economy efforts. Singapore can attract investments and form alliances with like-minded countries by establishing itself as a leader in sustainable finance, green technology, and environmental governance. Collaborative efforts on climate change mitigation, circular economy practices, and green infrastructure would not only strengthen Singapore's economic resilience, but will also help to achieve global sustainability goals.

Strengthening Resilience in Global Supply Chains

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in global supply systems, forcing countries to reconsider their approach to economic security. Singapore, with its strategic location and world-class logistics infrastructure, can play an important role in improving supply chain resilience.

Future economic diplomacy initiatives will most likely focus on diversifying supply chains and increasing strategic reserves. Singapore can use its skills in logistics, trade facilitation, and technology to build robust supply chain networks. Partnerships with significant trading partners, as well as participation in global measures to improve supply chain security, will be critical. By guaranteeing the regular movement of goods and services, Singapore can protect its economic interests while also contributing to global stability.

Enhancing Financial Connectivity

Singapore's economic diplomacy relies heavily on its role as a global financial hub. The city-state has a thriving financial industry that attracts

international corporations and investors. As global financial markets evolve, Singapore's economic diplomacy will focus on increasing financial interconnection and innovation. In the future, Singapore is likely to prioritize fintech, digital currencies, and sustainable finance. Singapore can sustain its economic advantage by creating a regulatory environment that promotes innovation while preserving financial stability. Collaboration with international financial institutions and involvement in global financial forums will help Singapore solidify its position as a vital player in the global financial system.

Developing Human Capital and Talent

Human capital is a key component of economic diplomacy. Singapore's emphasis on education, skill development, and talent attraction has been critical to its economic success. Looking ahead, Singapore's economic diplomacy will continue to prioritize human capital development in order to fulfil the demands of a fast changing global economy. Investment in education and training programmes, especially in developing disciplines like artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and green technology, will be critical. Singapore can retain its competitiveness by developing a trained and adaptive workforce. Collaboration with global educational institutions and engagement in international talent mobility programmes will also be important parts of Singapore's plan.

Conclusion

The future of Singapore's economic diplomacy is defined by a complex interaction of global trends, technical improvements, and regional developments. Singapore can maintain its position as a global economic powerhouse by navigating a multipolar world, embracing digital and green economics, improving supply chain resilience, boosting financial connectivity.

Missing Documents

My B.Ed degree issued by University of Sargodha is lost dated 9th May 2024 in DHA Phase II Islamabad area during travel. If anyone found it please inform.

By Misbah Karim Wife of Sameen Arshad Resident of Barakhaho-Islamabad



Federal Minister for Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi paying homage to ANF martyrs in Jhelum.



Commissioner urges for zero waste during Eid Days

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: Commissioner Sargodha Division Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti has emphasized on all municipal officers to ensure zero waste initiative across the division. He said that Municipal authorities should carry out their duties efficiently leaving no lapse in administrative and security measures during the Eid-ul-Adha. He said, all Deputy Commissioners should ensure the prompt execution of all arrangements of cleanliness plan. Biodegradable bags should be provided to households in cities and major towns. All DCs, ACs and municipal officers should be present in the field during Eid days. These instructions were issued during a preparatory and cleanliness operation review meeting for Eid, chaired by the Commissioner yesterday. The meeting was attended among others by the DCs, Director Local Government, CO District Council, and CO Municipal Corporation, ACs and municipal officers. The Commissioner said that Social and print media should be utilized to enhance public awareness regarding cleanliness and proper disposal of sacrificial remains. Only organizations holding an NOC can gather the sacrificial hides. All health centers should have doctors and paramedical staff on duty during all three days of Eid.

Illegal cattle markets established for Eid-ul-Azha will not be tolerated: DC Aurangzeb



Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Aurangzeb Haider Khan has said that illegal cattle markets established for Eid-ul-Azha across the district will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Assistant Commissioners should take strict action against the cattle sellers. A workable plan should be created for the cleaning operation during the three days of Eid. He issued these orders in his office yesterday in a meeting to review the progress of Eid-ul-Azha arrangements and the progress made by the concerned institutions in a week on the public welfare initiatives of the Chief Minister of Punjab. He said that the Municipal Corporation, District Council and all MCs should ensure the distribution of biodegradable shopping bags to the citizens. While reviewing the collection of government dues in the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner issued orders to all Assistant Commissioners to ensure hundred percent collection of agricultural income tax current till June 30. He expressed dissatisfaction over the activities carried out by Suthra Punjab in one week across the district. The meeting was attended by ADCR, ADCG, CO Education, Deputy Director Local Government and all Assistant Commissioners through video link.

Gas theft crackdown: Another 43 connections disconnected in Punjab, KP and Islamabad; Rs 1.95 million fine imposed

Soon Times Correspondent Lahore: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 43 connections; Rs 1.95 million fine imposed in Lahore, the team disconnected 6 connections on illegal use of gas. The team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas puffer. In Multan, the team disconnected 05 connections on illegal use of gas while another 05 on the use of Compressor. The regional team of Shiekhupura disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.35 million against gas theft cases. In Faisalabad, the team disconnected 03 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.09 million against gas theft cases. In Karak, the team disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.49 million against gas theft cases. The team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas theft cases. In Bahawalpur, the team disconnected 02 connections on the illegal use of gas and another 09 on the use of a Compressor. The regional team of Sahiwal disconnected 03 connections on the illegal use of gas. In Mardan, the team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.12 million against gas theft cases. The regional team of Gujranwala disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas while another 01 on the use of a compressor and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.9 million against gas theft cases.

اڈو ڈیپارٹمنٹ برائے پٹرول، گیس، پائپ لائن اور گیس سٹیشن

پٹرول، گیس، پائپ لائن اور گیس سٹیشن کے خلاف کارروائی کے لیے اڈو ڈیپارٹمنٹ نے ایک نیا سیکشن قائم کیا ہے۔ اس سیکشن کے تحت پٹرول، گیس، پائپ لائن اور گیس سٹیشن کے خلاف کارروائی کی جائے گی۔ اس سیکشن کے تحت پٹرول، گیس، پائپ لائن اور گیس سٹیشن کے خلاف کارروائی کی جائے گی۔

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Martyr Constable Gulzar has been laid to rest

Soon Times Correspondent Rawalpindi: ANF personnel were fired upon by smugglers near Taraki Tawal Plaza Jehlum yesterday. The funeral prayers of head constable Rana Gulzar, who was martyred in the firing incident, have been performed in Okara. A large number of citizens participated in the funeral prayer besides senior officers of ANF, Police and Pak Army. Martyr Head Constable Gulzar has been laid to rest in his native graveyard with full honours.

Citizens appreciate the efforts Dholka for keeping traffic flow smooth

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: Citizens appreciated the efforts of traffic police personnel and city traffic police in-charge Saeed Akhtar Dholka for keeping the traffic flowing efficiently on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha rush. Citizen Dr. Muhammad Ajmal, Atif Khachi and Qazi Saqib said, just like the stalls of sacrificial animals are set up all over the city and there is a rush of people coming and going from different cities to their homes, there are frequent traffic jams on occasions. But due to City Traffic Police Incharge Saeed Akhtar Dholka and traffic police's better traffic plan, traffic is flowing throughout the city. Making various intersections one-way within the bazaars has helped in controlling the traffic of the bazaars. They requested other citizens to cooperate with the traffic police.



Student drowned in a water supply well

Soon Times Correspondent Nowshera Soon Sakas: 18-year-old FSC first year student Muhammad Ruman Ali drowned in a water supply well in Mouza Sarki, a suburb of Soon Valley. Muhammad Ruman Ali went to bathe at the springs of Sarki with his friends. The deceased immediately jumped into the old well. He drowned in the water due to his feet getting stuck in the depth of the well. As soon as the information was received, the team of Rescue 1122 Nowshera reached the spot and started the rescue operation. The victim's body was taken out and artificial respiration and heart recovery methods were tried through CPR, but he could not survive. The body was shifted to THQ Hospital Nowshera along with the family members.



Journalists to protest against Defamation Law 2024 during Punjab budget session in Punjab Assembly

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE: Journalist associations have announced to protest against Punjab Defamation Law 2024 during Punjab Budget 2024 session in Punjab Assembly. Journalist associations have decided to initiate the first phase of their protest movement against newly enacted Punjab Defamation Law 2024. During the Punjab Budget 2024 session in Punjab Assembly, all journalists associations have planned to fully protest against the defamation law. During the budget session, journalists will walk out from press gallery of Punjab Assembly. Journalists will wear black bands on their arms to show agitation against the law passed targeting journalists. The next phase of the protest movement of journalists will be the complete boycott of coverage of government events. The Punjab government is presenting about Rs5,370 billion budget in the Punjab Assembly here on Thursday (today), with an estimated annual development plan of Rs842 billion. The Punjab Defamation Bill 2024 was passed by the Punjab Assembly on May 20, which was signed by Acting Punjab Governor Malik Ahmed Khan. Under the Punjab Defamation Law, the offender will pay fine of Rs3 million before trial. On evidence of accusation, social media account of offender will be blocked.



Agencies thwart TTP attempts to set up bases in Balochistan

Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad: After expressing the commitment to wipe out terrorism from every part of the state, law enforcement agencies conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) Thursday foiling the bids of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to set up offices in Balochistan, the Counterterrorism Department (CTD) said. During the successful operation, the intelligence agencies also detained several dangerous.

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Gaza war rages as US wants to 'close' truce deal



DOHA/GAZA
 Top US diplomat Antony Blinken said that an elusive truce and hostage release deal to end the Gaza war was still possible, wrapping up a Middle East tour as deadly fighting rocked the Palestinian territory.
 Lebanon's Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah, a Hamas ally, rained rockets on northern Israel, a day after an Israeli strike killed one of its senior commanders.
 Secretary of State Blinken, in Doha for the last stop of a tour to promote President Joe Biden's Gaza ceasefire roadmap, said the United States would work with regional partners to "close the deal."
 Hamas late Tuesday submitted its response to mediators Qatar and Egypt, and Blinken said some of the proposed amendments "are workable and some are not."

Zelensky lands in Saudi Arabia for unannounced visit



JEDDAH
 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky travelled to Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, Saudi state media reported, his latest visit to the Gulf kingdom which has sought to stay neutral in Ukraine's war with Russia.
 Zelensky landed in the Red Sea city of Jeddah for the unannounced trip and was greeted by Saudi officials, including the national security adviser and ambassador to Kyiv, the official Saudi Press Agency said.
 The Saudi foreign minister posted pictures on X of Zelensky's meeting with Saudi de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.



Hamas denies proposing new ideas to US-sponsored peace plan

Hamdan reiterated Hamas stance that it was Israel that was rejecting plan and the US is favouring it

DOHA/GENEVA/CAIRO
 Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan rebutted on Wednesday US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's claim that the Palestinian group had put forward new ideas.
 Earlier, Blinken had said that Hamas had proposed numerous changes, some contrary to a US-backed proposal for a ceasefire with Israel in Gaza, but that mediators were determined to close the gaps.
 Speaking to pan-Arab Al-Araby TV, Hamdan reiterated Hamas' stance that it was Israel that was rejecting proposals and accused the US administration of going along with its close ally.
 Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Islamic Jihad leader Ziyad Al Nakhalah discuss the ceasefire proposal before they respond to Qatari and Egyptian mediators in Doha, Qatar, June 11, 2024.
 White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said many of Hamas' proposed changes were minor "and not unanticipated" while others differed more substantially from what was outlined in a UN Security Council resolution on Monday backing the plan put forward by US President Joe Biden.
 "Our aim is to bring this process to a conclusion. Our view is that the time for haggling is over," Sullivan told reporters.
 Hamas also wants written guarantees from the US on the ceasefire plan, two Egyptian security sources told Reuters.

Death toll in Kuwait building fire rises to 49

DUBAI
 Death toll in a Kuwait building housing foreign workers on Wednesday increased to 49 with Kuwait's deputy prime minister accusing property owners of committing violations that contribute towards such incidents.
 The nationalities of those who died were not immediately disclosed by authorities. India's ambassador visited hospitals where workers were being treated for injuries sustained in the fire.
 At one hospital, more than 30 Indian citizens were admitted, the embassy wrote on social media, adding that at least 47 workers had received treatment in hospitals. Several Indians, including from the southern state of Kerala, were reported to

have died in the fire, according to a letter written by Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan to India's foreign minister that was shared with the press.
 A government agency for Keralites living outside the state said it had been told by the Indian community in Kuwait that 41 Indians, including 11 from Kerala, had died in the fire.
 Reuters could not independently verify the figures.
 Visiting the site, Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah said "the greed of real estate owners is what leads to these matters." It was not immediately clear if any violations had taken place at the building or what they were.

Florida's 2024 hurricane season arrives with a rainy deluge



Web Desk
 Dangerous flooding from a tropical disturbance inundated much of southern Florida, blocking roads, floating vehicles and delaying the Florida Panthers on their way to Stanley Cup games in Canada against the Edmonton Oilers.
 The disorganised storm system was pushing across Florida from the Gulf of Mexico at roughly the same time as the early June start of hurricane season, which this year is forecast to be among the most active in recent memory amid concerns that climate change is increasing storm intensity.
 The disturbance has not reached cyclone status and was given only a slight chance to form into a tropical system once it emerges into the Atlantic Ocean after crossing Florida, according to the National Hurricane Center.
 "Regardless of development, heavy rainfall is forecast to continue across portions of the Florida peninsula during the next few days," the hurricane center posted on its website.
 The Miami weather service office issued increasingly dire warnings.
 "Life-threatening flooding is now ongoing," the service said on the X social media platform. "Please stay off the roadways and get to higher ground."
 Mayors in Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood declared a state of emergency for their cities on Wednesday afternoon. Later Wednesday, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis also declared a state of emergency for five counties — Broward and Miami-Dade on Florida's Atlantic coast and Collier, Lee and Sarasota counties on the state's west coast.
 Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava also issued a local state of emergency.

Sports & Showbiz

T20 : New Zealand face elimination after 13-run defeat to West Indies



TARUJIBA (Web Desk)
 The West Indies on Thursday beat New Zealand by 13 runs in the 26th Match of the T20 World Cup 2024 at the Brian Lara Stadium here.
 "Set a victory target of 150 runs, New Zealand could score 136 runs losing nine wickets in the bargain in their quota of 20 overs. Glenn Phillips was the top scorer for the Kiwis with 40. Finn Allen contributed 26 and Mitchell Santner 21. Alzarri Joseph was the wrecker-in-chief for West Indies who captured four wickets conceding 19 runs while Gudakesh Motie three for 25 runs their four overs each.
 Put in to bat by New Zealand, the West Indies scored 149-9 runs thanks to 34-ball unbeaten 68 by Sherfane Rutherford, Nicholas Pooran (17) and Akmal Hossain (15) were other prominent scorers.
 For New Zealand, Trent Boult captured three scalps for 16 runs, Tim Southee two for 21 and Lockie Ferguson two for 27.



Babar Azam jumps to third spot in latest T20I rankings

DUBAI (Web Desk)
 Pakistan skipper Babar Azam jumped one place to third in latest T20I rankings issued by the International Cricket Council (ICC).
 The right-arm batsman has scored 90 runs in the three matches Pakistan have played so far in the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024.
 His opening partner Mohammad Rizwan has slipped to fourth place in the latest batting rankings.
 Afghanistan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz in the leading run-scorer at the T20 World Cup thus far with 156 runs from two innings and the in-form right-hander moves up eight places to 12th and reaches a new career-high rating on the updated list for T20I batters.
 India's Suryakumar Yadav remains well out in front of the T20I batters rankings, with England's Jos Buttler (up two spots to fifth), West Indies' Brandon King (up one rung to seventh) and Australia's Travis Head (up six spots to 10th) all gaining ground inside the top 10 following good starts to the tournament. Meanwhile, A strong start to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 has seen a host of players from Afghanistan make good ground on the updated player rankings.

Tickets for Ronaldo's Portugal training session on offer for up to 800 euros

BERLIN
 Tickets to watch Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo train with the national team in an open session on Friday at their Euro 2024 tournament base in Westphalia are on sale for as much as 800 euros (\$858.32).
 Ronaldo, the leading scorer in men's international football with 128 goals in 204 official matches, will be playing in his sixth Euros, having reached the final on



his tournament debut in 2004 and winning the competition in 2016. The 39-year-old has played in Saudi Arabia since his move there in 2023.
 The 6,000 free tickets for Friday's training session were snapped up in a few minutes when they went on sale and some are now being offered in small adds for hundreds of euros.
 There were several tickets offered for 400 euros while others were on sale for 800 euros on the German ksta.com's small adds website.
 Portugal play the Czech Republic in their opening Group F match on June 18 before facing Turkey and Georgia.

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INVITATION FOR BIDS
 (SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOPE BASIS)

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Tender No.	Bid Doc. Submission	Bid Opening Date & Time	Earnest Money	Description of Job / Items	Qty
LPT-2024024	02-July-2024 10:00 A.M	02-July-2024 10:30 A.M	2% Excluding GST & SST	1. CABLES & ACCESSORIES FOR INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF DIESEL GENERATOR (DIY 713C) (AS PER ATTACHED JOB)	SET 01
				2. INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF DIY 713C DIESEL BACKUP GENERATOR 500 KW FOR OA BLOCK (AS PER ATTACHED JOB)	JOB 01

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CORRIGENDUM.

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