



# Daily SOON TIMES

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Saturday  
June 22, 2024  
Page: 4 Rs: 20  
Vol: 4 Issue: 172  
Sargodha  
www.soontimes.pk

ABC Certified

Simultaneously Publishing from Islamabad, Sargodha & Karachi

+92 321 888 1135

## Five soldiers martyred in Kurram IED blast



Soon Times Correspondent RAWALPINDI An improvised explosive device exploded on a vehicle of

Security Forces in general area Sadda, Kurram District. Resultantly, five brave sons of soil: Havildar Aqeel Ahmed (age: 33 years, resident of District Okara), Lance Naik Muhammad Tafeer (age: 30 years, resident of District Poonch), Sepoy Anosh Rufun (age: 24 years, resident of District Attock), Sepoy Muhammad Azam Khan (age: 26 years, resident of District Haripur) and Sepoy Haroon William (age: 29 years, resident of Islamabad Capital Territory), made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shaladat. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists present in the area and perpetrators of this heinous act will be brought to justice. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

## COAS, Chinese minister discuss regional peace, stability

During the meeting, the progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was also reviewed.



Soon Times Correspondent RAWALPINDI, His Excellency Mr. Liu Jianchao, Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPCPC), met General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at General Headquarters today. During the meeting, both discussed matters of mutual interest, including regional peace and stability, and reviewed progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The COAS reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the strategic partnership with China and pledged full support for the successful implementation of CPEC, a flagship project of

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Mr. Liu Jianchao highlighted that he is visiting Pakistan as a follow up of the successful meetings between the leadership of the two countries in China. He emphasized the significance of the longstanding brotherly relations between the two nations and expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved on CPEC, reiterating China's commitment to its timely completion. The visiting dignitary also commended Pakistan's efforts in maintaining regional peace and stability, acknowledging the support of the Pakistan Armed Forces in providing security to Chinese nationals and projects in Pakistan.

## PTI Sargodha organized a protest rally



Soon Times Correspondent SARGODHA: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf organized a protest rally in Sargodha. The purpose of this rally was to demand the release of their party leader Imran Khan on the behalf of the country's party leadership. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's MNA from Sargodha City Malik Shafiq Abbas Awan

and MPA Ali Asif Bagga participated in this rally. The local leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was also present in the rally. The rally started from Azadi Chowk and ended at I-2-Block. The participants in the rally also carried party flags and protest banners. The participants addressed the rally and raised the morale of the party workers by shouting slogans.

## All parties on same page for execution of CPEC project: Deputy PM

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar said that all parties are on the same page for the execution of CPEC project.



Speaking at the China Pakistan Consultative Mechanism meeting, Dar said development and employment opportunities had been created in Pakistan by the CPEC project. He said this was the important project and the arrival of the Chinese minister in Pakistan was warmly welcomed. "The visit of the Chinese delegates is a part of promoting bilateral relations," he said, adding that the people to people ties between the two countries are of immense importance." He said investments are made in various sectors including energy through CPEC. The first CPEC project was launched in Pakistan through Belt and Road initiative, he mentioned. Dar further stated PM Shebaz Shari's visit to China was a thumping success which has further cemented the bilateral ties. Chinese's Communist Party International Organization Minister Liu Jianchao has said the meeting was a welcome step.

## Miftah Ismail, Khaqan Abbasi to launch 'Awaam Pakistan' party



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE

Two dissenting "stalwarts" of the Nawaz League, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Miftah Ismail, have announced the launch of a political party - Awaam Pakistan - on July 6. It was revealed through a video posted on social media platform X, former Twitter, with the tagline 'Awaam Pakistan: Baadlen ge nizam' (People of Pakistan, will change the system). The idea of the new party has been conceived by Abbasi, a former prime minister, and Ismail, a former finance minister, of the current ruling PML-N some time ago to "pull the country out of crises". Ismail recently announced the launch of Awaam Pakistan with Abbasi as its first convener. Divulging the party's manifesto, he said it aimed to change the governance system with the masses as core sources of decision-making. He also revealed that his party had been in contact with several "heavyweight" politicians across the country, adding that Sardar Mehtab Abbasi, Javed Abbasi, Syed Zaem Qadri, Rana Zahid Tauseef, Zahid Binnoori, and Sardar Ameer Soomro, all members of the PML-N, would be part of the Awaam Pakistan party.

## Maryam Nawaz, Nawaz Sharif met Iranian Ambassador Dr Raza Amiri

Pak-Iran leaders want to transform border from security zone to economic corridor



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and PML-N President Mian Nawaz Sharif met Iranian Ambassador Dr Raza Amiri Mughaddam at Jati Umra, Raiiswaid and agreed to transform the Pak-Iran border from a security zone to an economic corridor. They also discussed mutual interests, focusing on trade, cultural, economic, and social

relations. The meeting reviewed potential cooperation in agriculture and livestock, with Iran agreeing to increase meat imports from Punjab from 40pc to 70pc. They also discussed enhancing mutual trade to \$10 billion and strengthening cultural ties between the twin cities of Isfahan, Mashhad, and Lahore. Likewise, proposals to promote the Persian language in Punjab

were considered. The Iranian ambassador invited Maryam Nawaz and Nawaz Sharif to visit Iran. Nawaz and Maryam expressed grief over the martyrdom of Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi, recalling his personality. Dr Mughaddam expressed gratitude for Pakistan's friendship and congratulated Maryam Nawaz on her first 100 days as chief minister.

## No proof Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi marriage was fraudulent, lawyer Raja tells court



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD

The Islamabad District and Sessions Court on Friday took up the petitions filed against the sentence awarded to PTI founder Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi in the Iddat case. Presiding over the hearing, Judge Afzal Majoka remarked that a decision must be announced before June 27. During the proceedings, senior lawyer Salman Akram Raja, representing PTI founder Imran Khan, argued that there was no evidence supporting the claim of a fraudulent marriage between Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi.

## Cross-party consensus backs CPEC, stronger China ties as Pakistan hosts 3rd JCM

Dar said the CPEC played a catalytic role in Pakistan's socioeconomic development

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD All the mainstream political parties of Pakistan on Friday displayed exemplary consensus to back the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with the leaders reiterating their unwavering commitment to further strengthen the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China by thwarting all nefarious designs. The political consensus was shown at the CPEC Pakistan-China Political Parties Forum and 3rd Meeting of CPEC Political Parties Joint Consultative Mechanism co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPCPC) and member of the Communist Party's Central Committee Liu Jianchao who is on a three-day visit here. Besides Senate Chairman Syed Yousef Raza Gilani and National Assembly

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the senior leadership of all major political parties attended the event including Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, MQM's Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Maulana Fazlur Rehman of JUI-F, Hina Rabbani Khar of PPP, Senator Syed Ali Zafar of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Munazza Hassan of Isteqdam Pakistan Party, National Party's Senator Jan Muhammad, senior politicians Afrasiab Khattak and others. In his opening remarks, Deputy Prime Minister Senator Ishaq Dar said the CPEC played a catalytic role in Pakistan's socioeconomic development. He said besides ridding the country of a chronic issue of load-shedding, the development projects under the CPEC helped create hundreds of new employment opportunities for the Pakistani people which the people of Pakistan would never forget. Recalling the recent visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China, the deputy prime minister said both sides showed unanimity



to execute the second phase of CPEC besides signing the modalities for third-party participation in the project. He reiterated that Pakistan was committed to promoting people-to-people linkages as both countries stood with each other through thick and thin.

Dar said the CPEC constituted a vital pillar of the Pak-China economic and strategic partnership and that there was complete unanimity on its significance as it catalyzed Pakistan's endeavors toward socioeconomic prosperity and regional connectivity.

# WORLD REFUGEE DAY

World Refugee Day is a moment to reaffirm the international solidarity with refugees and their host countries. For over 40 years, Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan refugees and provided them with protection, basic needs and livelihood

opportunities. The people of Pakistan have been delivering assistance to refugees on behalf of the international community, despite enduring challenges of hosting on local economy, infrastructure, security and the environment. We call upon the

international community to come forward and play their part by easing pressure on host countries in compliance with the principle of equitable burden and responsibility sharing. At the same time, working on solutions is even more important. In line

with this year's theme of "Solidarity with Refugees and Solutions for Refugees", Pakistan looks forward to continuing cooperation with UNHCR and international community to advance solutions for Afghan refugees.

## Why Government Institutions fail to deliver?



Iflikhar Uddin Anjum

appointment of underqualified individuals to key positions. This undermines the merit-based system and hampers the smooth functioning of institutions. Lack of Capacity Building is also a key factor we can say another critical factor contributing to the inefficiency of government institutions is the lack of capacity building. Many public servants lack the necessary skills, training, and resources required to perform their duties effectively. This skills gap leads to a decrease in productivity and an inability to adapt to changing circumstances. Corruption and Nepotism can damage any society any county any nation corruption Corruption and nepotism have plagued Pakistan's government institutions for decades. The presence of widespread corruption undermines transparency, erodes public trust, and diverts resources away from essential services. Nepotism further exacerbates the issue by promoting personal connections over merit, leading to a decline in the quality of governance. If there would be hundred problems I would say our Bureaucratic Red Tape is responsible for ninety out of these hundred problems. Bureaucratic red tape is another significant hurdle that hampers the efficiency of government institutions. Lengthy and convoluted bureaucratic processes slow down decision-making, hinder implementation, and discourage innovation. Simplifying procedures, streamlining workflows, and embracing digital solutions can help reduce red tape and enhance efficiency. Lack of Accountability can also not be ignored at all. The absence of a robust accountability mechanism contributes to the perpetuation of inefficiency in

government institutions. Without proper oversight and consequences for misconduct, public servants have little incentive to perform their duties diligently. Implementing transparent and effective accountability mechanisms can help weed out corruption and improve the overall efficiency of institutions. Inadequate Resource Allocation is also a key factor due to which institution couldn't work properly. Insufficient resource allocation is yet another challenge faced by Pakistan's government institutions. Limited funding for critical sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure leads to subpar service delivery and an inability to meet the growing demands of the population. Allocating resources strategically and prioritizing sectors based on their importance can help optimize efficiency. So the conclusion is that the inefficiency of Pakistan's government institutions is a complex issue rooted in historical, political, and systemic challenges. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that focuses on reducing political interference, investing in capacity building, combating corruption and nepotism, simplifying bureaucratic processes, implementing accountability mechanisms, and ensuring adequate resource allocation. To pave the way for a more efficient and effective government, Pakistan must prioritize merit-based appointments, invest in training and development programs for public servants, promote transparency and accountability, and allocate resources wisely. Only through these efforts can Pakistan's government institutions deliver the efficiency and output required to meet the needs of its citizens and drive the nation towards progress and prosperity.

Pakistan, a country with immense potential, struggles with a common problem that affects its progress and development - the inefficiency of its government institutions. Despite having dedicated public servants and a rich history, the country's institutions often fail to deliver the efficiency and output required to meet the needs and aspirations of its citizens. Almost all government backed institutions like PIA, Steel Mill, Railways are running in a huge loss which now seems unbearable to the country. In this article, we will delve into the underlying factors that contribute to this issue and explore potential solutions to address these challenges. Historical Context can also not be ignored. To understand the reasons behind the inefficiency of Pakistan's government institutions, we must first examine the historical context. The country has faced numerous political, economic, and social challenges since its inception. These challenges have had a profound impact on the development and functioning of its institutions, creating a cycle of inefficiency that is difficult to break. Political Interference can destroy any kind of strong mechanism. One of the primary reasons for the inefficiency of government institutions in Pakistan is political interference. Political leaders often prioritize their own interests over the needs of the nation, leading to frequent changes in policies and the

## Pakistani Expats in UAE: Facing Adversity



By: Anjad Rana

Thousands of Pakistani expatriates in the UAE have been displaced from their jobs, including those in the business community, due to heavy rains and flooding. Many of these individuals have invested in Dubai's real estate market, which is considered a lucrative opportunity for wealth generation, as indicated by the latest UAE demographics data. According to the EU Tax Observatory report from mid-2022, Pakistanis have collectively invested \$10.6 billion in Dubai's real estate, ranking them as the third largest group of investors in the city within the Gulf region. In the United Arab Emirates, Pakistanis form the second largest national group, with a population exceeding 1.5 million, representing 12.5% of the country's total population, following Indians. The UAE is renowned for its tall buildings, expansive deserts, and oil resources, and is notably one of the most culturally diverse nations globally, with over 8 million expatriates from 200 different countries residing there, outnumbering the native population of 1.16 million. The challenges faced by Pakistani expatriates in the UAE due to recent heavy rains highlight the complex economic ties and migration patterns between Pakistan and the UAE. The

substantial investments made by Pakistanis in Dubai's real estate underscore their confidence in and contributions to the city's economy. The significant expatriate population in the UAE reflects the diverse and cosmopolitan nature of the country, presenting both challenges and opportunities for marketers and policymakers. Furthermore, the response of the Pakistani government to support and assist its expatriates affected by recent events in the UAE underscores the importance of cross-border cooperation and support during times of adversity. This demonstrates the interconnectedness of nations in today's globalized world, where individuals and communities frequently traverse borders for employment, investment, and personal advancement. This dynamic relationship between Pakistan and the UAE is emblematic of broader global trends in international migration and economic interdependence. United Arab Emirates announced \$544 million to repair the homes of Emirati families on after last week's record rains caused widespread flooding and brought the oil-rich Gulf state to a standstill. "We learned great lessons in dealing with severe rains," said Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum after a cabinet meeting, adding that ministers approved "two billion dirhams to deal with damage to the homes of citizens", announcement comes more than a week after the unprecedented deluge lashed the desert country, turning streets into

rivers and hobbling Dubai airport, the world's busiest for international passengers. "A ministerial committee was assigned to follow up on this file... and disburse compensation in cooperation with the rest of the federal and local authorities," said Sheikh Mohammed, who is also the ruler of Dubai, which was one of the worst hit of the UAE's seven sheikhdoms. The rainfall, the UAE's heaviest since records began 75 years ago, killed at least four people, including three Filipino workers and one Emirati. UAE authorities have not released an official toll. Cabinet ministers also formed a second committee to log infrastructure damage and propose solutions. Sheikh Mohammed said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. The situation was unprecedented in its severity but we are a country that learns from every experience," he said. Climatologist Friederike Otto, a specialist in assessing the role of global warming on extreme weather events, told AFP it was "high likely" that the rainfall "was made heavier by human-caused climate change". The storm first landed in Oman on April 14, where it killed at least 21 people, according to the official Oman News Agency. It then battered the UAE, dumping up to two years' worth of rain on the federal monarchy with a 90 percent expatriate population before subsiding last Wednesday. But the glam-hub of Dubai, touted as a picture-perfect city, faced severe disruption for days later, with water-clogged roads and flooded homes. Dubai airport cancelled 2,155 flights, diverted 115 and did not return to full capacity until Tuesday, unreasonable and unacceptable deficiency and collapse in services and crisis management.

## The influx of Afghan refugees and the national security of Pakistan

Ch Danyal Sahi and Sardar Usama Baloch

This study examines the impact of Afghan refugees on Pakistan's national security following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. It examines how this influx strained resources, intensified social tensions, and led to economic inequalities in impoverished regions such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. In addition, the study highlights refugees' involvement in militancy, the establishment of radical madrassas, and the resulting security threats. A mixed methods approach integrates qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively analyze. The results highlight the need for better border management, economic integration, and international cooperation to address these multifaceted challenges.

**INTRODUCTION:** Conflict is one of the main causes of displacement of

millions of people worldwide. Refugees arrive in host countries in a fragile state of mind, having lost their resources due to conflict and violence. Most refugees move to the nearest state to find shelter, creating difficulties for refugees and affecting host countries, which must accommodate large numbers of displaced individuals (Altındağ, Bakýp, & Rozo, 2020). With the shift in global power relations from the late 1970s to the 1980s, the weakening of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the end of the era of détente, the world witnessed proxy wars and regional conflicts promoted by the great powers. The United States modified its containment policy to include and indirectly support insurgencies in communist regimes. This policy was implemented in Afghanistan in response to the Soviet invasion in 1979, which led to catastrophic changes, political and economic instability, a critical law and order situation, and one of the

largest migrations in world history. In this era of great power competition, Asian countries faced mass exodus, with Pakistan, Iran, and India experiencing large-scale migration (Chema, 1988). For Pakistani policymakers, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was an opportunity to end global isolation due to ongoing nuclear research. The political climate in Asia was not favorable to the Western bloc after the overthrow of the Shah of Iran. It was in the interest of the United States and Pakistan to unite against the Soviet Union to achieve their national goals. Despite regional disputes with Afghanistan, the Pakistani government opened its borders to millions of Afghan refugees, becoming the main recipient of these refugees. The region suffered greatly due to the political agendas of the United States and Pakistan, which exploited the Afghan refugees. The United States aimed to exclude the Soviet Union and strengthen its base in the region, while Pakistan supported the Afghan resistance to balance its regional position and establish a

government in Afghanistan that would protect its national interests (Shosh, 2008). The Afghan war led to mass migration with significant long-term economic, social, political, and environmental impacts on Pakistani society. It has created internal and external security challenges and caused political, social and economic instability in the country. Pakistan currently hosts 1.7 million registered Afghan refugees, with more than 3.7 million refugees overall in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces (Sheema, 1988). The Pakistani government initially welcomed the refugees, but soon faced a lack of resources and appealed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist in refugee operations. UNHCR established a permanent office in Pakistan and launched the largest support program ever undertaken. More than 3 million refugees have received aid, including food, clothing, shelter, construction materials for camps, clean drinking water, veterinary services, and non-

material support such as education and health facilities. Despite the involvement of UNHCR and international donors, the effects of migration on Pakistani society have been severe and catastrophic (Shosh, 2008). After the September 11 attacks, the United States and its allies launched a war against the Taliban government in Afghanistan, plunging the country back into conflict. This chaos and unrest forced a large number of Afghans to seek refuge in Pakistan. By the end of 2001, the number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan had risen to nearly five million, posing further challenges to the Pakistani government (Khan, 2016). The government views these refugees as a security threat, as they are said to be involved in smuggling goods and people across the border. The daily border crossings of Afghan refugees drain the resources of the Pakistani government, which is trying to control this influx (Margeson, 2007, January).

To address these complex challenges, Pakistan needs a comprehensive strategy that encompasses immediate humanitarian needs and long-term integration and security solutions. Improved border management is crucial to controlling the influx of refugees and preventing cross-border militant activities. Additionally, implementing economic and social integration policies can help mitigate the adverse effects on local populations, such as job displacement and economic disparities. International cooperation and support are essential in providing resources and infrastructure to accommodate refugees while addressing security concerns. Collaborative efforts with international organizations like the UNHCR can enhance the effectiveness of aid programs and ensure the equitable distribution of resources. By balancing humanitarian considerations with national security imperatives, Pakistan can better manage the socio-political dynamics associated with the prolonged presence of

Afghan refugees and work towards a more stable and secure environment for both refugees and host communities. The research uses a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques to fully examine the impact of Afghan refugees on Pakistan's national security. The qualitative aspect involves an in-depth analysis of historical events, political affiliations and socio-economic dynamics, using various secondary sources such as academic publications, government reports and case studies. This is complemented by the quantitative dimension, which uses statistical data from censuses and surveys conducted by UNHCR and the Government of Pakistan to measure the demographic distribution, economic contributions, and security-related incidents associated with the refugee population. By triangulating these methods, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the complex socio-political and economic implications of refugee flows.



## Commissioner reviews the progress of concerned institutions on public welfare initiatives of CM Punjab

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
Sargodha:  
In a high-level meeting chaired by Commissioner Sargodha Division Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti, the progress made in a week by the concerned institutions on the public welfare initiatives of Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif was reviewed. Deputy Commissioner Sargodha Captain Retired Aurangzeb Haider Khan and Director Development Bilal Hasan, and DCS of Khushab, Mianwali and Bhakkar

participated in the meeting through video link. In the meeting, a briefing was given on price control in all four districts, monitoring of bread and bread prices, inspection of ongoing development projects and the preparation of estimates by evaluating minor dilapidated structures in urban and rural areas. The meeting was told that in the light of the orders of the Chief Minister Punjab, estimates have also been prepared for the repair of overhead bridges and zebra crossings in front of educational institutions across the division. In the meeting, the

progress report of clinics in wheels and actions taken so far against medical stores selling prohibited drugs were also informed. Similarly, it was also informed about the elimination of encroachment from graveyards, spending on four walls, mini petrol agencies and regulatory action against those doing illegal refilling of gas. The meeting also discussed about cleaning, construction and repair of drain collector lines, measures to ensure supply of fertilizers and agricultural medicines to the farmers at fixed prices etc.

## Impression of leniency for Qadianis in the recent decisions of the higher judiciary is alarming: Khilji

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
Lahore:  
The impression of leniency for Qadianis in the recent decisions of the higher judiciary is extremely alarming. This was said by the acting Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami Azhar Bakhtiar Khilji in a statement. The acting Ameer said that while the nation was still awaiting the Supreme Court's correction of the previous decision on the Qadiani case of Mubarak Sani in accordance with Islamic teachings and the constitution and law of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, another attempt has been made to undermine the

core Islamic pillar of Khatm-e-Nubuwwat (the finality of Prophethood). In the case titled Syed Asif Hussain vs. Federation of Pakistan, the Lahore High Court cited excerpts from an old judicial precedent, PLD 1959 Lahore 566, which included references to Qadianis alongside Islamic scholars. In this old judicial precedent, Qadianis were referred to as a "Muslim sect", which the Lahore High Court reproduced verbatim in its decision. The acting Ameer said that thankfully, the entire nation, including religious parties, Islamic scholars and lawyers raised their voices immediately

on this issue, and the Rawalpindi bench of the Lahore High Court acknowledged its mistake and removed three contentious paragraphs from the decision. However, the question remains as to why such irresponsibility was exhibited by the apex court of the largest province of Pakistan. He said that prima facie, the recent decisions of the higher judiciary favoring Qadianis give the impression that there is a blatant violation of Islamic teachings and the constitution, which is absolutely unacceptable to the Muslims of Pakistan.



## I'll file a contempt of court petition against CDA: Zaheer Awan

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
Islamabad:  
Despite the order of Islamabad High Court, CDA's refusal to allow the residents of H-XIII Islamabad to build graves in H-XI graveyard is contempt of

court. These views were expressed by Malik Zaheer Awan Advocate. He said that I will file a contempt of court petition against CDA in the Islamabad High Court.

## Punjab imposes Section 144 to stave off protests by PTI, doctors for respective causes

**Complete ban on corner meetings, processions and rallies is in place**  
**SECTION 144**  
**SECTION 144**  
**SECTION 144**  
The Punjab government has imposed Section 144 for a period of seven days to deal with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and doctors' protests. The Punjab government on Friday imposed Section 144 across the province in light of "the prevailing law and order situation." It effectively puts ban on protests and public gatherings. The PTI had announced before Eid that it would carry out nationwide protests demanding the release of the leader, Imran Khan. A Home Department order says

The order states: "It has been observed that in view of the prevailing law and order situation and security threats, any gathering/assembly is likely to provide soft targets to terrorists and miscreants, which not only pose serious security threats but is also likely to cause threat to public at peace and order as well as inconvenience to public at large." The PTI leaders castigated the government for creating obstacles to peaceful protest. A social media post said "multiple illegal police raids" were

## IESCO imposed fine of Rs. 627.5 Million & arrested 1450 in crackdown against power pilferers & defaulters: CEO IESCO Dr. Muhammad Amjad Khan

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
Islamabad:  
Dr. Muhammad Amjad Khan, Chief Executive Officer of Islamabad Electric Supply Company IESCO said in a statement that crackdown against electricity theft and the recovery of dues continues across all operational circles, including Islamabad, Rawalpindi City, Rawalpindi Cantonment, Attock, Chakwal and Jhelum, with the cooperation of the FIA, police, and other

law enforcement agencies. In the light of Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of Energy Power Division directives 131,0874 meters have been checked since the operation began on September 7, 2023. Fines of amounting to 627.75 million rupees have been imposed. 1872 FIRs have been registered against electricity thieves, resulting in the arrest of 1450 individuals. IESCO recovery teams have successfully recovered a total of 3338.66 million

n rupees from over 130,019 running and dead defaulter. Dr. Muhammad Amjad Khan urged consumers to pay their electricity dues on time and to support IESCO in this national campaign against electricity theft. He encouraged reporting any electricity theft to the relevant SDO complaint office, the IESCO helpline at 118, or the Complaint and Monitoring Cell at 051-9252933-34 to ensure timely action can be taken.

## Govt burdens electricity consumers by imposing fixed charges

**According to the proposal, domestic consumers will pay fixed charges of Rs200-1,000 a month**

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
ISLAMABAD  
The government has planned to squeeze masses further by imposing fixed tax on electricity consumers, including domestic users, over and above other levies being paid by them. The NEPRA (National Electric Power Regulatory Authority) has issued a proposed tariff which will be implemented from July 1.



According to the proposal, domestic consumers will pay fixed charges of Rs200-1,000 a month which will be added in their electricity bills in five categories depending upon the consumption. NEPRA also increased the charges by up to 300% for commercial and up to 355% for industrial consumers. The first category of domestic consumers comprises those using 301 to 400 units. They will pay the fixed charges of Rs200 per month. The second category users - 401-500 units - will pay Rs400, from 501-600 will pay Rs600, from 601-700 units will pay Rs800 a month and those who use above 700 units will pay fixed charges of Rs1,000 a month. The consumers using the ToU (time of use) metre will also pay Rs1,000 fixed charges a month. Commercial consumers having load less than 5kW will pay Rs1,000 a month as fixed charges. Those commercial users having load of 5kW and above will pay Rs2,000 from the existing Rs500 - an increase of 300%. Industrial consumers in B1 category using up to 25kW under ToU metering will pay

Rs1,000. Consumers in B2 category using up to 500kW will pay Rs2,000 instead of existing Rs500 a month fixed charges. The B3 category industrial consumers using 5,000kW will pay fixed charges with an increase of 335% to Rs2,000 from Rs460 a month. The B4 category consumers will pay Rs2,000 a month from the existing Rs440. At present, the total cost of electricity unit comprises 72% fixed charges and 28% variable charges. Still, on the revenue side, the fixed charges stand at just 2% and variable charges stand at 98%. The authorities have noticed a mismatch in the electricity tariff between cost and revenue structure. The government will submit a petition with NEPRA seeking uniform tariff for FY25 after the regulator has determined the increase base tariff for FY25 at Rs5.72 per unit. With the increase in base tariff, the power sector which is run by the government will burden the electricity consumers by over Rs3.763 trillion in the coming financial year. For the outgoing FY24, the increase in base tariff was notified at Rs4.96 per unit as a result of which it was set at Rs29.78 per unit. The new base tariff for FY25 will increase to Rs35.50 per unit.

## ANF recovered 210 kg hashish & arrested the accused

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
Karachi:  
ANF conducted a major operation in Karachi. ANF recovered 210 kg hashish from a vehicle near service road in Sohrab Goth Karachi.

ANF arrested the accused resident of Quetta during the operation. According to the spokesperson of ANF, a case has been registered against the arrested accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act.

## 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 22nd June 2024, From 06:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Diplomatic Enclave, Orchard Scheme, CDA Pump, G-8 Markaz, Marvi, F-6 Blue Area, Malik Altaf, Zia Masjid, Highway, Farash Town, Scheme-II, F-10/3, G-10/2, International School, I-10/1, Meera Jaffer, Pir Meher Ali Shah, Rahara, CM Pak Zong, Kurry, Isolation Hospital, PHA-I, Company Bagh, Ghariali, MCM, Kotli Sattian, Balawara, Bari Imam, Lohi Bhir, Iqbal Town, Service Road East Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Commercial Centre, Affendi Circle, C-Block, A-Block, Eid Gah, National Market, Shaheed Mohammad Din, Al Noor Colony, Khanna-II, Feroze Azam, Gulzar Quaid, Tamsaabad, Liaquat Bagh, Fuwara Chowk, Jama Masjid, Gwalmandi, Pirwahdhai, Qandabad, Bani, People Colony, New Race Course, Railway Colony, Kamalabad, Nust Road, Noon, Chakra, Ratta, Fazahia, Officer Colony, Chakra Feeders, Rawalpindi Cant Circle, Bank Road-I, Tipu Road, Makkah Chowk, Swan Garden-I, Pepsi Cola, RCCI Express, Model Town, Hamak, Mohra Nagyal, Gulistan Colony, Morgah, Major Rizq, Defense Road, Ranyal, Shah Jeevan, Jhawara, Chanor, Sehala College, Nar, Khawaha, Panja, Chakki Pandori, Mandra-II, Kalayam, Bengali, Sved Kasran, CB Khan-II, Mohar, Pindi Board, Park View, Car Chowk, Jail Park, Fuji Foundation, Mehbub Shaheed, Wilayat Complex, X-Liar, AOWHS, Qureshabad, Gurja-I, Hayal, Murt, Ranyal, Gulistan Fatima Feeders, Attock Circle, Nawaz Shaheed, Sher Shah Suri, Kala Khan, ECHS D-18, Model Town, Colonel Sher Khan, Industrial, Attock Cantt, Hameed,

Shaadi Khan, Bara Zece, Kamra Rural, Mansar, 3 Mela, Sona, Malliwali, Azim Shaheed, Qutub, Nara, Dharnal, Amanpur, Punjab Small Industries, Mix Industries, Kohistan Enclave, Model Town, 500 Bed Hospital, Kohsar Valley, Kashi Gul, Brahma, Jhang, Dhinak, Multan Khurd, Baba Rakhli, Muslim Town Feeders, Jhelum Circle, F-5 Jeddah, Shukriya, Kohar, Jakhar, M. Riaz Shaheed, Madhu Kals, Captain Nisar Shaheed, Hasnot, Safdar Shaheed, Sanghui, Nathwala, Mumtaz Shaheed, Dinah-4 City, Gujjar Khan, Ghori Dhamek, Baba Shaheed, Galiana, RTM, KTM, Qazia Feeders, Chakwal Circle, KSM Uni-III, Kariata, CTM, Line Park, Jamalwal, Khairpur, Islamia Chowk, Jund Awan, Dhadyal Rural, Mulla, Mughlan, Chakral, Rizwan Textile Mill, Dandut, Duffer, Dalwal, Ahmedabad, Kachhri, Sagarpur, Hasal, Danda Shah Bilawal, Dhok Ghazan, GPO Chak, Malkawal, Akwal, Bilalabad, Multan Khard, CS Shah Feeders, GSO Circle, From 08:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Dhirkot, Chamankot, Dana Express, Dhalia, Manhasa Suhawa, Nimble, Birut, Gujjar Kohala Feeders, From 06:00 AM to 09:00 AM, Kalal, Shah Pur, Adiala, Khasala, Humayun-I, Dhok Noor, Gulshanabad, Rose Line, Adiala Jail, Shahigan, Defense Road, Askari-14, PGHS Feeders, From 08:00 AM to 07:00 AM to 12:00 PM, GSO Circle, Gulburg, 8, 5, 9 & 7, Residency-17, RIU, OPF Feeders, From 06:00 AM to 08:00 AM, Shams Colony, Azharabad, CWO, Golar, Charing Cross, Westridge Feeders, From 08:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Jhang, Peshawar Road, P&T, EME, Quaid-e-Azam, Seham, Rajahabad Feeders, From 06:00 AM to 11:00 AM, City No. 1, OPF, AS Mill, PS Mill, City Industrial, HPT Mirpur, City 3 feeders and surroundings will remain closed. 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.

### Russia-North Korea pact could dent China's influence, but Beijing still holds sway over both



**BEIJING**  
With no obvious options, China appears to be keeping its distance as Russia and North Korea move closer to each other with a new defense pact that could tilt the balance of power among the three authoritarian states. Experts say China's leaders are likely fretting over potential loss of influence over North Korea after its leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the deal this week, and how that could increase instability on the Korean Peninsula. But Beijing may also be struggling to come up with a response because of its conflicting goals, keeping peace in the Korean while countering the U.S. and its Western allies on the global stage.

### India's monsoon advances, set to bring relief from heatwave

**MUMBAI**  
India's monsoon is advancing after stalling for more than a week and rains are set to cover central parts of the country in the next few days, bringing relief from the heatwave in the grain-growing northern plains, two senior weather officials said. Summer rains, critical for economic growth in Asia's third-largest economy, usually begin in the south around June 1 before spreading nationwide by July 8, allowing farmers to plant crops such as rice, cotton, soybeans, and sugarcane. Monsoon is reviving. It was stuck after covering most of Maharashtra, but by the weekend, it will enter Madhya Pradesh," an official of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) told Reuters.

# International News



## Armenia recognizes a Palestinian state, as malnutrition spreads among children in Gaza

**Armenia recognizes a Palestinian state, as malnutrition spreads among children in Gaza**

**Web Desk**  
Armenia said it would recognize a Palestinian state on Friday, prompting Israel to summon its ambassador for what the Foreign Ministry described as a "severe reprimand." Dozens of countries have recognized a Palestinian state, though none of the major Western powers has done so. Palestinians believe the recognitions confer international legitimacy on their struggle, especially as Israel's war against Hamas, now in its ninth month, faces growing international criticism over the campaign of systematic destruction in Gaza and huge cost in civilian lives. Also Friday, the head of a major hospital in north Gaza said his staff have seen some 250 children suffering from malnutrition, with numbers rising daily due to acute food shortages. Palestinians face widespread hunger as the war has largely cut off the flow of food, medicine and basic goods to Gaza, which is now totally dependent on aid. Meanwhile, Israel's pledge to guard a new aid route into southern Gaza has fallen flat, as the U.N. and international aid organizations say a breakdown in law and order has made that route unusable. The Israeli military said that two soldiers were killed in combat in central Gaza, while three were severely injured. Israeli ground offensives and bombardments have killed more than 37,100 people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. Israel launched the war after Hamas' Oct 7 attack, in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killed some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted about 250.

## US and China hold first informal nuclear talks in five years

**HONG KONG**  
The United States and China resumed semi-official nuclear arms talks in March for the first time in five years, with Beijing's representatives telling US counterparts that they would not resort to atomic threats over Taiwan, according to two American delegates who attended. The Chinese representatives offered reassurances after their US interlocutors raised concerns that China might use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons if it faced defeat in a conflict over Taiwan. Beijing views the democratically governed island as its territory, a claim rejected by the government in Taipei. They told the US side that they were absolutely convinced that they are able to prevail in a conventional fight over Taiwan without using nuclear weapons," said scholar David Santoro, the US organizer of the Track Two talks, the details of which are being reported by Reuters for the first time.



Participants in Track Two talks are generally former officials and academics who can speak with authority on their government's position, even if they are not directly involved with setting it. Government-to-government negotiations are known as Track One. Washington was represented by about half a dozen delegates, including former officials and scholars at the two-day discussions, which took place in a Shanghai hotel conference room. Beijing sent a delegation of scholars and analysts, which included several former People's Liberation Army officers.

### Trump says foreigners who graduate from US colleges should get green cards



**Web Desk**  
Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump in a podcast released on Thursday said that students graduating from US colleges should get a green card to stay in the country, a proposal that runs counter to his hardline immigration stance. During the All-In podcast hosted by Silicon Valley tech investors, angel investor Jason Calacanis told Trump that the US needs to be able to legally retain more high-skilled workers, a major issue for the tech industry. "Can you please promise us you will give us more ability to import the best and brightest around the world to America?" Calacanis said. "I do promise," Trump said. "But I happen to agree, otherwise I wouldn't promise... You graduate from a college, I think you should get automatically as part of your diploma a green card to be able to stay in this country and that includes junior colleges too." A green card, also known as a permanent resident card, allows individuals the right to live and work permanently in the United States and is a step towards citizenship. It was not clear if Trump was referring to all foreigners, including those who came to the United States illegally or overstayed their visas, or only those due to student visas. Asked for comment, the Trump campaign said in a statement that only after "the most aggressive vetting process in US history" would "the most skilled graduates who can make significant contributions to America" be able to stay. One immigration advocate was not convinced by Trump's proposal. "I almost have to laugh because his administration adopted multiple policies aiming to restrict student visas and make it harder for people to stay in the country after graduating," said Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, policy director at the American Immigration Council.

# Sports & Showbiz

## Babar, Rizwan 'at risk' of losing Category A in PCB central contract



**Sports Desk**  
After Pakistan's disappointing early exit from the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024, skipper Babar Azam and wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan are at risk of losing category A in their central contract with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Sources close to the matter said that work on a new central contract for the national players was underway. There will be a new, "smaller" selection committee, which will finalise the central contract. However, the salaries of the national cricketers will not be slashed. The global tournament proved challenging for the Green Shirts, who failed to progress beyond the league stage. The team faced a surprising defeat at the hands of the United States and also conceded a match to India, a game that was initially in their favour. This double setback prevented their advancement to the Super 8 round, marking a disappointing end to their campaign. The sources also said that Shan Masood is likely to be retained as the red-ball skipper for the upcoming Test series against Bangladesh.



## Wimbledon champion Alcaraz's reign at Queen's ends in last-16 loss to Draper



London Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz suffered a shock defeat by Britain's Jack Draper in the last 16 of the Queen's Club tournament in London on Thursday. Alcaraz, also the reigning Queen's champion, lost 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 with the British number one claiming the biggest win of his career. World number two Alcaraz arrived for this grass-court warm-up event for Wimbledon fresh from his French Open triumph on the clay of Roland Garros. But the 21-year-old Spaniard was undone by Draper, 22, who is bidding to become the first British men's singles champion at Queen's since Andy Murray won his fifth title at the event in 2016. Alcaraz had not been beaten in seven weeks or indeed lost a match on grass in nearly two years. Draper, however, put that record to one side as he became the first British man to beat a top-two player on grass since Murray defeated Novak Djokovic in the 2013 Wimbledon final. Alcaraz was annoyed by the automatic shot clock, which forced him to hurry his serve, and complained to umpire Mohamed Lahyani. 'CREDIT TO JACK' But he had no qualms about the result as his 13-match unbeaten streak on grass ended in decisive fashion, with Alcaraz saying: "I'm not too good right now. "I felt like I didn't play well. I didn't move well," added Alcaraz, who begins the defence of his Wimbledon title on July 1. "Of course I have to give credit to Jack. I think he played really good tennis today." For the 31st-ranked Draper, this stunning victory came hot on the heels of his first ATP title in Stuttgart last week.

### Sania Mirza's father breaks silence on wedding rumours with Mohammad Shami



Tennis star Sania Mirza has been the centre of attention ever since her divorce from Pakistani cricketer Shoaib Malik. This time, a morphed picture of Sania and Indian cricketer player Mohammad Shami in wedding attire has been making the rounds on social media, further fueling their marriage rumours. However, Sania's father Imran Mirza, has refuted the claims. Imran, talking to an Indian media outlet, said, "This is all rubbish. She has not even met him." The rumours began a few days ago when Sania shared thoughts on a second marriage, while Shami did the same.

## US Open champ Gauff headlines US Paris Olympics tennis team



**NEW YORK**  
US Open champion Coco Gauff will lead the US tennis team at the Paris Olympics three years after she missed the Tokyo Games because of a bout of Covid-19. World number two Gauff will be joined by fifth-ranked Jessica Pegula, Danielle Collins and Emma Navarro in women's singles, the US Tennis Association announced on Thursday. World No. 12 Taylor Fritz headlines the men's singles squad that also includes Tommy Paul, Christopher Eubanks and Marcos Giron. Olympic tennis starts on July 27 at Roland Garros, where Gauff fell to world number one and eventual champion Iga Swiatek in the French Open semi-finals this month. Gauff, who was runner-up to Swiatek in the 2022 French Open, also reached the semi-finals at the Australian Open this year. The 20-year-old will be a contender in women's doubles as well, teaming with Pegula on the same Roland Garros courts where they teamed on the French Open doubles crown — their fifth doubles title as a