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Cabinet approves Operation Azm-i-Istehkam

PM Office had earlier explained it couldn't be compared with past military operations conducted to physically dislodge terrorists from no-go areas



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
A federal cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday gave approval to Operation Azm-i-Istehkam and other related decisions taken at the Apex Committee formed under the revived National Action Plan (NAP), sources say. Shehbaz said it would be an intelligence-based exercise and didn't involve any hardships to general public, as he discussed the rumours circulating regarding the planned anti-terrorism operation. The development comes as Defence Minister Khawaja Asif earlier in the day explained the reasons and nature of the latest plan to root out terrorism from Pakistan at a press conference in Lahore. Read more: TTP resettlement led to Operation Azm-i-Istehkam.

Khawaja Asif
He said the operation had been envisaged to arrest the rise in terrorism activities in recent months and mentioned that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur did not raise any objection to the proposed operation at the Apex Committee meeting. Noting that the operation is a national security need and not a political move, Khawaja Asif said there should be not only a complete consensus but also a unified action on the part of national institutions. There shouldn't be a scenario where the terrorists [and their facilitators] get relief from courts, he warned. **NO COMPARISON WITH PAST MILITARY OPERATIONS**
Earlier on Monday, a statement issued by the Prime Minister Office read that Azm-i-Istehkam was aimed at reinvigorating and re-energising

the ongoing implementation of revised NAP, which was initiated after the national consensus across the political spectrum. The government recently announced a new vision for long-term stability called Azm-i-Istehkam. However, some people are misunderstanding it and comparing it to previous kinetic operations like Zarb-e-Azab and Rah-e-Najaa, it says. The previous kinetic operations were conducted to physically dislodge terrorists from their known locations which had become no-go areas and compromised the writ of the state. These operations required mass displacement of the local population and systematic clearance of affected areas. However, Operation Azm-i-Istehkam will include political, diplomatic, legal and information prongs apart from already continuing operations by all law-enforcement agencies.

ECP bench puts off contempt proceedings against Fawad Chaudhry until June 26

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
An ECP bench has adjourned until June 26 the hearing of a case initiated against former information minister Fawad Chaudhry for using interperate language and contemptuous remarks against the Election Commission of Pakistan during a media talk on Jan 24. A three-member bench, led by ECP member Nisar Durani, conducted Tuesday's proceedings.

Army will provide security to Chinese workers: Ahsan Iqbal

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Federal Minister for Planning, Development, Reforms and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Monday said that government is taking all possible measures regarding security in the country and added that the army will provide direct security to the Chinese workers. Talking in Dunya News programme 'Dunya Kamran Khan Ke Saath', Ahsan Iqbal said that the motive behind the recent terrorist incidents in Pakistan is to block the path of CPEC. He said that China is very clear that such incidents cannot spoil our relations.

Reserved seats can't be allocated contrary to principle of proportional representation: SC judge

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Supreme Court of Pakistan's Justice Ayesha A Malik, on Tuesday said that the reserved seats cannot be allocated contrary to the principle of proportional representation. Justice Malik made these comments during the hearing on the petition filed by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), the ally of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), against the denial of reserved seats for women and minorities. A 13-member full court, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, is presiding over the hearing. The bench comprises Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Malik, Justice Athar Mmallah,

Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghani. "Whether SIC wins or loses this case, will other parties benefit from it?" questioned Justice Ayesha during the hearing today, noting that the reserved seats can only be allotted on the principle of proportional representation and not contrary to that. Meanwhile, Justice Minallah said women and minorities must get representation in Parliament. He said that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) were affected earlier but the SC did not come forward to help. "The same is happening as it did in 2018. One party is the victim," said Justice Minallah, adding that the court did not learn from its history.

CM orders early completion of Bund Road project

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Tuesday ordered the early completion of the Controlled Access Corridor Bund Road Project. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz visited the project, personally inspecting the service roads from Saggian Interchange to Babu Sabu. She also set a July deadline for the project's completion. During the visit, LDA DG Tahir Farooq and Chief Engineer Israr Saeed briefed the chief minister on the project. He said the high-rise area of package two was being fully opened for traffic. CM Maryam Nawaz stressed the importance of addressing the issues the public faces through the controlled access corridor and the service roads.

TTP resettlement led to Operation Azm-i-Istehkam: Khawaja Asif



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Tuesday asked for not comparing the planned Operation Azm-i-Istehkam with the military actions taken against terrorists in the past, saying there were no no-go areas in Pakistan unlike the previous state of affairs when the Taliban had complete control over regions like Swat and erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The state writ is in place across the country, barring in some areas where the Taliban have control in night hours, the minister told a press conference at the PML-N headquarters in Model Town, as he also mentioned the results of allowing the terrorists to relocate to Pakistan. He said the operation had been envisaged to arrest the rise in terrorism activities in recent months and mentioned that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali

Amin Gandapur did not raise any objection to the proposed operation at the Apex Committee meeting held in an attempt to revive the National Action Plan. Noting that the operation is a national security need and not a political move, Khawaja Asif said there should be not only a complete consensus but also a unified action on the part of national institutions. There shouldn't be a scenario where the terrorists [and their facilitators] get relief from courts.

Imran-Bushra illegal marriage case verdict to be pronounced on June 27

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka on Monday heard joint appeals of suspension of sentence and expeditious hearing filed by PFI founder Imran Khan and former first lady Bushra Bibi. Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi's counsel Salman

but sentence was awarded in Islamabad, which didn't come under the ambit of this court. Talking of his long career in the criminal practice, the lawyer wondered that no lawyer ever fought a case like this in court, adding that no one knew who committed fraud as both husband and wife were languishing in the jail. Expressing sympathy with Khawar Maneka, he said Maneka moved court under extreme pressure after six years. Safdar also mentioned suspension of sentence in the cipher case which, he said, had been challenged in the apex court before even entering the high court.

Notification banning passport issuance for asylum seekers abroad challenged in apex court Nawaz

On Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
The government notification banning the issuance of passports to Pakistani nationals seeking asylum abroad has been challenged in the Supreme Court. The petition, filed by advocate Saim Chaudhry under Section 184(3) of the constitution, lists the federal government and Passport/DG?as respondents. The petitioner has requested the court to declare this policy annulled under section 5 as null and void, arguing that the notification about the ban is discriminatory and violates fundamental rights. The petitioner adds that the government notification is in violation of Articles 10, 10A and 25 of the Constitution. He also contends that the government decided to ban the issuance of passports for Pakistani nationals seeking asylum abroad without providing any plausible reason or justification. On June 11, the Interior Ministry had decided not to issue passports to Pakistanis seeking asylum abroad.

Can't support operation without knowing nitty-gritty of it, Barrister Ali Saif

Soon Times Correspondent PISHAWAR
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Adviser Barrister Ali Saif stated that the provincial government couldn't support the "Operation Azm-i-Istehkam" unconditionally without getting to know the details of it. In a conversation with journalists on Monday, Barrister Saif said a meeting was held under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House where Members of National Assembly (MNAs) from KP also participated. He was of the view that the prime

minister's statement regarding the operation created confusion as the latter did not specify the method and its duration. "There is a concern among people about the operation. The provinces should be consulted on action against terrorists. This is a very sensitive issue linked to national security. We lost billions of dollars in the war against terror. The parliament and provincial assemblies should be taken on board in this regard."

PAKISTAN'S CLIMATE RESILIENCE BUILDING

Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have agreed to work jointly for building Pakistan's climate resilience. This agreement was reached during a high-powered Climate Adaptation Roundtable hosted by the Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam for the Foundation's chairman Bill Gates here in Islamabad. The roundtable was held at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Headquarters and co-hosted by Chairperson of NDMA, Lt. Gen.

Inam Haider Malik. The PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid Alam also apprised Bill Gates of the various sectoral impacts of climate change, saying Pakistan's socio-economic development gains at highly exposed to the adverse impacts of climate change. She also informed him particularly of the floods, heat waves, forest fires and droughts, which have become frequent and intense in terms of their impacts on various socio-economic sectors, mainly agriculture, water, energy, health and education. PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid also

informed Mr. Gates, "Despite the lowest contribution in climate change causing carbon emissions, Pakistan is facing the worst effects of global warming and making all-out efforts to deal with the impacts so as to protect lives and livelihoods of the country's vulnerable communities." Pakistan is also committed to support global climate action at all levels to protect the global community from the deleterious impacts of global warming," she highlighted during her conversation with Mr. Gates. PM's aide Romina Khurshid

Alsm also underscored the importance of continued dialogue between Pakistani stakeholders as well as international partners to explore avenues of collaboration and mutual support over the world's most pressing collective challenge, climate change. She said that both the domestic public and private sector stakeholders were already playing their part in climate mitigation and adaptation, highlighting further the need to develop and deepen linkages between the same and international partners.

Social Media and our Youth



Iftikhar Uddin Anjum

Instagram to maintain relationships with family and friends, even across great distances. This connectivity is particularly valuable in a culturally diverse country like Pakistan, where social ties and familial bonds are crucial. Social media also facilitates the creation of online communities based on shared interests and causes. These communities provide a sense of belonging and support, whether they are focused on hobbies, social issues, or professional networking. For instance, groups advocating for women's rights, environmental protection, or educational reform have gained significant traction on social media, empowering youth to participate in social change. Social media has become a powerful tool for political engagement and activism among Pakistani youth. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook are used to raise awareness about social and political issues, organize protests, and mobilize support for various causes. The accessibility and reach of social media allow young people to voice their opinions, challenge the status quo, and hold authorities accountable. Social media serves as a platform for Pakistani youth to express their cultural identity and creativity. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram and YouTube allow young people to showcase their talents in music, art, and storytelling. This cultural expression not only fosters a sense of pride and identity but also promotes Pakistani culture to a global audience. Moreover, social media has democratized content creation, allowing anyone with a smartphone to become a creator. This has led to the emergence of numerous Pakistani influencers and content creators who share their unique perspectives and experiences, enriching the digital landscape with diverse voices. While social media offers significant benefits, it also presents several challenges and risks for Pakistani youth. These include issues related to mental health, cyber bullying, misinformation and the digital divide. The impact of social media on mental health is a growing concern worldwide, and Pakistani youth are no exception. The pressure to present a perfect online persona, constant comparison with others, and the pursuit of likes and followers can lead to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. The highlight reels of others' lives often create unrealistic expectations, causing feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction among young people. A study by the Aga Khan University highlighted that excessive social media use is associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression among Pakistani adolescents. The addictive nature of social media, coupled with the fear of missing

out (FOMO), exacerbates these mental health challenges, making it crucial to address these issues through awareness, media and through seminars. Cyberbullying is a pervasive issue that affects many young social media users in Pakistan. The anonymity and reach of social media platforms can embolden individuals to engage in harmful behaviors, such as spreading rumors, sharing private information without consent and harassment. Victims of cyberbullying often experience severe emotional distress, which can impact their mental health and academic performance. Online harassment, particularly targeting women and minority groups, is a significant concern. The lack of stringent cyber laws and effective enforcement in Pakistan often means that perpetrators go unpunished, perpetuating a culture of impunity. Efforts to combat cyberbullying and online harassment must include legal reforms, improved reporting mechanisms, and educational initiatives that promote respectful online behavior. The rapid spread of misinformation and fake news on social media poses a significant challenge. In Pakistan, where literacy rates vary widely, distinguishing between credible information and falsehoods can be difficult for many users. Misinformation can lead to misunderstandings, panic, and even violence, as seen in several incidents where false rumors incited mob actions. Combating misinformation requires a multifaceted approach, including digital literacy education, fact-checking initiatives, and collaboration with social media platforms to monitor and control the spread of false information. Educating youth on how to critically evaluate sources and verify information is essential in building a more informed and resilient society. Despite the rapid growth in internet access, a significant digital divide persists in Pakistan. Rural areas and economically disadvantaged communities often lack reliable internet connectivity and access to digital devices. This divide exacerbates existing inequalities, limiting the benefits of social media to those who are already privileged. Efforts to bridge the digital divide should focus on improving infrastructure, providing affordable internet access, and distributing digital devices to underserved areas. Ensuring that all Pakistani youth have the opportunity to participate in the digital economy and access educational resources is crucial for inclusive development. To harness the benefits of social media while mitigating its risks, it is essential to adopt strategies that promote healthy and responsible use. This involves efforts from parents,

"Foreign investment is indispensable for economic stability"



Tariq Khan Yousafzai

The key to economic development in today's world is to create an investment-friendly environment. No country, no matter how developed it is, cannot progress without private investment. Investors, whether local or foreign, invest only when they believe that their capital is completely safe. The People's Republic of China has given investors confidence with its reform and opening-up policy. Especially in the last ten years under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, the wonderful policies that have been introduced in the People's Republic of China, these policies have greatly promoted the speed of the country's development. Our natural ecosystems have never faced such a critical situation, to combat which infrastructure development is a major responsibility. About 1 million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction, while biodiversity loss causes global economic output to decline by about 10 percent annually. The biggest challenge for this is to reduce these environmental damages while increasing the world's built environment. How is it possible to achieve both goals with these contradictions? There are several methods by which construction companies can achieve the desired goals. However, this will require huge investment! There are always big promises to invest by friendly countries, whether it is to remedy the damages caused by climate change or to restore the country's economy. But they are not implemented.

Lack of investment

despite announcements and promises is a very important question, which needs immediate attention. What are the concerns of friendly countries? The answer of course is that the political situation is unstable, everything. It is in specific hands. Political parties and leadership have no importance in the country. Evidence of various actions and decisions taken in the past is sufficient. In this regard, former Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is confined in jail, is an example, whose official X handle has uploaded a video of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the main character of the fall of Dhaka. The answer is, because it has unsuccessfully tried to incite the officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army to rebel, dereliction of duty and to incite the officers and soldiers to take action against state institutions. The said video has been viewed by 4.2 million people. See, 56,000 people liked it while 38,000 users reposted it. Moreover, according to him, he was kept in solitary confinement, and he made a big mistake by trusting General Bajwa. Serious allegations have been made that the move is seen as an act of mutiny in the ranks of the armed forces and the PICA Act, 2016 is applicable. That is, now Imran Khan will also face this dangerous trial, as far as the country's economy is concerned, no investor will be willing to invest in this situation. Despite this, the government has made reservations for friendly countries. To remove the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has been formed, which includes the heads of the army in addition to the relevant government institutions. The purpose of establishing this investment council is to facilitate investment from friendly countries and Implementation was to be ensured. After the

Prime Minister's visits to the Gulf, it is expected that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates promised to invest 15 billion dollars, after which economic stability began to come to the country. At present, China, which has been given opportunities in Afghanistan, is not taking much interest. However, investment is expected from there too, in this case, the release of a very dangerous video by the founder of a major party in the country is very meaningful, after which investors will definitely prefer to stay away. No one denies the fact that Pakistan wants to get out of its economic difficulties through the investment of friendly countries, but those who want power and the government's institutional system are not allowing the investment agreements to be converted into practical form. Although in the world After changing the form of energy, the Gulf countries want to invest in various sectors in the countries of the world where their investments are safe in order to reduce their dependence on oil. Although Pakistan is a more attractive place for them. But the unstable political situation in Pakistan, mistrust of each other in the provinces and the federation, as well as the business environment, the most important of which are high interest rates and security issues due to the lack of governance in the implementation of investor announcements and agreements. In this situation, it is necessary for the leadership of all political parties to unite to bring economic revolution in the country. And where there are concerns of the units, the path of immediate legislation should be adopted to create such a capital-friendly environment, in which the capitalists approach for investment here on our terms rather than on their terms.



Parliamentary Delegation of Iftikhar e Pakistan Party (IPP) headed by Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on 25th June, 2024.



Met dept predicts rains, relief from scorching heat in parts of country



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
For many weeks, an incessant spell of hot weather has gripped the country. The wait for rain is getting more due to

the intolerable conditions created by the rising temperature. However, a spell of rain from June 26 to July 1, as predicted by the meteorological department, is likely to bring a pleasant weather to provide the people a much-needed relief. According to the Met Department, Umerkot, Mirpur Khas and Karachi of Sindh would experience downpour from June 26 to July 1. Meanwhile, from June 27 to July 1, heavy rain and winds are expected in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Jehlum, Chakwal, Bahawalpur and Lodhran. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chitral, Swat, Manshra and Abbotabad would witness excessive period of rain. Moreover, the department also warned that there is a risk of urban flooding in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Narowal due to extreme rain from June 28 to June 30.

Punjab to equip CTD with modern technology for operations against terrorists



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
The Punjab government has announced that it will equip the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) with modern technology for operations against terrorists as the agency requested funds from the Finance Department.

LAHORE
According to the documents, after the meeting between the Additional IG CTD and the Finance Secretary, the funds of the CTD were reduced. Against the demand of Rs3.81 billion, Rs2.27 billion will be provided to the CTD. According to the documents, Rs 900 million were approved for the purchase of modern equipment and weapons, Rs 980 million for the purchase of vehicles, and Rs 500 million for other expenses.

No authentic info about Nawaz-Bajwa meeting, accepts Zubair

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:
Former Sindh governor and ex-Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Mohammad Zubair has backed tracked from his earlier claim and has said that he has no authentic information about the alleged meeting between Nawaz Sharif and former army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa.



August 10 to August 14 in 2022. Bajwa's last visit to the UK as army chief was four months after the removal of Khan's government. The speculated meeting between Nawaz and Gen Bajwa was rumoured to have taken place in London in early 2022. However,

Speaking to The News on Monday, the former spokesperson for the ex-PM and his daughter Maryam Nawaz clarified that his comments regarding the said meeting were in fact speculative and were not facts that he could say under oath. He explained that he was responding to a speculative question by sharing the rumours circulating at the time. Zubair emphasised that he also mentioned during the talk show that he could not confirm the speculated Nawaz-Bajwa meeting. However, he insisted that Imran Khan's government was voted out in April 2022 with the support of the then military

establishment. Meanwhile, government sources claim that Gen Bajwa, during his six-year term as army chief, had visited the UK four times. The speculation was that the Nawaz-Bajwa meeting had taken place in London a few months before April 2022, when Khan's government was removed through a vote of no confidence. However, Bajwa's last visit to London before April 2022 was in June 2019, more than two and a half years earlier. Official sources provided details of Gen Bajwa's visits to the UK: from April 2 to April 7 in 2017; October 10 to October 14 in 2018; June 20 to June 15 in 2019; and

records do not show Bajwa visiting London during that period. An online search of newspaper reports also indicates no UK visit by Bajwa except for the dates mentioned above. Nawaz had left for London in November 2019 for treatment after being released on bail from a seven-year sentence for corruption. Khan's government had allowed Sharif to proceed to London for treatment after he was diagnosed with an immune system disorder. Later, Khan alleged that Nawaz left the country based on fake medical reports to avoid accountability.



Special Judge Anti-Corruption sentenced those who embezzled Govt funds

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha:
According to details, Rana Tousif-ur-Rehman and Muhammad Sarfaraz registered on their names a CCB in the name of collective development in Mitha Tiwana. They embezzled 18,28,935 rupees from government funds during the construction of roads. Anti-corruption Sargodha registered a case against the accused and sent the challan to the court. On completion of the hearing of the case in the court, Special Anti-Corruption Sargodha Shehzad Hussain Bhatti has sentenced the two

accused Rana Tousif-ur-Rehman Chairman and Muhammad Sarfaraz, Secretary of Community Development CCB Mitha Tiwana to 10 years imprisonment with hard labor and a fine of 2 lakh rupees. Sargodha Anti-Corruption Department, headed by Hafiz Muhammad Imran, Regional Director, Anti-Corruption Sargodha, Sargodha Anti-Corruption Sargodha Prosecution Team made efforts to convict the accused in the cases pending in the court. Anti-corruption Sargodha team arrested both the accused and shifted them to jail.

ANF recovered 2.5 kg drugs & arrested the accused

Soon Times Correspondent Rawalpindi:
ANF is continuing operations against drug trafficking. ANF recovered 2.5 kg of drugs during two operations and arrested the accused. ANF recovered 1.9 kg of ice from a parcel destined for Australia at the cargo office in Lahore. In another operation, ANF recovered 640 grams of heroin from a passenger going to Karachi from Peshawar Airport. According to the spokesperson of ANF, a case has been registered against the arrested accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act.



UNODC reports significant increase in methamphetamine use in Pakistan: Dr. Jawad

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha:
Drugs addiction is growing as a social disease in Pakistan which has engulfed the new generation and paralyzed their abilities. Our youth today, who have to take over the leadership of the country in the coming tomorrow, have fallen victim to it. Especially the state of mental disorders and insanity among the youth due to ice addiction is a momentous concern for us as a nation. These views were expressed by the well-known educationist and psychiatrist Dr. Jawad Muhammad Shujaat while speaking at a ceremony organized for the rehabilitation of drug addicts at Azm Center on the occasion of International Narcotics Day. He said that the growing trend of ice in the society along with other addictive substances is nothing less than an alarming situation. Ice, a crystalline form of methamphetamine, is highly addictive. According to the United Nations Office on



Drugs and Crime (UNODC), a significant increase in methamphetamine use has been seen in Pakistan in recent years. The country's proximity to major drug-producing regions, easy cross-border supply and lack of effective drug control make it an attractive transit point for drug traffickers, the report said. He said the growing trend of ice addiction in Pakistan needs urgent attention and prevention. To deal with this serious situation, the government and the civil society have to take joint measures.

All reservations addressed, will join cabinet after consultations:

Soon Times Correspondent JHELUM:
Senate Chairman and senior Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Yusuf Raza Gilani has said that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has addressed all of their reservations on various issues. Speaking to journalists in Jhelum, Gilani said that the PPP would decide on joining the federal cabinet after consultations with the party as currently, they are working to strengthen the government to control the economic situation. The former prime minister's remarks come as the PPP has time again expressed reservations over the recently proposed budget as well as on various political matters in Punjab. Last week, sources told Geo News that



the PML-N had accepted all demands of the PPP after the parties' negotiation committees held the third round of talks held on Sunday. The meeting was attended by PPP's Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Ali Haider Gillani, Nadeem Afzal Chohan and Hassan Murtaza, whereas the PML-N was represented by Punjab Assembly Speaker Ahmed Khan, Rana Saanullah and Khawaja Saad

Rafique among others. During the meeting, the government agreed to prefer the PPP for development funds and appointments in administrative posts in Punjab, the sources said. The PPP has demanded the appointment of an additional secretary in the chief minister's secretariat whose job would be to resolve the issues faced by the party only, they said. The Punjab government would appoint district deputy commissioners, district police officers and revenue officers in consultation with the PPP in the areas where the political party has significant support, the sources said. Sources said 12 such districts were pointed out including Multan, Muzaffargarh, Rahim Yar Khan, Rawalpindi and Rajanpur.

IESCO Power Suspension Schedules for Today

Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad:
According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned regions/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 26th June 2024, From 08:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, Sohldran Road, Ghori Garden, Sharifabad, Burma, Khanna Dak Feeders. From 06:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Zia Masjid, Iqbal Town, Highway, Service Road East, Fazalshah, Sohan Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Rata, Noon, Raja Sultan, Range Road Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Swan Garden-I, Major Riaz, Lala Zar, Jhawara, Dhamyal-I, Gulshan Saeed, Lalkarti, Cantt, UC Lakhan, Shah Jeevan, Quid-e-Azam Colony, Qasim Base,

Morgah, Pindi Board, Park View, Car Chowk, Jail Park, Fuji Foundation, Melbub Shahed, Mohra Nagyal, Wilayat Complex, X-Liar, AOWHS Feeders, Attock Circle, Colonel Sher Khan, Hussainabad, Wahdat Colony, Kohsar Colony, Kala Khan, Mansar, Haji Shah, Kamra Rural, Gondal, Hameed, Muslim Town Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Basharat, Dhoda, Megan Feeders and surrounding will remain closed. Further, load management of 20 to 25 MW can be done at 132 KV Chakri, Adiala, Chakwal, Tala Gang, Neela, Bhagwal, Dandah Shah Bilawal, Chohan Saidan Shah and Tumman grid stations if required. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

Iran's presidential election dominated by Khamenei loyalists



DUBAI
Iranians choose a president on Friday in a tightly controlled election following Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash last month, with the outcome expected to influence the succession to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's top decision-maker.
With Iran's supreme leader now 85, it is likely that the next president will be closely involved in the eventual process of choosing a successor to Khamenei, who has ensured candidates sharing his hardline views dominate the presidential contest.

Investigation highlights 'attack on press freedom' in Gaza war



Web Desk
A collaborative investigation by international media outlets on Tuesday shed light on the circumstances behind more than 100 Palestinian journalists and media workers being killed in the Gaza war, some while wearing a press vest.
A consortium led by investigative outlet Forbidden Stories and involving around 50 journalists from 13 organisations including AFP, The Guardian and the Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism group (ARIJ) took part in the four-month probe.
It looked into strikes involving journalists and media infrastructure since Israel launched a devastating offensive in the Gaza Strip in response to Palestinian militant group Hamas carrying out an unprecedented attack in Israel on October 7.



Israel strikes Martyred at least 11 in Gaza, tanks push further into Rafah

One strike at a food distribution centre in Gaza City killed three, and another killed eight people

CAIRO
Two Israeli air strikes targeting aid supplies killed at least 11 Palestinians in Gaza on Monday, medics said, as Israeli tanks pushed deeper into Rafah in the south and fought their way back into areas in the north they had already subdued months ago.
One strike at a food distribution centre in Gaza City, near the Shati historic refugee camp, killed three people. Another, near Bani Suhaila town in the southern Gaza Strip, killed at least eight, including guards who accompany aid trucks, the medics said.
There was no immediate comment from Israel, which denies attacking aid efforts and accuses militants of causing harm to civilians by operating among them.
Overnight, an Israeli air strike at a medical clinic in Gaza City killed the director of Gaza's Ambulance and Emergency Department, the enclave's health ministry said. Israel's military said that strike had killed a senior Hamas armed commander.
The health ministry said the killing of Hani al-Jaafari brought the number of medical staff killed by Israeli fire since Oct. 7 to 500. At least 300 others have so far been detained.
In a statement, the Israeli military said the strike targeted Mohammad Salah, who it said was responsible for developing Hamas weaponry.
NOCEASEFIREACCORD
More than eight months into the fighting, international mediation backed by the United States has so far failed to bring a ceasefire agreement.

Western arms reach Ukraine front lines, relieving some pressure

DONETSK REGION, Ukraine
Western supplies of artillery shells, slowed by months of political wrangling in Washington before finally being released, have started to reach Ukrainian units on the front lines, relieving pressure on forces outnumbered by the Russians.
When Reuters reporters visited one artillery unit in Donetsk region, the focus of Russian troops' slow advance along the 1,000-km (600-mile) front, it fired its M-109 self-propelled howitzer as needed.
In the past, soldiers said they had been forced to limit their use of 155 mm rounds against the enemy, compromising their ability to support infantry further forward.
"There was 'shell hunger'. Ammunition was rationed quite severely. It had an impact on infantry. They (the Russians) crept from all sides, it hurt the infantry men," said unit commander Vasyl, 46, declining to give his full name.
"Now, there is no more 'shell hunger' and we work well."
Demand for artillery rounds has soared since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, with Kyiv's Western allies running down their own stockpiles as they rushed shells to Ukraine where thousands of rounds are needed every day.



South Korea begins search for answers after battery plant fire kills 22



HWASEONG, South Korea
The South Korean government ordered on Tuesday urgent safety inspections at high-risk industrial sites a day after a fire at a lithium battery factory that killed 22 workers with one person still missing.
Officials from agencies including the National Forensic Service, police and the fire department entered the factory as part of a joint investigation.
The blaze which broke out inside a warehouse with 35,000 lithium batteries produced toxic smoke, and the workers likely lost consciousness and succumbed within seconds, fire officials have said.
The fire was the latest industrial accident in a country where dozens of manufacturing workers lose their lives on the job each year despite repeated calls to improve workplace safety.
"I ask the ministries of labour and industry and the National Fire Agency to conduct an urgent safety inspection and, where there is concern of an accident, take immediate measures," Prime Minister Han Duck-soo said at a cabinet meeting.
Seventeen of the 22 workers who died were Chinese and one Laotian was also among the dead. Most of them were hired temporarily to work at the plant packing primary lithium batteries run by unlisted company Ariell.
The factory is in Hwaseong, an industrial cluster southwest of the capital Seoul.
Firefighters with search dogs combed the gutted structure looking for the one person who remains missing. They found human remains and personal articles, which will be DNA tested for identification, Hwaseong fire official Kim Jin-young said.

Semi-final schedule for T20 World Cup 2024 confirmed

England to face India, whereas, Afghanistan will compete against South Africa in semi-final matches of tournament



Sports Desk
The T20 World Cup 2024 is nearing its end from the 20 teams at the beginning to coming down to the last four who will be playing in the semi-final on June 27 in the West Indies.
After England and South Africa, India became the third team to qualify for the T20 World Cup semi-final on Monday. The Men in Blue beat Australia by 24 runs in their recent match.
On the other side, Afghanistan beat Bangladesh by 8 runs (DLS method) in the final Super 8 match of the tournament on Tuesday to qualify for the final four.
For the first time in history, the Rashid Khan-led unit have qualified for the semi-finals of a World Cup.
Bangladesh were bowled out for 105 in 17.5 overs while chasing a target of 116 runs, which was later reduced to 114 in 19 overs due to rain.
As Afghanistan registered an historic win, opener Litton Das remained unbeaten on 54 runs in 49 balls, but ran out of partners at the other end.
Rashid and pacer Naveen-ul-Haq led the way with the ball as both claimed four wickets each.



David Warner quietly concludes illustrious international cricket career

Sports Desk
Australian opener David Warner bid farewell to his 15-year international cricket career after Afghanistan bagged a victory over Bangladesh in the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024 on Tuesday, eliminating the Kangaroos from the tournament.
The decision comes as Afghanistan's latest victory marked Australia's exit from the tournament in the Super 8 stage, confirming a subdued farewell for Warner.
With appearances in 110 T20I innings, the 37-year-old opening batsman scored 3,277 runs, including a century and 28 half-centuries, at a formidable strike-rate of 142.47.
He had already announced that the T20 World Cup 2024 would be his final ODI in November's World Cup final win over India while his last Test was against Pakistan in January.
Before Afghanistan's match against Bangladesh, pacer Josh Hazlewood had stated that the timing of Warner's send-off from his teammates would rely on the result of the same match.
"Nothing's been said yet," Hazlewood said. "It might be said after this [press conference] before the [evening] game, but I think we'll wait until after the game and then we'll [acknowledge] the career that's been. It's been unbelievable. We'll definitely miss him around the group, out in the field and off-field - an amazing all-format career."
On Warner's farewell, Hazlewood said: "We've had a little taste of it. It's sort of been a slow burn with Test cricket and ODI cricket, and now T20. Life without him, we've sort of gotten used to it a little bit in New Zealand. It's always different when you lose a player that's been there for so long. But we'll move on and push forward."
Speaking before Australia's World Cup exit, Warner's opening partner Travis Head said it would be a "disappointing" manner for Warner's career to culminate.
"We'll be disappointed if it ended like that, where we have to watch another game. A lot has been said about what he's contributed to Australian cricket at the top of the order in all formats," Head said.
"He goes down as our best multi-format player. He'll be missed at the top of the order, but let's hope [tonight] is not the end of it. We'll wait and see but we'll give him a send-off tonight if that is the case later on. It might be a bit of a late one if the fixture finishes the way it has. But a lot has been said about how good Davey has been at the top of the order."

Trailer of highly anticipated crime drama series 'Mirzapur'



(Web Desk)
Ahead of the release of the third season of fan-favourite series Mirzapur, its director, Gurmeet Singh said: "One unique aspect of Mirzapur is that its story isn't based on any written book.
The narrative grows organically. Punet Krishna, the series' writer, created such deep characters from the beginning that we found the story within them."
Speaking about their creative approach, Singh added, "We didn't have to look outside; we explored the story through these characters -- what they wanted, what they needed, what their flaws were, and what could challenge them."

Afghan openers break Babar-Rizwan partnership record



(Web News)
Afghanistans openers Ibrahim Zadran and Rahmanullah Gurbaz have broken the partnership record of Pakistan captain Babar Azam and Muhammad Rizwan.
The Afghan opening pair became the highest scoring partners in a single edition of the T20 World Cup in the Super Eight match against Bangladesh on Tuesday.
Babar and Rizwan had scored 411 runs as partners in the World Cup 2021, while Zadran and Gurbaz scored 442 runs.
The Afghan duo has also become the pair to have four fifty-plus partnerships in one edition of the