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PM pledges to make Pakistan 'great nation' following Chinese development model

China-Pakistan friendship has no parallel and remains unshakeable, Shehbaz

PM advises Pakistani people against being dejected or losing hope. "Pakistan to follow Chinese president's vision to focus on progress".



Soon Times Correspondent
Islamabad
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday reiterated his resolve to make Pakistan a great nation by following the Chinese development model through utmost hard work and a sharp focus on industrial and agricultural progress.

"If we follow the Chinese model, I have no doubt, Pakistan will regain its position in the comity of nations and will be respected like our Chinese brothers are done by friends and foes [...] We will follow your model, work hard untringly, put in our sweat and blood, and make Pakistan a great country," the prime minister said addressing the 4th Pakistan-China Friendship and Business Reception in Beijing. He told the gathering of Pakistani and Chinese business leaders that Pakistan would follow Chinese President Xi Jinping's vision to focus on progress and prosperity by avoiding conflicts

and cited immense Chinese progress and projects like the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI).

The prime minister, who is in China on a five-day official visit, advised the Pakistani people against being dejected or losing hope rather than standing up and accepting the challenge to reach the level of Chinese progress within a few years or decades.

He said the China-Pakistan friendship had no parallel, noting that it remained unshakeable and unreachably even during the storms, wars, and earthquakes.

Recalling the Chinese journey of swift development to become the second biggest economic and military power under President Xi's vision, PM Shehbaz said it was achieved only through hard work and untringly efforts.

PTI leader Aliya Hamza rearrested moments after release from Sargodha jail



Soon Times Correspondent
SARGODHA
Pakistani Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Aliya Hamza was rearrested moments after being released from Sargodha jail on Thursday.

The PTI leader was released from Sargodha jail after her bail was confirmed by the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) yesterday in connection with May 9 cases.

She was rearrested by the Gujranwala police after her release from Sargodha jail.

Police said that the PTI leader in connection with the Gujranwala Cantonment Police in connection with a May 9 case.

Govt denies Imran Khan being kept in solitary confinement



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
The federal government has denied the claim that PTI founder Imran Khan is being kept in solitary confinement.

The government submitted additional documents to the Supreme Court to negate PTI founder Imran Khan's claim. The documents submitted in court include photographs of the former prime minister meeting lawyers in Adiala jail.

The federal government, submitting the list of those

Punjab CM's discretionary funds enhanced by Rs2 billion UAE envoy calls on Nawaz Sharif, CM Maryam

Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE
An increase of Rs2 billion in discretionary funds for Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has been approved.

According to sources, the Punjab government has granted approval to increase in the Punjab CM's discretionary funds. The finance department has allotted the funds for new fiscal year budget.

Government sources disclosed that Rs5 billion in budget had been allotted for the Punjab CM's discretionary funds. The chief minister can allot funds from discretionary funds to anyone.

Read more: Inflation is at the lowest level in five months, says Azma Dakhani

Discretionary funds are development grants routed through politicians to their constituencies at the discretion of the prime minister or chief minister.

It is pertinent to note that during the tenure of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government in 2018,



the cabinet took a decision to ban the use of all discretionary funds of president, prime minister and MNAs while calling it an insult to taxpayers.

Also read: PDMA achieves key milestones under CM Maryam Nawaz's directions

The discretionary powers of all the ministers to grant funds also had been revoked during the PTI government.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Gandapur to be indicted on July 5 in audio leak case



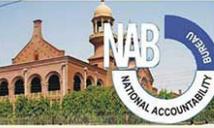
Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
A district and sessions court of Islamabad on Thursday fixed July 5 to indict Khayber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in the audio leak case.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Abdul Ghafoor Kakar conducted hearing of the audio leak case against KP CM Gandapur.

At the start of the hearing, an application was submitted to court for grant of exemption to Gandapur from attending court.

The court fixed July 5 for indictment of Gandapur and his collaborator Asad Khan. The court then adjourned hearing of the case.

LHC reserves decision on admissibility of plea contesting new NAB



Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE
The Lahore High Court has reserved its decision regarding the admissibility of a petition challenging the induction of an amendment to the NAB laws through the presidential ordinance which allows the extension of the remand period from 14 to 40 days.

Justice Shujaat Ali Khan of the LHC took up the petition, filed by citizen Munzer Ahmed, on Thursday.

At the outset of the proceedings, the counsel for

the petitioner requested the court to issue an injunction against the presidential ordinance.

Subsequently, the court reserved its decision regarding the admissibility of the plea.

On May 27, the ruling PM-N (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 was challenged in the Lahore High Court.

Acting President Yousef Raza Gilani approved the NAB (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 into law, assuming the role of acting president while Asif Ali Zardari was on a private visit to Dubai.

On June 3, the NAB (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 was challenged in the Lahore High Court.

Imran Khan's govt apparently wanted politicians' accountability, observes CJP Isa

CJP heads five-judge bench; PTI founder Imran Khan joins via video link from Adiala Jail



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
As the Supreme Court resumed hearing on a set of intra-court appeals against the revocation of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) law amendments on Thursday, Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa remarked that apparently, former prime minister Imran Khan's government also only wanted accountability of politicians.

CJP Isa was heading the five-judge bench which also included Justice

Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamil Khan, Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi.

Imran Khan, the incarcerated founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), joined the proceedings via video link from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail. His request seeking personal appearance in the case is still pending with the apex court.

June 6 hearing

Appearing before the bench, lawyer Ferooz H. Naik stated that he had prepared his written submissions.

He said he was supporting the note of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah.

At this CJP Isa questioned whether he was adopting the arguments of Makhdoom Ali Khan, the former attorney general for Pakistan. Naik responded that the arguments were his own.

Khawaja Harris, Advocates Arguments Khawaja Harris walked up to the rostrum and advanced his arguments as the court's assistant.

The chief justice asked Harris to tell the court which fundamental right had been affected by the NAB amendments.

Omar Ayub, Shibli Faraz, others granted extension in interim bails in vandalism case



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
Islamabad anti-terrorism court (ATC) has extended interim bail of Pakistani Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders in vandalism case.

ATC's Judge Abdul Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain heard the vandalism case against PTI leaders, Omar Ayub, Shibli Faraz, Ali Nawaz Awan and others.

Judge Abdul Hasnat granted

Sarim Burney remanded in FIA custody for two days

Extension of the physical remand denied with FIA being given custody of the accused for two days



Soon Times Correspondent
KARACHI
A local court has granted a two-day physical remand of Sarim Burney to the Federal Investigations Agency (FIA) on Thursday that follows the activist's arrest over allegations of involvement with human trafficking.

Investigation officer Chaudhary Bilal had earlier requested a 14-day physical remand for the activist on the basis that it was necessary to gather evidence and apprehend any other alleged accomplices of Burney after obtaining his statement.

The IO had made the request before the accused was presented before Justice Khaleeq Zaman.

He expressed concerns that failing to do may deter justice as possibility for evidence being tampered or destroyed was high if the FIA did not have an outright custody of the accused.

However, extension of the physical remand was denied with the FIA being given custody of the accused for only two days.

Electricity price raised by Rs3.33 per unit

Surge impacts bills of current month, excluding K-Electric and lifeline consumers



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
The cost of electricity for consumers rose by Rs3.33 per unit on Thursday owing to monthly fuel adjustment charges, according to a notification issued by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA).

The increase in electricity prices will be applied to the bills of the current month, excluding K-Electric and lifeline consumers.

Electricity prices have been surging for the masses recently, putting additional financial strain on consumers already grappling with high inflation.

On June 4, NEPRA notified an increase in electricity rates by up to Rs7.76 per unit. The hike allowed power companies to recover over Rs46 billion from consumers for the third quarter of FY 2023-24.

Of this total, Rs28.515 billion will be charged as capacity charges, which will be directed to independent power plants (IPPs) that have not produced any electricity and have remained idle.

Out of the total burden of Rs46.613

billion, Rs28.515 billion will be charged on account of capacity charges, whereas Rs10.284 billion will be recovered on account of less FCA impact of T&M losses. Rs5.309 billion O&M, and Rs 2.541 billion use of system charges.

A day earlier, The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) urged the government to promptly decrease the interest rate to 12%.

Electricity prices should be reduced to 9 cents per unit for all industries while contracts with the independent power producers (IPPs) should be revisited, it said.



World Food Safety Day

World Food Safety Day is being observed today to catalyze momentum for the alignment of governmental policies and stakeholder actions to ensure food safety. In today's world, where foodborne diseases and global pandemics are becoming more prevalent, the urgency to take proactive measures to emphasize proper hygiene and protect our food system has never been greater. This year's theme "Food Safety: Prepare for the Unexpected" serves as a reminder of the ever-present challenges and uncertainties we face in ensuring the

safety of our food supply. Preparing for the unexpected requires anticipating potential risks and vulnerabilities in the food chain and implementing robust measures to mitigate them. It also entails investing in food surveillance systems, strengthening relevant laboratories, and improving emergency response mechanisms to detect and contain food safety threats before they escalate into crises. This day reminds us of the need to strengthen food safety regulations and standards that govern the production, processing, and

distribution of food. We can minimize the risk of food contamination and adulteration and ensure food safety by ensuring strict compliance with these standards. Additionally, promoting best agricultural practices can help reduce the likelihood of foodborne diseases and improve the quality of our food supply. Pakistan also needs to invest in research and innovation and utilize the latest technology to address food safety challenges. Modern tools can enable us to identify potential hazards accurately, allowing for more targeted and effective interventions to

protect public health. We also need to create awareness among the people about food safety, and clean and hygienic food through the media. This World Food Safety Day highlights the importance of realizing that food safety is a shared responsibility requiring the collective efforts of all stakeholders. We need to adhere to the highest food safety standards for the well-being of our nation. Let us reaffirm our commitment to strengthen our food safety systems, and ensure that everyone has access to safe, clean, and nutritious food.

"Unsung Guardians: The Economic Hardships of Pakistan's Security Personnel"

Malik Muhammad Usman

The security sector in Pakistan, a crucial pillar of the nation's infrastructure, plays a vital role in safeguarding lives and property and maintaining order across various settings. However, the very individuals who uphold this security, the security guards, are grappling with severe economic challenges. These issues, which compromise their quality of life and effectiveness on the job, are the focus of this article. We will delve into the various aspects of their working conditions, with a particular emphasis on the financial hardships they endure due to inadequate compensation, a problem exacerbated by the rising inflation within the country. Security guards, the unsung heroes operating in the background, ensure safety and security for others while their lives are fraught with insecurity and financial instability. Their role is of utmost importance, especially in a country like Pakistan, where security concerns are a constant part of daily life. However, their remuneration is disproportionately low compared to the risks they face and their responsibilities. This section sets the stage for a detailed exploration of the challenges these workers face, the origins of these issues, their impacts on the guards' lives, and the potential solutions that could alleviate their plight. The struggle with low wages is compounded by the cost of living crisis driven by inflation, which has seen a steady rise, disproportionately affecting those on the lowest rungs of the income ladder. As prices of essentials such as food, housing, and healthcare continue to escalate, the value of the guards' wages diminishes, plunging them deeper into financial distress. We will look into personal stories, and expert

opinions to provide a vivid picture of these guards' economic hardships, emphasizing the urgency of addressing these issues. Having a chat with one of the security guard he said "I work 12 hours a day and 7 days a week and I am paid 16000 monthly. My house rent is 15000 and my daily travel cost is 100 rupees. I have 4 kids and they don't have proper shelter and I am unfortunately not let them go to school. I don't go home most of the times and sleep on roads or footpaths wherever I get space just to save that 100 rupees traveling cost. These sacrifices help me feed my family." Historically, Pakistan's enforcement of labor laws has been lax, with little oversight or penalties for non-compliance. This regulatory vacuum allows private security companies to operate with minimal accountability, often resulting in poor pay and conditions for the guards. The lack of robust and organized labour movements within the sector further exacerbates the situation, leaving guards with no collective bargaining power to negotiate better terms or protect their interests. The direct impact of economic challenges on the daily lives of security guards is profound and multifaceted. Financial insecurity affects nearly every aspect of their lives—from mental and physical health to family dynamics and social stability. Guards facing economic hardship often cannot afford adequate housing, resulting in long commutes or substandard conditions. Health issues become prevalent as financial constraints limit access to healthy food. The economic plight of security guards in Pakistan is characterized by wages that do not align with the critical nature of their work. With monthly earnings typically ranging between 16,000 to 20,000 PKR, many guards earn just enough to scrape by, with little left for savings or financial

security. The psychological impact is equally significant, with many guards experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression due to financial pressures. These mental health challenges not only affect their well-being but also impair their ability to perform duties effectively, potentially compromising the security they are tasked with providing. Addressing the economic challenges of security guards in Pakistan requires a holistic approach that involves stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. Initiatives could include setting industry-specific minimum wage standards that reflect the cost of living and the nature of the work, strengthening the enforcement of labour laws to ensure compliance by employers, and fostering the development of solid unions or worker associations that can advocate effectively for the rights of security guards. Government policies could be aimed at improving the regulatory framework to ensure better working conditions and fair wages. This might involve revisiting existing labour laws to cover security personnel more explicitly or introducing new legislation tailored to the unique needs of the security sector. Public awareness campaigns could also highlight the importance of security work and the need for fair compensation and treatment. Policy recommendations and reform proposals from labour economists, security industry experts, and human rights advocates. It will also examine successful case studies from other countries where similar challenges have been addressed through effective policy interventions. About the author: The writer is a community journalist and student of Beaconhouse National University, Lahore

The Crucial Role of Incubation Centers in Business Infrastructure

Muhammad Shayan Ibrahim

In the rapidly evolving landscape of global business, incubation centers have emerged as pivotal institutions that foster innovation, support startup growth, and strengthen economic ecosystems. These centers act as catalysts for entrepreneurial ventures, providing the necessary infrastructure, resources, and mentorship that startups need to thrive in their formative years. As economies worldwide seek to harness the potential of new businesses, the role of incubation centers in business infrastructure cannot be overstated. Incubation centers, often affiliated with universities, government bodies, or private enterprises, offer a structured environment where startups can develop their ideas into viable businesses. These centers provide a range of services including office space, access to funding, mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and business training. The primary goal is to reduce the barriers to entry for new businesses, which are often significant in terms of costs, expertise, and market access. One of the most significant contributions of incubation centers is the provision of a supportive ecosystem. Startups usually face numerous challenges, from conceptualizing their ideas to scaling their operations. Incubation centers address these challenges by offering office spaces at subsidized rates, thus alleviating the financial burden on nascent companies. Moreover, these centers often provide essential services such as administrative support, legal advice, and technical assistance, enabling startups to focus on core business activities. Mentorship is another critical aspect of what incubation centers offer.

Experienced entrepreneurs, industry experts, and academics collaborate with startups, providing invaluable insights and guidance. This mentorship can significantly shorten the learning curve for new entrepreneurs, helping them avoid common pitfalls and make informed decisions. Additionally, the opportunity to interact with seasoned professionals and other startups fosters a culture of knowledge sharing and innovation. Access to funding is a major hurdle for many startups, and incubation centers play a crucial role in bridging this gap. Many centers are connected with a network of investors, venture capitalists, and government funding programs. By facilitating introductions and pitch opportunities, incubation centers help startups secure the capital needed to grow and scale their operations. Some centers even offer seed funding or grants, giving startups a much-needed financial boost in their early stages. Networking opportunities provided by incubation centers are invaluable. Startups benefit from being part of a community of like-minded entrepreneurs and businesses. This network can lead to partnerships, collaborations, and new business opportunities. Additionally, being associated with a reputable incubation center can enhance a startup's credibility, making it more attractive to investors, customers, and potential partners. Incubation centers also contribute to the broader economic landscape by fostering innovation and creating jobs. By supporting startups that develop new technologies, products, and services, incubation centers drive economic growth and competitiveness. Successful startups often expand and create employment opportunities, contributing to the overall economic health of their regions. Furthermore, the

concentration of innovative businesses within incubation centers can lead to the development of industry clusters, attracting more businesses and investment to the area. The impact of incubation centers is evident in numerous success stories. For instance, YCombinator, one of the most renowned incubation centers, has nurtured companies like Airbnb, Dropbox, and Reddit, which have grown into industry leaders. These success stories highlight how effective support and resources during the early stages can propel startups to global prominence. Government and policy makers recognize the importance of incubation centers in economic development. Many governments have introduced policies and programs to support the establishment and operation of these centers. This support is crucial, as incubation centers require significant investment in infrastructure, personnel, and programs to be effective. Public-private partnerships are often key to ensuring the sustainability and success of these centers. In conclusion, incubation centers play an indispensable role in business infrastructure by providing startups with the resources, support, and environment needed to succeed. They help reduce entry barriers, offer critical mentorship, facilitate access to funding, and create networking opportunities. Beyond individual startups, they drive innovation, economic growth, and job creation, making them essential components of modern economic ecosystems. As the global economy continues to evolve, the importance of incubation centers in nurturing the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators will only grow, cementing their role as vital incubators of business success.

Political Polarization and its impacts on youth

By Muneeb Akram

The influence of political polarization in Pakistan has been witnessed in the last decade whereby various aspects of the population, especially the youth, have been affected. This division does indicate the worsening of the degrees of polarization and antagonism between different ideological and partisan camps and their backing. The youth constitute a significant demographic of Pakistan, and they are most prone to the current levels of polarization present in the society. They are scrambling for power and influence within a harsh political climate that appears to be getting worse with time. In order to mitigate the effervescing socio-political issues in Liberia, it is imperative for one to unravel the underlying causes of polarization as well as its manifestations and effects on the youths of Liberia. Another factor that is found in the political climate of the country is that political polarization in Pakistan is not new but has deep roots in the history of the country but this has also experienced a boost in the contemporary era. The formation of a new and stronger government like Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf along with the older and well-established parties like Pakistan Muslim Nawaz League and Pakistan Peoples Party has nurtured a bitter

political environment. It has a clearly defined constituency, which is antithetical to the other side, so that there is always suspicion, and sometimes even enmity. Partisan animus: Polarizing information: This is evident because media houses and social media hold certain political beliefs, and give prominence to information that strengthens those beliefs. This has eventually created a climate of political polarization resulting to more emphasis on rivalry and controversy in the advancement of embracing healthy discussions and disagreement. Pakistan has a large youth population hence making first-time voters a significant demographic in the electoral process a group of people is considered young within the age range of 15 to 29 years amounts to 64% of the population. This is reflected in their interaction with politics where they share similar sentiments arising from the currently extant polarized climate. The effects of political polarization therefore align with the participation, activism, psychological well-being, and connectedness of young people at this critical juncture.

The effect of political polarization on the youth is evident in political socialization. Young people are becoming voters and citizens when polarization is on the rise within the United States. This usually has a cumulative effect of creating firm and

unshakable support for certain political parties or persons. It is through social media that young people are politically socialized through content carefully chosen to affirm their already existing political leaning. The algorithms employed by social media giants such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have a bias towards the user's bias and thus develop echo chamber systems, where users are inclined towards a specific view. This strengthens polarization since students do not have the chance to interact with people with varying opinions and critically discuss political matters. Polarization has also influenced political activism among youth. On the one hand, the increase in political activity has also prompted the youth to become more involved in politics. Social movements for example the PTI came to power in 2018 had a large number of youths involved, for change, anti-corruption, etc. On the other hand, polarization is another downside as it has caused aggressive and, at times, hostile activism. Such deviations include strike, demonstrations or counter demonstrations are some of the common deviations where young people are usually included. This is an environment of activism and the extremism is very evident, and compromise is certainly not seen as a strength but a sign of weakness.

Yet another facet of the lives of young Pakistanis that has been shaped by political polarity has to do with their mental health. Due to political turmoil, clash of ideologies, and unfavorable comments, people may easily experience stress, anxiety, or a feeling of hopelessness. The youths involved in the political activities may end up developing high interest in politics and may end up losing heavily when their most preferred political organizations or individual political leaders are vanquished. Additionally, in tendency such practices as trolling, cyberstalking, and harassment in the aggressive online environment can divide mental health disorders. This is why nowadays online environment is so toxic, thanks to anonymity that Internet provides users, which enables them to act aggressively and disrespectfully, especially towards the youth. The social cohesion among young people is also under significant threat due to political polarization. Political extreme conflicts between the supporters of different parties can lead to the social exclusion of the youth, and therefore the formation of political tribes. Individuals can lose friends, clash with their peers, or even break up their family ties based on political ideals. This fragmentation

has negative impacts on the society for the following reasons: Youth are prevented from assembling or organizing themselves to pursue a noble cause. People stop following the culture of collectivity and replace it with the culture of party politics. This also impacted youth's education and intellectuality. Unfortunately, polarization is not restricted to any given institution, including institutions of learning that are meant to encourage the freedom of speech and nurturing of critical minds. Being in a partisan environment, students can experience the pressure of like-political thinking and free speech suppression. This environment fails to encourage the growth of critical thinking skills and the capacity to approach challenges and problems from different angles. However, there is room for reducing the adverse effects of political polarization on the youth. Civic education that teaches critical thinking, media literacy, as well as the role of democracy in any society will assist the young generation in coping with such situations. It is also important for people to talk to each other and engage across the political divide in a bid to respect each other. To an extent, social networks can do so by changing the algorithms of their platforms in a way that would show more diverse opinions

and by banning hate speech and harassment. In addition, political leaders and political parties bear the responsibility to lower polarization and engage in healthy political communication. Those leaders, who care for the unity of the nation and the welfare of the majority in contrast to their own party-affiliated interests, present a positive role model to the youth. CSOs and youths can also do so by facilitating dialogues on the sectors of mutual interest including education, employment, and environment. Political Polarization in Pakistan presents specific concerns for the youth in terms of their political identities, enfranchisement, well-being, relations, and learning. Realizing these challenges demands first-rate cooperation from different stakeholders such as educators, the government, media houses, and civil society. Thus, by discussing issues with diverse perspectives and encouraging rationality and active citizenship, it becomes possible to avoid the detrimental impact of polarization and, at the same time, help those young Pakistanis develop into valuable citizens who may step up for the future of Pakistan. The youth are thus a crucial agent that can bring together different people and deliver a better society that is only possible if some elements of our social structure uphold the core tenets of religious tolerance and respect.

Govt forms SIFC cabinet committee to boost investment



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: The federal government has constituted Cabinet Committee on Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to ensure implementation of recommendations within the contours of SIFC. A notification has been issued to this effect. As per the notification, the committee will submit decisions to the federal cabinet for approval. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will be

chairman of the committee while the army chief, chief ministers and national coordinator will attend the committee meetings on special invitation. The prime minister has also formed another cabinet committee on immigration, overseas employment and technical vocational education and training. The committee will act as a central forum for all government agencies related to overseas employment and technical training and will review policies in this

regard. It will also approve curriculum, monitoring and evaluation framework for vocational training institutions and will devise plans to combat illegal immigration, human trafficking and exploitation of skilled workers. The committee will also develop an action plan to engage with international partners. Earlier, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar announced that seven desks have been established under Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to attract foreign investment. Addressing a press conference, the information minister said that the seven desks, established for China, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, European Union, United States and the Far East, would focus on bringing foreign investment to Pakistan.



Rawalpindi: Haji Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem CEO Saviour Foods, Rawalpindi addressing in a awareness seminar on the occasion of International Environment Day on 5th June 2024 organized by Rawalpindi Restaurants Caterers Sweets and Bakers Association.

SNGPL disconnected 90 connections & imposed fine of Rs 1.28 million

Soon Times Correspondent Lahore: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad. It disconnected 90 connections and imposed fine of Rs 1.28 million. In Lahore, the team disconnected 12 connections on illegal use of gas and lodged 1 FIR against gas pilfer. In Multan the team disconnected 15 connections on illegal use of gas. In Peshawar the company disconnected 41 connections on account of direct use and illegal use of gas and booked Rs 0.07 million against gas theft cases. The regional team of Sheekhupura disconnected 04

connections on illegal use of gas and booked an amount of Rs 0.19 million against gas theft cases. In Faisalabad the team disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and imposed a fine of Rs 0.05 million against gas theft cases. In Mardan the team disconnected 11 connections on illegal use of gas and booked an amount of Rs 0.75 million against gas theft cases. In Bahawalpur the team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas and 02 on use of the compressor. The regional team of Sahawal disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas. In Gujranwala the team booked an amount of Rs 0.22 million against gas theft cases.

Govt of Pakistan should demand immediate release of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui from the US: Shujauddin Shaikh



Soon Times Correspondent Lahore: The Government of Pakistan should demand the immediate release of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui from the US, forcefully. This was said by the Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami, Shujauddin Shaikh, in a statement. The Ameer said that Dr. Aafia Siddiqui was evidently taken over from Pakistani soil and handed over to the FBI while citing reasons of the so-called "war on terror" during the reign of the Dictator, General Pervez Musharraf, in 2003. She was held in the notorious Bagram

prison and subjected to inhumane torture. Afterwards, through a frivolous and utterly fictitious charge, was sentenced to 86 years in prison through the American judiciary, massaging any sense of justice. The reality is that from General Musharraf to the present ruling coalition, none have actually taken any practical steps towards recovering this daughter of Pakistan from the US. It is apparent that the government and other centers of power are completely weak in this matter due to their crippling fear of upsetting the US. The Ameer said that the details which have come forth of the meeting of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui with her sister have enraged every Pakistani as to how the imprisoned Dr. Aafia Siddiqui is being persecuted in different ways for the past 21 years, and such mental and physical torture continues to this day. He said that the Government of Pakistan should immediately spring into action for the release of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui and lend complete official and diplomatic support to her family members and international human rights lawyers.

Pakistan set to export SUVs, other vehicles

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Industries and Production announced that Pakistan will export sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and other cars in the next few months. According to officials of the Ministry of Industries and Production, Pakistan will export 50 locally manufactured SUVs of Toyota Indus Motors in the first phase. Separately, Toyota Indus' Hybrid Corolla Cross will be exported in the second phase. The Ministry of Industries and Production maintained that the company has also sent 100 mechanical engineers from Pakistan to Japan for training. "Pakistani workforce in Japan has been recognised for their exceptional skills and



expertise." The Ministry of Industries and Production added. Earlier on June 4, the federal government is considering a proposal to increase the regulatory duty on used imported vehicles. According to the details, the federal budget for the next financial year will be presented on June 12 in which regulatory duty on imported used vehicles is likely to be increased.

Strong winds leave two dead in Wazirabad

Soon Times Correspondent WAZIRABAD: A severe storm hit Wazirabad on Thursday, resulting in the tragic loss of two lives and leaving a mother critically injured. ARY News reported. According to Rescue Sources, the storm caused a wall to collapse, trapping a mother and daughter underneath. The 10-year-old daughter Noor Fatima died on the spot while her mother Khadija Bibi was rushed to the hospital with severe injuries.



In a separate incident, a young motorcyclist Khawar Ali lost control of his bike due to the strong winds and collided

with a road divider, resulting in his death. Rescue sources reported that the mother and daughter were sitting in their courtyard when the neighboring wall collapsed due to the intense storm. Local residents managed to pull them out from under the debris but unfortunately, the young girl had already succumbed to her injuries. The mother was transferred to the district headquarters hospital in Gujranwala after receiving initial medical aid at the local hospital.

Eidul Adha 2024 in Pakistan likely to fall on THIS date

Soon Times Correspondent KARACHI: The astronomer has predicted a possible date of Eid-ul-Adha in Pakistan, announcing the Zill-Hajj moon's time to be sighted. According to the details, astronomer Javed Iqbal said that the moon of Zill-Hajj would be born on June 6. He said that the moon is most likely to be visible on Friday, June 7. Javed Iqbal said that at the time of sunset on June 7, Friday the moon will be 26 hours and 45 minutes old. He said that the moon must be at least 19 hours old to be visible. "The moon is likely to be visible for about 15 minutes after the sunset on Friday," the astronomer added. Javed Iqbal said that the first day of Eid-ul-Adha in Pakistan likely to be observed on June 17, Monday. Meanwhile, the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee will meet in Karachi on Friday for a sighting of the Zilhajj moon.



The meeting will be held at the Meteorological Department office in Karachi. Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad will preside over the meeting. Eidul Adha, also known as the Feast of Sacrifice, is one of two Eid festivals celebrated by the Muslim faithful to commemorate Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son to God. Traditionally marked by the slaughter of animals, whose meat is shared with family members and the poor. The faithful slaughter their sacrificial animals in remembrance of the tradition of Prophet Ibrahim, which continues for three days of Eid.

Army eliminates 66 terrorists in Balochistan operations since January 1



Pakistan Army eliminated 66 terrorists during various operations against Khawarij in Balochistan. The Pakistan Army carried out operations against terrorists in Balochistan during the year 2024. After the Afghan Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021, a new wave of terrorism started in Pakistan. The modern-day Khawarij Tehreek-e-Taliban stepped up their attacks in Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Pakistan armed forces adopted an effective strategy to neutralize the terrorists. Under this strategy, the Pakistan Army launched various operations in a coordinated and systematic manner to root out terrorism in Pakistan this year. From January 3, to May 31, Pakistan Army killed 66 terrorists, injured 27 and arrested 4 alive during various operations against Khawarij in Balochistan.

PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC CRISIS AND ITS SOLUTIONS

AYESHA TUFAIL
National Defence University, Islamabad
Pakistan is a gift of Allah Almighty. The country with more than 240 million population with high intelligence quality and skills, precious minerals and natural resources, four seasons

and diverse geography, agriculture-based economy, rich sea and long coastal line, high mountains and tourism opportunities cannot be crippled in economic crisis. These facts along with present economic crisis are speaking that we are not doing enough which we should have done. It is hard to

engulfed in economic crisis. This is high time we should realise that we are going wrong somewhere. We have the resources, we have the will, we have the resolve and we have the expertise. Why cannot we progress and become the loan givers instead of loan seekers. Solution is simple. We should cash our agriculture

potential by using our fertile land, indigenous technology, rich yielding seeds, and hardworking highly motivated farmers. We are rich in natural resources which are untapped since long. We should extract, process, refine and convert these in high quality finished goods by utilizing our expert, energetic, envisioned and

unemployed workforce Easily available in our beloved country. We should give the requisite training for this purpose and utilize this strength to the best of our capabilities. We have the intelligence and educated youth available who should be converted into IT force earning huge foreign

potential for tourism, that should be utilised to our best interests. By taking these steps wholeheartedly and with full motivation we can employ our unemployed population, use our untapped natural resources and earn requisite foreign exchange reserves.



Rescue efforts wind down after deadly Papua New Guinea landslide



CANBERRA
Rescue efforts at the site of a landslide in Papua New Guinea are due to end on Thursday, two weeks after part of a mountain collapsed onto a remote village, a United Nations agency said. It remained unclear how many people died in the disaster in PNG's Enga region, but the national government said more than 2,000 people may have been buried alive. A UN estimate put the death toll at around 670. A 14-day window provided by local authorities for search and rescue will end on Thursday, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said in a statement on Wednesday.

"The provincial government will cease searching for bodies due to public health risks and the potential for new landslides, as the soil remains unstable," it said.

Russia arrests Frenchman suspected of collecting military intelligence



LONDON
Russian investigators said on Thursday they had detained a French citizen on suspicion of gathering information about the activities of the Russian military. The state investigative committee said the man was suspected, over several years, to have "purposefully collected information in the field of military and military-technical activities of the Russian Federation". It added: "This information, when obtained by foreign sources, can be used against the security of the state."



Gaza officials say 40 killed in Israeli strike on Nuseirat school

The two officials added that 14 children and 9 women were killed in the strike

DUBAI
The director of the Hamas-run Gaza government media office Ismail Al-Thawabta and a Gaza health ministry official told Reuters on Thursday 40 people were killed and 73 were wounded in an Israeli attack on the Nuseirat school in the Gaza Strip. The two officials added that 14 children and 9 women were killed in the strike. Earlier, UNRWA communications director Juliette Tooma told Reuters that the number of those reported killed in the Israeli offensive on the Nuseirat school was between 35 and 45, adding the number could not be confirmed at this stage. The Israeli military said it assessed that there were 20-30 fighters located in the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency school.

India's opposition, written off as too weak, makes a stunning comeback to slow Modi's juggernaut

NEW DELHI
India's bruised and battered opposition was largely written off in the lead-up to the national election as too weak and fragmented to take on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his powerful Hindu nationalist governing party. It scored a stunning comeback, slowing the Modi juggernaut and pushing his Bharatiya Janata Party well below the majority mark. It's uncharted territory for the populist prime minister, who needs the help of his allies to stay in power. That could significantly change his governance style after he enjoyed a commanding majority in Parliament for a decade. The election results released



Wednesday also marked a revival for the main opposition Congress party and its allies, who defied predictions of decline and made deep inroads into governing party strongholds, resetting India's political landscape. The opposition won a total of 232 seats out of 543, doubling its strength from the last election. "The opposition has proved to be tremendously resilient and shown courage of conviction. In many ways it has saved India's democracy and shown Modi that he can be challenged and even humbled by denting his image of electoral invincibility," said journalist and political analyst Rashed Kidwai. The unwieldy grouping of more than two dozen opposition parties, called INDIA, was formed last year. Beset with ideological differences and personality clashes, what glued them together was a shared perceived threat, what they call Modi's tightening grip on India's democratic institutions and Parliament and his strident Hindu nationalism that has targeted the country's minorities, particularly Muslims.

Sunak and Starmer clash over tax and health in a debate as disruptor Farage roils the UK election



Web Desk LONDON
British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer sparred Tuesday over tax, the cost of living and the country's ailing health system in an inconclusive televised debate ahead of a July 4 election expected to make one of them the country's next leader. Sunak tried to boost his center-right party's dismal outlook by urging voters to back the stability of continued Conservative government. Starmer hoped to cement his status as favorite by arguing that Britain desperately needs change. Both acknowledged the country's many problems, from fraying public services to a broken immigration system. But neither could say outright, when asked, where the money would come from to fix them. Sunak stressed his stewardship of the economy, which has seen inflation fall to just over 2% from a peak of more than 11% in late 2022. He said should stick with him because his "clear plan" for the economy was working. Starmer said the election was a choice between more "chaos and division" with the Conservatives and "turning the page and rebuilding with Labour". Polls currently give center-left Labour a double-digit lead. To win, Starmer must persuade voters who previously backed the Tories that Labour can be trusted with the U.K.'s economy, borders and security. Speaking in front of a live audience on a sleek, futuristic set at the studios of broadcaster ITV in Salford, northwest England, both Starmer and Sunak appeared nervous.

Sports & Showbiz

Babar Azam advised to manage pressure by learning from Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli

Pakistan only managed to beat India in 2021 T20 World Cup and dominated arch-rivals with historic 10-wicket win



Pakistan's star batter Babar Azam has been advised by former national wicketkeeper Rashid Latif as the cricket realm's much-anticipated T20 World Cup clash between India and Pakistan is just days ahead in New York. Latif, a former national batter, urged Azam to learn from the Indian star cricketers Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli how to handle the game's biggest pressure moments. The 29-year-old Azam will lead the Green Shirts for the third time in the

T20 World Cup as he took his team to the semi-final in 2021 and then to the final in the following year where Pakistan suffered a defeat from Australia and England respectively. The Pakistani coach Latif believed that, as a captain, Babar has a long way to go as he still needs to learn how to handle the pressure because the match against India will invite much stress than the World Cup. While speaking with the Press Trust of India, Latif said Thursday:



Today's women are leading in every field of life Mir Tariq Talpur.

KARACHI (Staff Reporter)
America Pakistan Business Development Forum and Evthon 360 organizers and developers, eight teams from across the city participated in Empower HER Cricket League Season 1, including NICKVD Lions, Hamdard University, Newport Tigers, Shamsi Strikers, Trackpad Panthers, Agile Sky Tech, The Greenian Avengers and Maalir Women's Club teams were participated. Cricket fans from all over the world attended the event to watch the Empower Her Cricket League Season 1 and the Chief Guest of the event was Provincial Minister for Social Welfare Mir Tariq Ali Khan Talpur along with Empower HER Cricket League Founder & Tournament Director Muhammad Noman Ahmedani, Director Syed Nasser Wajahat, Director Dr. Aliya Kamal Ahsan and Advisor Mr Sameer Shamsi Wajahat on this occasion. Dr. Javed Akbar Syal, HOD Pediatric Cardiology Ziauddin Hospital Dr. Najma Patel, President of Go Read for Women Dr. Khaleeda Soomro, Chairman Khalid Shamsi Shamsi Ahsani, President Health AMPAK Dr. Zahid Hassan Ansari, President of Pakistan American Culture Center Syed Makhdoom Ali Riaz, President PCS Karachi Chapter Dr. Rajesh Kumar, CEO Mercury Knitwear Abid Majeed, CEO G Securities Dr. Anwar Usman G, CEO Olympic Group Abdul Karim Adhiah, Marketing Director Nabeed PK Mr Salman, and others also attended. Chief Guest Provincial Minister for Social Welfare Mir Tariq Ali Khan Talpur appreciated the initiative of America Pakistan Business Development Forum to promote women cricket in Pakistan and Global Secretary Syed Nasser Wajahat, Muhammad Noman Ahmedani, Sameer Shamsi, Shamir Khattak, Dr. Aliya Kamal Ahsan, Namira Mansoor, Danish Rizvi, Hamza Arsalan, Syed Arkan Rizvi, Anaya Ahmedani and Muhammad Usman Ghani congratulated on this successful conduct of Empower Every Cricket League while fully assured of their and Sindh government's support for the second season of the league. Provincial Minister for Social Welfare Mir Tariq Ali Khan Talpur also distributed prizes and trophies to the winning and runners-up teams on the occasion, Provincial Minister for Social Welfare Mir Tariq Ali Khan Talpur said that today's women are leading in every field of life and best measures are being taken to empower them. He said that half of the population of Pakistan consists of women, if they are given opportunities to advance, they can not only make their name and the country bright, but can also play an important role in the development of the economy. Tariq Ali Khan Talpur said America Pakistan Business Development Forum is trying to Empower women through which women.

Kate, battling cancer, may never return to royal duties: Report



(Web Desk)
Royal Princess Kate Middleton, who is battling cancer, may never come back to her royal duties, a US news portal has reported, citing sources. In a report, US Weekly said that she "will never come back in the role that people saw her in before," citing sources. The Princess of Wales was once front and centre on royal engagements with her husband, Prince William. The insider added that Kate is currently "re-evaluating what she's going to be able to take on when she comes back" after she underwent preventative chemotherapy as part of her treatment. Even royal expert Richard Fitzwilliams said that when Kate does return to her royal duties, "it will be (based) on medical advice, and it will be very carefully balanced". The report comes just weeks after a source claimed that Middleton, 42, may not appear publicly as a working royal for the rest of the year.

IND vs PAK: Poor turnout at key T20 WC clash sets off alarm bells



SportsDesk
The alarmingly low turnout of spectators at the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024 in the USA and West Indies, especially at the India-Ireland showdown on Wednesday, has laid bare flaws of the organizers' marketing strategy. Hundreds of empty seats in the stands mocked the players, which can partly be blamed on the high ticket prices set by the International Cricket Council (ICC). With a price tag of \$1000, the grandstands, such as the premium North and South were empty. Though no official attendance figures have been released, it is estimated that around 20,000 people were present during the match and many of them were dissatisfied for not getting the bang for their buck. Meanwhile, tickets for the match between Pakistan and the USA on Thursday (June 6) are yet to be sold. Diamond Club (\$10,000), Corner Club (\$2,750), and Premium Club Lounge (\$2,500) seats are still available. As the much-anticipated match between India and Pakistan on Sunday (June 9) approaches, concerns are heightened. The ICC has been urged to improve arrangements at the stadium in New York. Moreover, if the attendance stays the same in the forthcoming matches, particularly between India and Pakistan, the move to take the World Cup to the USA can safely be termed a disaster. "A lot depends on India vs Pakistan fixture. ICC will be left embarrassed if they don't manage to fill up the stadium for the marquee clash. The success of USA leg is majorly dependent on that match and there is now very little time left for the ICC to turn things around. I am sure the top brass will be very worried at the moment," says an industry source tracking development according to News18. Meanwhile, cricket fans are desperately waiting for the clash between India and Pakistan on Sunday (June 9) and the last time they played at the Narendra Modi Stadium in India during the T20 World Cup 2022, there were around 90,000 and 1,00,000 viewers in the ground.