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Chief Editor
Shah Muhammad Awan

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IMF to discuss \$7 billion bailout for Pakistan in August



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board is expected to convene in mid-August to discuss the \$7 billion bailout package for Pakistan.
A staff-level agreement between Pakistan and the IMF was reached on July 12.
Sources inside the Ministry of Finance indicate that the IMF board is expected to give its final approval within four to six weeks following the staff-level agreement. However, they added that Pakistan must secure external financing assurances before the board meeting.
Discussions on funding to address climate change and natural disaster risks are anticipated soon.
The IMF has indicated consideration of Pakistan's proposed request for climate financing.
Sources further disclosed that Pakistan must identify long-term priority projects related to climate change. The IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) programme offers affordable, long-term financing. To achieve these goals, Pakistan will need to collaborate with other global institutions, according to the Ministry of Finance.

CM Maryam Nawaz steps up child healthcare efforts

● CM Maryam Nawaz steps up child healthcare efforts



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE:
Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has said that the government is taking all steps to ensure healthcare facilities for every child. She was talking to a delegation of the Child Life Foundation, led by its Chief Executive Officer Dr. Ahsan Rabhani.
Both sides discussed the issues of healthcare facilities for children in Punjab. The delegation suggested to the CM to launch second shift at hospitals.
The delegates also shared ideas for cooperation with the Punjab government to improve basic healthcare infrastructure for children.
During the meeting, the issue of medical staff training was also discussed, aiming to enhance their capacity.
Besides issues of launching child health-related telemedicine and digital health services in remote areas were also discussed.
The CM said the health is the top priority of the Punjab government, and they are determined to save children's lives by extending better health services to them.
She told the delegation that 159 telemedicine satellite centers have been set up in government hospitals.

LHC Chief Justice Aliya Neelum seeks details of cases in Punjab



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Lahore High Court Chief Justice Aliya Neelum has sought details of cases related to Punjab.
During a bail application hearing of an accused identified as Imran, the chief justice directed the prosecutor general of Punjab to furnish details of cases registered in Punjab, the number of submitted challans, and the number of undertrial cases.
Chief Justice Neelum issued these directions to Prosecutor General of Punjab Syed Farhad Ali Shah.

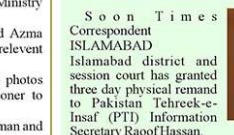
Azma Bokhari moves court against social media campaign



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has voiced concern over what she said selective justice.
Speaking to media outside the Lahore High Court on Thursday, she deplored that an obnoxious video was uploaded at social media sites against her and made viral by activists of a political party.
She filed a petition in the LHC, seeking action against the persons involved in malicious campaign against her. She made the Federal

Investigation Agency and the Interior Ministry respondents in the case.
LHC CJ Miss Aaliya Neelum directed Azma Bokhari to move FIA along with relevant evidences.
LHC ordered the removal of obscene photos from social media and directed petitioner to make amendment in the plea.
She said the LHC chief justice was a woman and "I do not ask for justice as a provincial minister but as woman."
Moreover, she said, some "terrorist sisters" of May 9 were eulogised and two of them were called the "daughters of nation".
"We are also daughters of nation. Who will deliver us justice? she asked while deploring that justice seemed to be meant for PTI only.
The videos of Hina Pervaiz Butt, Sania Ashique, and Marriyum Aurangzeb also were made viral on social, she said.
Bokhari said CM Maryam Nawaz was trying to provide protection to women and judiciary should also provide security to them.

Court grants three-day physical remand of Raof Hassan to FIA



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Islamabad district and session court has granted three day physical remand to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Information Secretary Raof Hassan.
Judicial Magistrate Muhammad Shabbir Bhatti announced the reserved verdict on the plea of The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) today.
PTI leader Raof Hassan and other accused were presented before court on completion of two days physical remand.
The FIA investigation officer requested the additional remand of the accused including Raof Hassan.
The FIA prosecutor informed

the court that the social media accounts of the accused haven't been recovered yet, and email accounts needed to be logged in.
The FIA prosecutor alleged that people were running WhatsApp groups for money and foreign individuals were also involved in anti-state activities.
The investigation officer stated that the evidence of fake social media accounts have been found on the mobile phones of

Imran Khan asks LHC to preempt his possible detention under military courts

Requests the court to keep his detention under civilian courts



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has filed an application in the Lahore High Court (LHC) against his possible detention under military courts in the May 9 cases.
The PTI founder has filed the application in the LHC through his counsel Aziz Karamat, making the federal government and inspector generals of police of all four provinces respondents.

Khan contended in the application that there was a possibility of handing over his cases to military courts in the May 9 cases.
The PTI founder requested the court to prevent any such happening and order the authorities to keep his detention in civilian courts in the May 9 cases.
He has been acquitted in cipher, Toshakhana, and illegal marriage cases. But he has been detained in another Toshakhana and May 9 cases.

Fawad Chaudhry's jail trial, indictment in ECP contempt case declared null and void



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has declared jail trial against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former minister Fawad Chaudhry null and void in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) contempt case.
The court has also annulled the indictment on Fawad Chaudhry in Adiala jail and order of jail trial in the ECP contempt case.
IHC Justice Saman Riffat Intiaz heard the ECP contempt case today and announced the verdict on an application filed by Fawad Chaudhry.
It is pertinent to note that a four-member commission, headed by ECP member Nisar Durrani, issued arrest warrant to Imran Khan and Fawad Chaudhry in the ECP contempt case on July 11.
ECP issued the bailable arrest warrant to Fawad Chaudhry adjourning the case hearing until August 7.
Imran Khan and Fawad Chaudhry were indicted in the ECP contempt case on January 3.

Pakistan welcomes "Declaration of Unity" by Palestinian factions; lauds China's role

She reiterated Pakistan's continued political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri people

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Pakistan on Thursday welcomed the "Declaration of Unity" signed by the Palestinian political factions in Beijing while recognizing and commending China's role in bringing the factions together for meaningful negotiations.
"Unity amongst the Palestinian people is of paramount significance in view of the ongoing war crimes against the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza, and the blatant disregard for international law by the Israeli occupation forces," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said at her weekly press briefing here.
Calling upon the international community to intervene immediately to bring an end to the ongoing illegal and incessant aggression in Gaza, she



reiterated Pakistan's support for the realization of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, their right of return to Palestine and the establishment of an independent state of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharfi as its capital.
Regarding the periodic report of the

Human Rights Committee in Geneva on India, she said during the proceedings, questions were raised about arrests under draconian laws like Public Safety Act and Public Security Act, and frequent suspension of mobile internet service in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.
"This demonstrates continuing concerns of the international human rights machinery about the dismal human rights situation in IIOJK. We call on the international community to take note of these human rights abuses by India in IIOJK and to bring an end to the suppression of the Kashmiri people," she said and reiterated Pakistan's continued political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri people.



Gilgit Khunjrab Motorway Game Changer

Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan has directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to setup priorities for the construction of highways and identification of new projects. He observed that there would be no compromise on the quality of construction of highways and roads so Chairman NHA should depute honest and competent officers for the projects. Chairing a high-level meeting of

the NHA here Thursday, the federal minister said that the real problem was the funds as just spending money was not a miracle so the Government departments have to take steps to raise their income. He further said that the officers of the NHA should take advantage of their abilities and expertise to develop a model of working on projects in other countries as well so that the annual income of the Authority could be increased. Regarding the construction of highways and roads in the

northern region, Abdul Aleem Khan said that the construction of the Gilgit-Khunjrab Motorway could prove to be a game changer by providing access to China and Central Asian States, similarly land connectivity through road and rail up to Gwadar is of very important. In the meeting, the federal minister was given a detailed briefing on the Gilgit Package including the construction of Gilgit to Chitral, Shandoor, Mansehra and other roads by NHA, on which Federal

Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that increasing the security and facilities on the highways would also enhance the number of tourists and traveling citizens. It was informed in the meeting that this year, the NHA will get additional funds of 23 billion rupees including the construction of new toll plazas and their functioning. The projects of NHA in the four provinces were discussed in detail and some important decisions were taken in this high level meeting.

Asif Ali Zardari-A political School!



Sharjeel Inam Memon

The 69th birthday of President Asif Ali Zardari of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is being celebrated today. This is the best opportunity to recognize his services for the stability of Pakistan, its democracy, and the well-being of its people, and to pay tribute to his heroic achievements. One of Asif Ali Zardari's great achievements is that, after the martyrdom of Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, he worked tirelessly for the survival and continuity of the Pakistan People's Party in very difficult circumstances. After the judicial killing of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the terrorists' aim in martyring Ms. Benazir Bhutto was to destroy the People's Party. The People's Party transformed the democratic struggle of the people of Pakistan into a powerful political movement in the 1960s and continues to lead this democratic struggle. The People's Party represents not only the unity of the people of Pakistan but also an institution of national unity. Preserving and strengthening it is undoubtedly a historic achievement for democratic and national stability. Another major achievement of Asif Ali Zardari is the restoration of the 1973 Constitution through the 18th Constitutional Amendment, which ensures the preservation of the Federation of Pakistan. This guarantee is provided by the federal parliamentary democratic system established in the constitution. Asif Ali Zardari transferred his presidential powers to Parliament under the 18th Constitutional Amendment for the sake of the country and democracy. Now, only Parliament has the authority to form, change, and dissolve governments. The 18th Constitutional Amendment has also significantly reduced opportunities for non-political forces to seize democratic power or interfere in the political process. It has granted greater provincial autonomy, ending the sense of deprivation among smaller federal units and strengthening the Federation of Pakistan. Another significant achievement of President Asif Ali Zardari is that he made crucial political decisions alongside the 18th Constitutional Amendment to address threats to Pakistan's security. He gave an identity to this federal unit by renaming the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This recognition ended the perception

that the province and its adjacent tribal areas were merely a 'buffer zone' in the geopolitical game. Asif Ali Zardari also identified these areas as distinct units through the Gilgit-Baltistan Reforms in 2009, which helped mitigate risks for Pakistan. Additionally, he not only apologized for past violations against the people of Balochistan but also introduced the 'Balochistan Rights Package' to integrate them into the mainstream political framework of Pakistan. Another great achievement of Asif Ali Zardari is his promotion of the politics of reconciliation in the country. Reconciliation is a fundamental philosophy of the Pakistan People's Party. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto himself drafted the party's 'fundamental document' at its establishment in 1967, with its first chapter dedicated to reconciliation. From 1970 to 2024, every election manifesto of the People's Party has included a chapter on reconciliation. The philosophy of reconciliation advocates that instead of engaging in conflict, political forces should agree on a political and democratic program and work together to advance democracy and people's rights. The way Asif Ali Zardari implemented this philosophy of reconciliation is unparalleled in modern history. Through his conciliatory politics, he achieved significant milestones for democracy and people's rights, including the unanimous approval of the 18th Constitutional Amendment. While pursuing reconciliation with political forces, he avoided confrontation with non-political forces or the establishment of Pakistan, and refrained from any kind of adventurous actions. He believed that conflicts and adventurous politics in third-world countries often damage political forces. Political and democratic evolution should not obstruct the necessary adjustments of state institutions. Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is continuing this tradition of reconciliation politics, opposing the traditional politics of conflict and bitterness. It is important to reference Asif Ali Zardari's historic speech in the National Assembly, where he stated that the era of divisive politics must end, and that we should not pass on a legacy of hate to future generations. Through his conciliatory approach, Asif Ali Zardari introduced prudence, tolerance, and politeness into politics, nurturing great traditions that will serve as a model for genuine political forces. In the political history of Pakistan, the name of Asif Ali Zardari will remain prominent among those great politicians who endured the hardships of long imprisonment. He was imprisoned for 11 years, facing numerous false

political cases and following the legal path to prove his innocence. He frequently appeared in different courts in a single day. At no stage did his determination or independence waver, nor did he compromise. He respected all state institutions, including the judiciary of Pakistan, and never claimed that, as the leader of a major political party, he was above the law. He never incited his party workers to attack institutions. Like Shaheed Bhutto, and thousands of other workers and leaders of the People's Party, he accepted court decisions. He avoided conflict with state institutions and did not drive the country into chaos. Instead, he continued his political journey with great resolve, working for the stability of Pakistan and democracy. Another significant achievement of his is the immense patience he demonstrated during the worst propaganda and media trial against him in history. He adhered to the belief that the position and status of any political leader are defined by history, not by the opponents' propaganda. Additionally, he advanced the main mission of the People's Party by delivering the fruits of the democratic struggle to the people. He continued the party's program of providing employment, housing, and other basic needs, redirecting financial resources to improve living standards and implementing plans to enhance the quality of life for the people. What Asif Ali Zardari has done for Pakistan and its people reflects his profound political consciousness. Born into a political family, his father, Hakim Ali Zardari, was a progressive and people-friendly politician. He maintained close relationships with progressive and democratic thinkers in Pakistan and provided financial support to people-oriented and progressive organizations and individuals. Hakim Ali Zardari's views on Pakistan's affairs were clear and impactful. Asif Ali Zardari inherited this political awareness, which was further refined through his association with the martyr Ms. Benazir Bhutto. His high political consciousness, prudence, integrity, and struggle have earned him the honor of serving as the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for a second term—a distinction no one else has achieved. Under his leadership, the People's Party government was established in Balochistan for the second time. Asif Ali Zardari will be remembered among those leaders whose political traditions will endure and from whom students of politics will continue to seek guidance. He is also a significant figure for political opponents, serving as a school of politics in his own right.

The Root Causes of Pakistan's State Failure



Rai Muhammad Zaka Ullah Khan

Pakistan faces many social, political, and economic problems, it's important to look at the historical reasons for its failures as a state. Much of the blame goes to the early leaders, especially Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League, who didn't have a clear plan for the new nation. Creating a state based on "Muslim identity" instead of shared culture, language, and values has turned out to be a big mistake. A nation can't be built just on religious identity. Nations are stronger when they share culture, language, and values. The state's attempt to impose a monolithic national identity based on religion has alienated various ethnic groups, weakening national cohesion and leading to internal conflicts. This thing make split between East and West Pakistan, which led to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, shows this clearly. The big cultural and language differences between Bengalis and West Pakistanis were overlooked in favour of religious identity, causing alienation and eventually separation. "According to Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad the identity crisis within Pakistan, stemming from its diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural composition. The state's failure to foster an inclusive national identity has resulted in ethnic tensions and separatist movements." The early leadership under Jinnah and the Muslim League lacked a clear vision of how to govern the newly formed state. That's why, even though he was secular, Jinnah often used religion to gain power and make religious leaders happy. In Nov 21 1945, He quoted in their speech Islam gives us a

complete code of life. It is not only religion but it contains laws, philosophy and politics. It contains everything that matters to a man from morning to night" "The Muslims demand Pakistan, where they could rule according to their own code of life and according to their own cultural growth, traditions and Islamic laws." At another time, He said Who am I to give you a constitution? The prophet of Islam had given us a constitution 1,300 years ago. We have to simply follow and implement it, and based on it we have to establish in our state Islam's great system of governance." While on the other hand He said in constitution assembly in 11 August 1947, during their speech, You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or cast or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State. We are starting with this fundamental principle: that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State, Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State. "It is hard to understand what Jinnah actually wanted for Pakistan whether he think a secular democratic state or a religious state. His speeches make it difficult to interpret Pakistan's identity. Jinnah's approach during the independence movement was to use Islamic identity as a unifying different ethnic groups in Muslims but that his ultimate vision for Pakistan's governance remained unclear and subject to interpretation. This reliance on religious identity for political legitimacy set a dangerous precedent. The Objectives Resolution of 1949, passed under Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, further entrenched the role of religion in the state's affairs. This

resolution, later becoming part of the 1956 constitution, facilitated the use of religion as a tool for political manoeuvring, ultimately leading to the exploitation of people's rights. And also the delay in creating a constitution led to political uncertainty. Without a clear legal and political framework, early governments struggled to establish effective governance and a sense of national unity. And the failure to establish a constitution allowed the civil and military bureaucracy to intervene in the political system. Several key players contributed to Pakistan's state failure like that the Muslim league leadership inability to establish a clear governing framework and their use of religious identity undermined the foundations of a secular, democratic state. And power vacuum created by the lack of a constitution allowed the military and bureaucracy to dominate the political landscape, stifling democratic development. And empowered by early political decisions, the clergy have wielded significant influence, often at the expense of progressive and inclusive policies. And also the most common reason failure of state is Muslim leadership alliances with feudal elites entrenched patronage politics and hindered social and economic reforms, perpetuating inequality and underdevelopment. A way forward to built Pakistan as a strong nation, it is essential to recognize the need for a democratic and secular state. A secular state ensures neutrality in matters of religion, allowing individuals the freedom to practice their beliefs without state interference. And a democratic and socialist state, which prioritize social welfare and equity, can help create a society where everyone has equal opportunities and access to resources. A secular, democratic framework can help Pakistan move past its identity crisis and build a cohesive national identity that respects and celebrates its diversity. It is through the promotion of shared cultural, linguistic, and value-based commonalities that Pakistan can hope to achieve lasting stability and development.

PIC Orders BISP to Disclose List of Govt. Employees Received Irregular Cash Transfers

Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad:

The Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) has directed the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) to publicly disclose the list of government employees, pensioners, and spouses of government employees who irregularly received cash transfers from the BISP program. This directive follows an appeal by citizen Saad Ullah, who exercised his right to information under the Right of Access to

Information Act, 2017. Saad Ullah's appeal sought a detailed list of government employees and pensioners who irregularly received cash transfers, including their names, grades, and the total disbursed amounts. He also requested similar information regarding the spouses of government employees and pensioners who received cash transfers irregularly. BISP initially did not respond to the information request,

prompting Saad Ullah to file an appeal with the Pakistan Information Commission. In its response to the PIC, BISP argued that the requested information was exempt from disclosure under sections 7 (g) and 16 (g) (ii) of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017. BISP further stated that 140,000 government employees had been excluded from the list of beneficiaries in 2019. However, the Pakistan Information Commission

rejected BISP's plea, asserting that the exemption claimed for those who received BISP allowances through deception was unjustified and contrary to the Act's preamble. The PIC has directed BISP to disclose the names of the irregular beneficiaries as requested by the appellant within 10 days. Failure to comply will result in penal proceedings against the concerned officers of BISP.

Commissioner asks citizens to remove encroachments within 10 days

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: Commissioner and Administrator Municipal Corporation Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti has appreciated the cooperation of citizens to make Sargodha city clean and beautiful. In his statement, he said that the process of constructing footpaths by the

traders in the block city is unprecedented in the country. He lamented that in almost all the blocks and other settlements of the city, citizens have set up encroachments outside their houses and business centers. They should remove all encroachments (ramps, garages, bathrooms etc.) within ten days. A fine of Rs. 100,000 and imprisonment of up

to three years can be imposed. The commissioner says that encroachments in the streets, markets and neighborhoods have ruined the beauty of the city, while in case of rains or any emergency there has also been an obstruction. Collaborate with the civic municipal corporation staff to make Sargodha city clean and encroachment free.

CM Maryam says accurate data to help provide relief to public



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz says correct data is crucial for the future and people will be provided relief at their doorsteps. Addressing the inaugural session of Social Economic Registry, CM Maryam said that she applauded the efforts of Mariyum Atrangzeb and the planning

ministry. She said that when she took oath in the month of Ramadan, she announced a package and provided it to the people at their doorsteps. "We started receiving complaints due to a lack of adequate data. We prepared complete information. The phone numbers were obsolete and wrong. There is 130 million population of Punjab and I don't know what number comes into the category of Social Economic Registry." Maryam Nawaz was of the view that the

BISP also needed to be updated. Ramadan packages were made on the basis of data of BISP and NADRA. She realized then that the government made decisions without information and data. She said they did not have adequate data of farmers who got registered 12 acres of their lands in order to evade taxes. The chief minister said she was not well aware of the data regarding homeless, those living on rents, and those on wheelchairs. She said she had opened helpline for all the projects and schemes. "Those who are not registered in schemes can help themselves by contacting helplines," she said. She said more than 5,000 registration centres had been established. "There is a well trained staff in the centre. Data collection is not an easy task. Many people cannot pay their electricity bills. We are introducing 4.5 million solar panels. Data is being received," she said.

PTI activist 'Neeli Pari' arrested for thrashing PML-N's Tahir Anjum

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE: Lahore Police on Thursday arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) worker Aneela Jutt alias 'Neeli Pari' for assaulting and torturing Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Cultural Wing President Tahir Anjum. Deputy Inspector General Operations Faisal Kamran said police raided a house in Lohari area in search of the woman and arrested her.



The stage actor came under attack from the female PTI worker when he was passing by the party's hunger strike camp outside the Punjab Assembly on Wednesday. The camp was established by PTI activists in support of their leaders. The enraged party worker ripped a sleeve of the PML-N leader's shirt while trying to drag the actor out of his vehicle, viciously pounding and cursing him. Aneela alleged that Anjum used to post derogatory videos to malign incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan, dubbing him a 'terrorist'. Videos of the incident flooded social media, showing the PTI activist hurling abuses at the stage actor as he fiercely fought to stay inside his car, with the sleeve of his right arm reduced to tatters. Some cops and bystanders intervened to stop

Aneela, but to no avail, as she refused to give up and resisted the security personnel, ignoring their warnings and entreaties to let Anjum leave the scene. After much rumpus, Anjum managed to flee the site. Later, speaking to journalists, the actor expressed outrage over the incident and claimed that the PTI's bullies did not even care that his children were also in the car with him. He slammed the PTI workers for resorting to 'hooliganism' like members of a 'terrorist outfit' and for buffeting him. Before leaving the scene, Anjum also denied posting videos against the PTI founder or doing anything illegal to trigger such an attack. The incident took place outside the Punjab Assembly building, where the Imran-founded party is staging its second token hunger strike protest after Islamabad, demanding the release of arrested PTI leaders.

Court grants three-day physical remand of Raouf Hassan to FIA

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: Islamabad district and session court has granted three day physical remand to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Information Secretary Raouf Hassan. Judicial Magistrate Muhammad Shabbir Bhatti announced the reserved verdict on the plea of The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) today. PTI leader Raouf Hassan and other accused were presented before court on completion of two days physical remand. The FIA investigation officer requested the immediate remand of the accused including Raouf Hassan. The FIA prosecutor informed the court that the social media accounts of the accused haven't been recovered yet, and email accounts needed to be logged in. The FIA prosecutor alleged that people were running WhatsApp groups for money and



foreign individuals were also involved in anti-state activities. The investigation officer stated that the evidence of fake social media accounts have been found on the mobile phones of the accused. Raouf Hassan was the head of the social media team and used to direct the social media team. The FIA prosecutor mentioned that the malicious campaigns against the judiciary and administration were being run through the party's social media accounts. The FIA prosecutor requested some time to scrutinise social media accounts by their technical expert of social media. Islamabad district and session judge extended the physical remand of Raouf Hassan and nine accused for three days by accepting the application of FIA investigation officer.

Punjab Bolster Efforts To Increase Birth Registration Through P&SH And NDHRA

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE: The Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) have bolstered to increase birth registration through the NADRA-P&SHD joint initiative. The P&SHD has taken a revolutionary step by integrating birth and death registration across Punjab. The PSHD signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NADRA to facilitate this integration at all Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) in the province. The signing ceremony was held at the PSHD committee room, 1-Birdwood Road, Lahore here on Thursday. The Minister for P&SHD Khawaja Imran Nazir, Special Secretary (Ops) Muhammad Iqbal and the Director of NADRA Col. (Retd.) Saqib Mehmood signed the accord. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for PSHD Khawaja Imran Nazir stated that digitalizing birth and death records at the primary healthcare level is a significant milestone for PSHD Punjab is the only province sharing this data directly with

NADRA, allowing citizens to obtain birth certificates promptly. Nazir emphasized the role of Lady Health Workers (LHW) in raising awareness among citizens. The digitization initiative, which includes record sharing with NADRA, will facilitate a paperless system. Nazir also announced that government hospitals now maintain digital records for all patients, including those in outpatient departments (OPD) and pediatric wards. He highlighted that these digital records will enable the development of better strategies for understanding the causes, factors, and prevention of diseases. Integrating data with the Local Government and the Community Development Department for birth and death certification will enhance the immunization coverage of newborns, particularly in underserved and lagging areas, thereby improving healthcare facilities in these regions. On this occasion, Director NADRA, Saqib Mehmood, emphasized the importance of digitizing birth and death data for future digital censuses. He commended the Department of Health for its efforts in digitizing patient records in government

hospitals, recognizing the significant impact this initiative will have on improving healthcare services and data accuracy. Earlier, Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Gondal, DDGHS, appreciated the efforts of PSPU and NADRA in achieving NHSP's goals. He reiterated NHSP's commitment to increasing access to quality health services for poor and vulnerable households in Punjab. He also acknowledged the efforts of the Provincial Minister and Secretary PSHD, Ali Jan, in enhancing primary healthcare services delivery across Punjab. He thanked the Chief Minister of Punjab for his unwavering support of the primary healthcare department. The ceremony was attended by DG Health Services (DGHS), Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Gondal, Special Secretary (Ops), M. Iqbal, Additional Secretary (Tech) Dr. M. Younas, Director, Director for the Policy and Strategic Planning Unit (PSPU), Muhammad Ahmed Khan, Director Project NADRA Col. Saqib Mehmood and other officials.

IHC CJ calls for adapting technology in legal profession

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq emphasized the growing role of technology in the legal profession and urged all members to adapt accordingly. Addressing a function in Islamabad, the chief justice acknowledged that judicial challenges persist and will continue. However, he noted that since 2023, many facilities have been provided to plaintiffs. He highlighted the advent of artificial intelligence and mentioned that notices will now be received through email and SMS, making the e-notice system more convenient for plaintiffs. Chief Justice Farooq stated that e-notices have been introduced in Islamabad, and online proceedings are also underway. He mentioned the inauguration of automation, which has simplified the compliance process for summons or notices. He added that a notice tracking system is being introduced in the judiciary and



information machine. The chief justice also addressed the pending matter of appointing new judges in Islamabad, assuring that it will be resolved soon. He welcomed the training programme for new lawyers. Furthermore, he urged the legal community not to sever their connection with books and the law. Chief Justice Farooq concluded by stressing the need to collaboratively address the problems faced by the common man, asserting that the bar is their home and they will work together to solve its issues.

Punjab imposes Section 144 amid PTI's call for protest

The decision has been taken to maintain law and order situation

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: The Punjab government has imposed Section 144 across the province for three days after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced protest on July 26. The Home Department, in a notification, said there would be a ban on rallies, sit-ins,



protests and rallies from July 26 to July 28. The Section 144 has been imposed to maintain law and order situation and protection of human lives and properties. The department said the decision has been taken in view of threats of terrorism, adding that public gatherings could be an easy target for militants.

NAB Amendment Ordinance 2024 challenged in IHC

14 years of imprisonment was a cruel act and ordinance should be revoked

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: The NAB Amendment Ordinance 2024 has been challenged in the Islamabad High Court (IHC). Advocate Azhar Saddique appeared before the Court on behalf of a citizen Malik Najjullah. President, cabinet secretary, Senate chairman and National Assembly speaker were made the parties in the case. The petitioner said the new amendment



ordinance was not even presented in the Parliament while remand of more than 14 days was violation of the human rights. He said that the 14 years of imprisonment

was a cruel act and the ordinance should be immediately revoked. The CJP stated that the ordinance was passed without the knowledge of the parliamentarians and is therefore against the law. The petitioner immediately sought the revocation of the amendment ordinance. On May 24, two ordinances were issued with prior approval of the acting president and Senate chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani.

Omar Ayub urges nation to prepare for new elections

Soon Times Correspondent RAWALPINDI: Opposition Leader in National Assembly Omar Ayub says the incumbent government has failed and the nation should prepare for the new elections. Talking to media on Thursday, the PTI leader emphasized that all CCTV footage from the May 9 incidents and Zaman Park should be disclosed, and deleting such footage constitutes a crime. Ayub said he met Imran Khan in a pleasant atmosphere at Adiala Jail.



"The PTI is the biggest political party in the country, and the nation should prepare for new elections for growth and development," he highlighted. He stated that the only solution to the country's issues is a new election. From the beginning, he claimed that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) misinterpreted the Constitution and called for the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner and the four provincial commissioners, suggesting Article 6 be imposed on the CEC.



Gaza ceasefire negotiations appear to be in closing stages, senior US official says

WASHINGTON
Negotiations on a ceasefire-for-hostages deal in the Gaza conflict appear to be in their closing stages and US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will discuss remaining gaps on Thursday, a senior US official said. The official, briefing reporters ahead of their talks, said the remaining obstacles are bridgeable and there will be more meetings aimed at reaching a deal between Israel and Hamas over the next week. Hamas-led fighters stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and taking 250 captives, according to Israeli tallies, triggering a war in which more than 38,000 people in Gaza have been killed.

Typhoon Gaemi sinks freighter off Taiwan, heads to China coast



Web Desk
TAIPEI/BEIJING
Typhoon Gaemi swept through northern Taiwan on Thursday, killing two people, triggering flooding and sinking a freighter offshore, before heading across the sea and into China where it is expected to dump more torrential rain. Gaemi made landfall around midnight (1600 GMT Wednesday) on the northeastern coast of Taiwan in Yilan county. It is the strongest typhoon to hit the island in eight years and was packing gusts of up to 227 kph (141 mph) before weakening, according to the Central Weather Administration. As of 8.30 am (0100 GMT), it was in the Taiwan Strait and heading toward Fuzhou in China's Fujian province.



Biden addresses US, as Trump and Harris trade barbs in reset presidential race

Momentum grew for the Harris campaign as ex-president Obama set to endorse her as party candidate

WASHINGTON
US President Joe Biden addressed the nation on Thursday for the first time since dropping his reelection bid, saying he decided to forgo personal ambition to save democracy in a seate Oval Office speech that contrasted with the rough-and-tumble campaign.
Shortly before the speech, Republican Donald Trump laid out Democratic rival Kamala Harris in his first rally since she replaced Biden atop the ticket, signaling a bare-knuckled campaign ahead of the Nov. 5 election.
Trump branded Harris a "radical left lunatic" after she had dominated the campaign the two previous days with withering attacks on him that pointedly raised his felony convictions, his liability for sexual abuse, and fraud judgments against his business, charitable foundation and private university.
Momentum grew for the Harris campaign as NBC News said on Thursday that former President Barack Obama planned to soon endorse Harris as the Democratic presidential candidate.
"Aides to Obama and Harris also have discussed arranging for the two of them to appear together on the campaign trail, though no date has been set," it said.
Biden said he believed he deserved to be reelected based on his first-term record, but his love of country led him to step aside.
"I decided the best way forward is to pass the torch to a new generation. That is the best way to unite our nation," Biden said, after having resisting calls from within the party to quit the race after his poor showing in a June 27 debate with Trump.
Biden, at 81 the oldest president in US history, was greeted with cheers, applause and music in the Rose Garden after the address, as his staff had converged on the White House for a viewing party.

US defends UNRWA after Israel moves to deem it 'terror group'



Web Desk
The United States has criticized an Israeli bill that would declare the UN agency for Palestinian refugees a terrorist organisation, saying that such efforts are "incredibly unhelpful."
"UNRWA is not a terrorist organisation, and we urge the Israeli government and the Knesset to halt the movement of this legislation," said State Department spokesman Matthew Miller.
He added that "the attacks that the Israeli government has levelled on UNRWA are incredibly unhelpful. They do nothing to advance the cause of getting humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza."
Israel's parliament, the Knesset, on Monday gave preliminary approval to a bill that designates UNRWA as a terrorist organisation and proposes severing all ties with the humanitarian agency. After passing its first reading, the legislation will go to a parliamentary committee for further deliberation.
The United States suspended its financial contributions to the agency after separate unproven Israeli allegations were made that some UNRWA staff were involved in Hamas's October 7 attacks. Since then, US lawmakers have prohibited Washington from releasing funds to the agency.

Frankfurt airport open again after climate activists block runway



BERLIN
Frankfurt airport, Germany's busiest, has resumed operations after suspending flights on Thursday morning when several climate activists blocked runways by gluing themselves to the tarmac.
Planes were able to take off and land again, the airport said on its website, but passengers were still advised to check on their flight status before setting off for the airport.
A spokesperson for Frankfurt, a vital international transit hub and one of Europe's biggest airports, said around 140 flights had been cancelled out of 1,400 planned on Thursday.
Last Generation climate activists said in a statement that six protesters had cut through a fence and had reached various points around the Frankfurt airport runways with posters reading "Oil kills". Images released by the group showed protesters in orange safety vests with their hand glued to the tarmac.
A federal police spokesperson said several climate activists were on the airport grounds.
The group, which wants the German government to pursue a global agreement to exit oil, gas and coal by 2030, has listed several countries across Europe and North America where similar disruptions are planned as part of a protest campaign that began on Wednesday.
In Norway, around a dozen activists blocked a part of the check-in area of the Oslo Airport, in a second day of actions, but there was no disruption of flights to and from the Norwegian capital, an airport official said.
Germany's Cologne-Bonn airport, the country's sixth-largest, suspended flights for several hours on Wednesday after climate activists glued themselves to a runway, while similar actions at other European airports had been foiled by authorities.
German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, whose ministry wants to punish unauthorized airfield access with up to two years in jail, called the action "dangerous, dumb and criminal."

Babar Azam drops one spot in Latest ICC Test rankings



(Web Desk) – Former Pakistan Test captain Babar Azam has fallen one position in the ICC Test batsmen rankings, while Harry Brook has made significant strides, reaching a career-best third place.
England's commanding 241-run victory over the West Indies in the second Test has led to notable changes in the latest ICC Men's Test Player Rankings.
Veteran Joe Root scored his 32nd Test century during the match, earning 12 additional rating points. This performance has brought him closer to the top spot, currently held by New Zealand's Kane Williamson. Root is now only seven points behind Williamson, and a strong showing in the upcoming third Test in Birmingham could see him reclaim the number one position.
Harry Brook also saw considerable advancement, climbing four spots to a career-best third place. His impressive century in the second innings at Nottingham allowed him to surpass prominent players including Babar Azam, Daryl Mitchell, Steve Smith, and Rohit Sharma.



Injured Coetzee out of South Africa's Test series against West Indies

(Web Desk)
He strained his left side during the USA's T20 franchise league, Major League Cricket (MLC).
South Africa suffered a blow as fast bowler Gerald Coetzee has been ruled out of upcoming Test series against the West Indies because of a side strain.
He will be replaced by Miguel Pretorius, uncapied at Test level but with the experience of 64 first-class games to his credit.
He strained his left side during the USA's T20 franchise league, Major League Cricket (MLC).
Coetzee, playing for Texas Super Kings, returned home to undergo assessments by the medical team.
Cricketer South Africa confirmed on Thursday that he was not adjudged fit to play the Test series starting on August 7.
Pretorius was last named in a South Africa squad in March 2021, for a T20I series against Pakistan, but he didn't get a cap. He also got a call in December 2020 for a Test series in Sri Lanka, but then injured his shoulder and could not debut.
Pretorius, 29, has grabbed 188 wickets at 27.50 in 64 first-class games. He is currently the leading wicket-taker for Somerset in this season's English County Championship, with 23 wickets.
South Africa kick off the Test series in Port-of-Spain, before moving to Providence for the second Test. Three T20Is follow, from August 24 to 28.
The Test squad
Temba Bavuma (capt), David Bedingham, Matthew Breetzke, Nandre Burger, Tony de Zorzi, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Dane Paterson, Dane Piedt, Kagiso Rabada, Tristan Stubbs, Ryan Rickelton, Kyle Verreynne, Migael Pretorius.

Teenage girl reaches Karachi to meet Kubra Khan



(Web Desk)
Police have recovered a missing teenage girl from Karachi who told law-enforcers she left home to meet Kubra Khan because she is her favourite actress.
According to police, the girl, 13, left her house to meet Kubra Khan. She didn't tell her parents and ran away.
She said she was very much inspired by television actor Kubra Khan and left her house to meet her.
Now the girl with help of Punjab police returned home. Police said the girl was innocent and she did what came to her mind. This incident also came to Kubra Khan's knowledge in London.

Hijab-wearing French sprinter faces exclusion from Olympics opening ceremony



French government and Olympics officials are seeking a solution to allow Muslim French sprinter Soukambha Sylla to wear her hijab at the opening ceremony while still complying with the country's secularism laws.
This effort comes after the 26-year-old member of France's 400-metre relay team recently took to her Instagram to reveal that her hijab — a head covering worn by many Muslim women — would prevent her from appearing in Friday's blockbuster opening ceremony.
She wrote: "You are selected for the Olympic Games, organised in your country, but you can't take part in the opening ceremony because you wear a scarf on your head."
Thousands of athletes, including some who wear a hijab, are placing an international spotlight on tensions in France over national identity and perceived discrimination against Muslims. Reuters reported.
France, home to Europe's largest Muslim minority, enforces laws to protect the principle of secularism under which state employees and school pupils are banned from wearing religious symbols and clothing in public institutions.
Rights groups say these rules effectively discriminate against Muslims.