

Daily SOON TIMES

ABC Certified

Simultaneously Publishing from Islamabad, Sargodha & Karachi

+92 321 888 1135

Punjab CM Maryam approves construction of new corridors

All three projects worth Rs210 billion would be completed by December 2025



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Tuesday approved construction of new corridors in Punjab. CM Maryam gave formal consent to make new corridors in the province in a special meeting presided over by her. It was decided in the meeting that two-way roads would be built from Sahawal to Chichavani, from Rajana to Layyah and from Shorkot to Chargah Wali jhang whereas one-way road from Depalpur to Vehari would be converted into a two-way road. All three projects worth Rs210 billion would be completed by December 2025 with the collaboration between the Punjab Government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz ordered

the start of construction on the new corridor in three months. All three corridors will be completed with the cooperation of the Asian Development Bank and the Punjab government. Maryam Nawaz said that the roads corridors connecting the big cities. The road corridor project will not only reduce travel difficulties but also contribute to economic development. A special meeting was held under the chairmanship of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in which approval was given to build new corridors in different cities. It was decided in the meeting that a two-way road will be built from Sahawal to Chichavani, Rajana to Layyah, Dipalpur to Wahari. The single road will be converted into a two-lane road, while a new two-lane road will be built up to Shorkot Jhang Chiragwali.

Imran moves ATC for bail in multiple May 9 cases



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Tuesday approached an anti-terrorism court for seeking bail in 12 cases related to May 9 incidents. The former prime minister submitted his bail pleas in the ATC through his lawyer Salman Safdar. The application said that the PTI founder was on the judicial remand in multiple cases whereas nothing had been found against him, adding that all the cases against him were based on mala fide intentions and were part of political victimisation. The application pleaded that the PTI founder's post-arrest bail be approved by the ATC. It must be remembered that the PTI founder had filed bail applications in the Jinnah House, Askari Tower and arson cases.

PTI's Raof Hasan sent on judicial remand in anti-state propaganda case



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
A court in Islamabad has remanded Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Raof Hasan and other suspects to a 14-day judicial custody in an anti-state propaganda case. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) presented Hasan before District and Sessions Judge Shafiq Bhatti, who denied the FIA's request for an additional five-day physical remand. Islamabad Police arrested Hasan during a raid on the PTI Secretariat, seizing a computer and other items. According to sources, authorities allege that the digital media cell at PTI's office had become a hub for international disinformation, where anti-Pakistan propaganda was being carried out in collaboration with enemy agencies. However, PTI condemned the raid, accusing law enforcers of seizing affidavits from MNAs and MPs as well as stand crucial for verifying party affiliations and could significantly impact the National Assembly's composition.

Army should reciprocate PTI's willingness to talk, says Imran

Says his party is ready to talk but army has not announced its representative

Soon Times Correspondent RAWALPINDI

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan said on Tuesday his party was ready for talks with army as they had never levelled allegations against the military but only criticised it. Speaking to journalists in Adiala Jail, the former prime minister said the PTI had mandated Mahmood Khan Achakzai for talks with army but no one was nominated from the other side. "We have complete trust on Achakzai," he said. Imran Khan said the first demand for negotiations was the return of the stolen mandate. The second demand is the release of arrested workers and quashing of cases. The third stage is saving the country,



which is not possible without clean and transparent elections, he made it clear. PTI founder wants nation to prepare for election in December, says Bhabhar. Responding to a question about Fazlur Rehman's call for resigning from assemblies, he said: "He is talking about the third stage." He also threw his weight behind the ongoing sit-in by the Jamaat-e-

Islami, saying he would direct party leaders to join the protest immediately. The PTI founder also talked about the May 9 incidents, saying the CCTV footage could prove their innocence. "If anyone from PTI is involved in May 9, he or she should be brought to justice." "I never engaged in violence during my 28-year political struggle," he said. He accused the government of trying to wipe out the PTI by pitting it against army, adding that both parties [PML-N and PPP] were about to vanish. Khan also clarified that he did not tender an apology to the NAB prosecutor as "I just told him I had no issue with him."

May 9 judicial commission will be the last nail in PML-N's coffin, says Barrister Saif



Soon Times Correspondent PESHAWAR
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Saif said on Tuesday that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was all at sea after the KP government decided to form a judicial commission on May 9 related incidents. He said in a statement that the PML-N especially Maryam Nawaz had been groaning after the announcement of the judicial commission of the KP government, adding that something fishy was going on in the rank and file of the PML-N. He went on to say that neither the PML-N led government wanted to form a judicial commission itself neither did it want to constitute one, citing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan's call for a judicial commission to probe May 9 incidents. He said that the PTI would come out victorious in May 9 cases as it did in reserved seats verdict by the apex court. He said that the judicial commission would be the last nail in the coffin of the PML-N. He reiterated that the "Form-47" government would not be able to survive.

Ji chief Hafiz Naeem Rehman blasts past governments for crippling IPP deals

Hafiz Naeem demands making IPP agreements public as Ji's sit-in enters fifth day



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Jamiat-e-Islami (JI) leader Hafiz Naeem Rehman criticized previous governments, including those led by former military ruler General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf, PPP, PML-N, and PTI, for making agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) that are detrimental to the public. Addressing a press conference at the Ji sit-in at Rawalpindi's Liaquat Bagh, which entered its fifth day, Hafiz Naeem highlighted that the protest has sparked hope among the 250 million citizens of Pakistan.

The current electricity bills, he argued, are unaffordable, impacting children's education and household expenses. Hafiz Naeem demanded that the IPP agreements be made public, accusing the government of incompetence and corruption for failing to renegotiate these deals. Welcoming and thanking PTI's supreme Imran Khan for supporting the protest, Hafiz Naeem noted that the PPP initiated the IPP agreements while the PTI government negotiated with 35 companies. FBR employees, he claimed, are involved in corruption amounting to one trillion

rupees annually. He urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to announce that no minister or government official would use vehicles larger than 1300cc, asserting that such a move could save 1350 billion rupees. Criticizing the government for not implementing this policy, Hafiz Naeem accused the rulers of living in luxury at the expense of the public. The banking sector, Hafiz Naeem asserted, benefits the most from Pakistan's economic downfall, emphasizing that interest (usury) is prohibited in Islam. The country's debt, both domestic and foreign, amounts to 65 trillion rupees, with nine trillion rupees

National Assembly meets today to take up 43-point agenda



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
The National Assembly session has been called at 5pm today (Tuesday) to take up 43-point agenda, including the introduction of the Election Act Amendment Bills. The agenda for the session has been released by the National Assembly secretary. The bill will be presented by MNAs Bilal Azhar Kyani and Zain Jaffer as a private member bill.

Proposed amendment to the Federal Employees Benevolent Fund and Group Insurance Act and the Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Bill will also be discussed. MNA Noor Alam Khan is set to introduce a bill to repeal the Contempt of Court Ordinance, 2003. Pakistan Peoples Party MNAs Syed Naveed Qamar and Nafisa Shah are expected to propose amendments to the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business. Mutahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan lawmaker Nikhat Shakeel Khan will move a resolution to take steps to reduce the expenses on Hajj.

Devastating rains in Kohat claim lives of 11 family members

Rescue efforts continue as the community mourns the devastating incident

Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad
Eleven members of a family, including women and children, drowned in Kohat after torrential rains flooded their basement. The incident occurred in the Old Bazar Khel area of Dara Adam Khel, as heavy rainfall continued across Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Rescue 1122 officials reported that the family was trapped in the basement of Amjad's house when rainwater inundated the area. Emergency teams responded swiftly, recovering 11 bodies and initially searching for a missing girl, who was later found. Governor Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim, expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives. Continuous heavy rains in Peshawar, Swabi, and surrounding

areas have caused severe flooding, with roads and low-lying areas submerged. In Swabi, torrential rain damaged crops, including tobacco and maize, and disrupted electricity supply as numerous feeders tripped. Additionally, the roof of a livestock shed in Kotha village collapsed, trapping two bulls, which were later rescued by emergency teams. A day earlier, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) reported that all rivers and streams in Punjab are experiencing normal water flow amidst the ongoing monsoon rains. According to the PDMA spokesperson, the water flow in dams and barrages is also stable. The current water level in Mangla Dam is at 58%, while Tarbela Dam is at 69%. Indian dams on the Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi rivers have water levels up to 39%. The monsoon rain pattern is expected to continue until July 31. The PDMA has forecasted more monsoon rains in most districts of Punjab over the next 24 hours.

World needs to unite against human trafficking: Mohsin Naqvi

World needs to unite against human trafficking: Mohsin Naqvi



ISLAMABAD
Federal Minister for Interior Affairs Mohsin Naqvi said on Tuesday that developed and developing countries must stand against the heinous crime of human smuggling. In a message on the World Day Against Human Trafficking, the interior minister said that unemployment, poverty, and unequal distribution of wealth were the major reasons behind human trafficking. Naqvi said that human trafficking was experienced mostly in the less developed countries. He further admitted that organised groups active in human trafficking operated in Pakistan as well. He also mentioned the role of FIA in the matter, which is actively monitoring the criminal activities with utmost seriousness. He said the FIA had arrested several human traffickers. Naqvi reiterated that world needed to work in unison to stop human trafficking. The interior minister further said that the smugglers played with thousands of lives, resulting in many individuals losing their families.

Operations Against Terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has praised the security forces for their successful operations against terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that

the security forces have sent 5 terrorists to hell in joint intelligence-based operations. Mohsin Naqvi paid tribute to Constable Abrar Hussain of the Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa Police, who was martyred while bravely fighting the terrorists. Interior Minister said that we salute the sacrifice rendered by Constable Abrar Hussain.

He highlighted said that the brave personnel of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have played a leading role in the war against terrorism.

Climate Change in Asia



Shabana Mehmood

Climate change is a global phenomenon that deeply impacts every region, with Asia being one of the most vulnerable areas. The region is experiencing a range of climate-related challenges, from heat waves to extreme rainfall events, leading to increased risks for communities and ecosystems. In this article, we will discuss the impacts of climate change in Asia, focusing specifically on heavy rainfall events, and explore safety precautions and adaptation strategies that can be implemented to mitigate the risks. Impact of Climate Change. Asia is already feeling the impacts of a changing climate, with increasing temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events. According to a recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the region is projected to experience more intense rainfall events, leading to increased risks of flooding, landslides, and other natural disasters. One of the key impacts of climate change in Asia is the increasing frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall events. These events can lead to devastating consequences, including flooding, infrastructure damage, and loss of life. In recent years, countries in the region have experienced numerous record-breaking rainfall events, such as the devastating floods in Japan in 2018 and the catastrophic floods in Kerala, India in 2019. Safety Precautions for Heavy Rainfall. In the face of increasing heavy rainfall events, communities in Asia must take proactive measures to protect themselves

and their assets from the risks of flooding and landslides. Here are some safety precautions that can be implemented to mitigate the impacts of heavy rain: 1. Early Warning Systems: The establishment of robust early warning systems is essential to alert communities about impending heavy rainfall events. These systems can help to evacuate people from high-risk areas, coordinate emergency response efforts, and reduce the loss of life. 2. Infrastructure Improvements: Investing in resilient infrastructure is crucial to withstand the impacts of heavy rainfall events. This can include building flood defenses, improving drainage systems, and relocating infrastructure away from flood-prone areas. 3. Land Use Planning: Proper land use planning is vital to reduce the risks of flooding and landslides. This can involve zoning regulations, building codes, and the preservation of natural ecosystems that provide important flood mitigation functions. 4. Community Preparedness: Communities should be prepared to respond to heavy rainfall events by developing emergency response plans, conducting drills, and educating residents about how to stay safe during floods and landslides. 5. Climate-Resilient Agriculture: The impacts of heavy rainfall events on agriculture can be severe, leading to crop damage, soil erosion, and loss of livelihoods. Implementing climate-resilient agricultural practices, such as water conservation, crop diversification, and soil conservation, can help to mitigate these risks. In addition to safety precautions for heavy rain, implementing adaptation strategies is essential to build resilience to the impacts of climate change in Asia. Some key adaptation strategies that can be implemented include: 1. Sustainable Water Management: As heavy rainfall events become more frequent, it is crucial to manage water resources

sustainably. This can involve implementing water harvesting techniques, using irrigation systems, and conserving water to meet the increasing demand for agricultural, industrial, and domestic use. 2. Ecosystem Restoration: Restoring and conserving natural ecosystems, such as wetlands, forests, and mangroves, can help reduce the risks of flooding and landslides. These ecosystems provide important services like flood control, soil stabilization, and biodiversity conservation. 3. Climate-Resilient Urban Development: Cities in Asia are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of heavy rainfall events, due to high population density and inadequate infrastructure. Adopting climate-resilient urban planning practices, such as green infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems, and green roofs, can help reduce the risks of flooding and improve the quality of life for urban residents. 4. Disaster Risk Reduction: Investing in disaster risk reduction measures, such as early warning systems, emergency response plans, and community preparedness, is crucial to reduce the impacts of heavy rainfall events on vulnerable communities. Climate change poses significant challenges for Asia, particularly in the form of heavy rainfall events that can lead to devastating consequences for communities and ecosystems. By implementing safety precautions, such as early warning systems, infrastructure improvements, and community preparedness, and adopting adaptation strategies, such as sustainable water management, ecosystem restoration, and climate-resilient urban development, the region can build resilience to the impacts of climate change and protect the well-being of its people. Governments, stakeholders, and communities must work together to address the challenges of climate change and ensure a sustainable future for Asia.

\$101 million US Aid to Counter Chinese Influence



Amjad Rana

The US administration has provided financial support to Pakistan to combat terrorism, particularly during major counterterrorism operations. The US administration has consistently provided financial and logistical support to Pakistan in its fight against terrorism, particularly since the post-9/11 period. Key operations, such as Operation Al-Mizan, Rah-e-Haq, Rah-e-Rast, Rah-e-Nijat, Zarb-e-Azb, and Radd-ul-Fasaad, have benefited from substantial US assistance in the form of military aid, equipment, and intelligence sharing. The Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act and various budget allocations have underlined the strategic importance of Pakistan in regional stability and counterterrorism efforts. In this regard, the recent request for \$101 million in the 2024 budget aims to continue supporting Pakistan's counterterrorism operations, strengthen its democracy, and stabilize its economy. This reflects the ongoing US commitment to reducing Pakistan's overreliance on Chinese investments and addressing shared security threats in the region. Through these efforts, the US seeks to bolster Pakistan's capabilities to combat terrorism and promote long-term stability and democratic governance. The US administration has requested a budget of \$101 million for Pakistan to support the strengthening of democracy, combating terrorism, and stabilizing the economy. US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu presented this request to the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, highlighting Pakistan's ongoing challenges and opportunities. The funds are aimed at supporting democratic values,

fighting violent extremism, and aiding economic reforms and debt management. This request aligns with the broader US strategy for the South and Central Asia region, where a total of \$1.01 billion in foreign assistance is sought to counter Chinese and Russian influence and address terrorism. Specifically, \$585.7 million is designated for South Asia, marking a 4.8% increase from the previous budget. The budget request also reflects concerns about Pakistan's heavy reliance on Chinese investments. The US aims to reduce Islamabad's dependence on Beijing, emphasizing that US investments represent the future compared to China's past investments. Currently, Pakistan is a significant recipient of Chinese development finance, primarily in the form of loans rather than grants. Beijing has previously extended financial assistance to Pakistan, including rolling over \$2.4 billion in loans to help avert a financial crisis. While the War on Terror (2001 - 2008) Post-9/11 Period, After the September 11 attacks, Pakistan became a key ally in the US-led War on Terror. The US provided significant military and economic assistance to Pakistan to support counterterrorism efforts. Coalition Support Funds (CSF) The US reimbursed Pakistan for the costs incurred in military operations against terrorist groups. Between 2001 and 2008, Pakistan received around \$11 billion in CSF. Key Operations Operation Al-Mizan (2002 - 2006) Pakistan Army's series of military operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to combat foreign and local militants. The US supported these efforts through military aid and intelligence sharing. Operation Rah-e-Haq (2007 - 2009) Aimed at clearing militants from the Swat Valley. The US provided logistical support and funding to enhance the capacity of Pakistani security forces. Operation Rah-e-Rast (2009) Launched to retake control of the Swat Valley from the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The US increased its support, recognizing the strategic

importance of the operation. Operation Rah-e-Nijat (2009) Targeted the Mehsud tribe in South Waziristan, a stronghold of the TTP. The US provided financial aid and military equipment to Pakistan to strengthen its counterterrorism capabilities. Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act (2009) Also known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act, this legislation authorized \$7.5 billion in non-military aid to Pakistan over five years (2010-2014). The aim was to support economic and social development, as well as counterterrorism efforts. The Act included strict conditions on Pakistan's use of the funds, particularly focusing on enhancing civilian oversight of the military and ensuring that funds were used effectively to combat terrorism. Recent Developments (2015 - Present) Operation Zarb-e-Azb (2014 - 2017) A major offensive against militants in North Waziristan. The US provided substantial support in the form of military aid, equipment, and intelligence. Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad (2017 - Present) An ongoing operation aimed at eliminating the residual and latent threat of terrorism across Pakistan. The US has continued to support these efforts through various forms of assistance. Financial Assistance In recent years, the US has maintained its support for Pakistan's counterterrorism operations, though the focus has shifted towards ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of funds. Reduction and Resumption of Aid At times, the US has suspended or reduced aid to pressure Pakistan to take more decisive action against terrorist groups. However, aid has been resumed when Pakistan has taken significant steps to address US concerns. Recent Budget Request (2024) \$101 Million Request As part of the 2024 budget, the US administration has requested \$101 million for Pakistan to strengthen democracy, fight terrorism, and stabilize the economy. This reflects ongoing US support for Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts and broader strategic objectives.

Finance ministry forecasts CPI inflation to reach single-digit

ISLAMABAD: Web-Desk. Pakistan's finance ministry on Tuesday released its monthly outlook for July stating that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation reached cusp of the single-digit range. "The CPI inflation was recorded at 12.6 per cent on year on year (YoY) basis in June 2024, compared to 11.8pc in the previous month and 29.4pc in June 2023. The average annual inflation fell to 23.4pc in FY2024 from 29.2pc last year," the report stated. The monthly outlook noted that Pakistan's economy was moving towards stability in FY2024, tractor production reached 45,529, marking a 43.5 percent increase from FY2023. Tractor sales also rose by 47.0 percent to reach 45,494. Agricultural credit disbursement reached Rs 1,972.8 billion during Jul-May

manufacturing is set to take off," it noted. "In June 2024, CPI inflation reached the cusp of the single-digit range while the external account position improved due to contained imports resulting from prudent fiscal and monetary management, while exports and remittances increased significantly," the report said. To further strengthen stability, the government has recently reached a staff-level agreement with IMF on a 37-month Extended Fund Facility Arrangement (EFF) for \$7 billion, it says. According to the report, in FY2024, tractor production reached 45,529, marking a 43.5 percent increase from FY2023. Tractor sales also rose by 47.0 percent to reach 45,494. Agricultural credit disbursement reached Rs 1,972.8 billion during Jul-May



FY2024, 26.0 percent up from previous year. However, due to the cobweb phenomenon, the sowing area of cotton decreased in Punjab and Sindh provinces. The large scale manufacturing (LSM) expanded 1.0 percent during Jul-May FY2024, compared to last year's

contraction of 9.6 percent. In May 2024, LSM registered growth of 7.3 percent year-on-year (YoY) and 7.5 percent month-on-month (MoM), driven by strong performance in food, apparel, leather, coke & petroleum products, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and

machinery and equipment. The government managed to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.9 percent of GDP in Jul-May FY2024, from 5.5 percent last year. The primary balance showed a surplus of Rs 1,620.5 billion (1.5% of GDP) during Jul-May FY2024, in contrast to

a deficit of Rs. 112.0 billion (-0.1% of GDP) last year. This was achieved by increasing revenue and keeping non-interest spending in check. During Jul-May FY2024, net federal revenues reached Rs. 6,202.6 billion, a 49.0 percent increase from the previous year, driven by tax and non-tax collections. Non-tax revenues saw a 90.0 percent increase. In FY2024, the current account deficit shrank to \$0.7 billion compared to \$3.3 billion last year. Goods exports increased by 11.5 percent, reaching \$31.1 billion, while imports remained at \$53.2 billion, compared to \$52.3 billion in FY2023 (0.9% growth). This has led to a goods trade deficit of \$2.1 billion, down from \$24.8 billion last year. Pakistan's total liquid foreign exchange reserves were recorded at \$14.7 billion on July 12, 2024, with the State Bank of

Pakistan's reserves at \$9.4 billion. During FY2024, the money supply (M2) increased by 15.5 percent, compared to 14.2 percent in the previous year. This increase was driven by the growth in the banking sector's net foreign assets by Rs 540.6 billion, contrasting with a decrease last year. In May 2024, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, through its 24 partner organizations, disbursed 28,913 interest-free loans amounting to Rs 1.38 billion. From February 2023 to March 2024, the government disbursed Rs 83,683 billion to beneficiaries for business under the Prime Minister Youth Business & Agriculture Loan Scheme. Despite limited fiscal space, the government is taking various measures to mitigate the impact of inflation on vulnerable populations.



District Coordination Committee Terms Punjab Govt's Socio-Economic Registry Program Revolutionary Measures

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: The District Coordination Committee has termed the Punjab government's Socio-Economic Registry Program and Agriculture Transformation Plan as revolutionary measures for economic development and has emphasized the need for full publicity to ensure the representation of the common man in these programs. The coordination committee has unanimously approved the resolution condemning the murderous attack on CO Health and to carry out equal work in all the constituencies from the funds released to the construction departments. The meeting of the coordination committee was held under the chairmanship of Conveyor Sardar Asim Sher Makin on Tuesday in the conference room of the Deputy Commissioner's office. Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Anrangzeb Haider Khan, MNA Dr Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti, MP Rana Munawar Ghos, Barrister Taimur Khan and other heads of provincial departments participated in the meeting. The coordination committee expressed concern over the attack of the disease on the Kinko crop and directed the Ministry of Agriculture to take emergency measures. The Coordination Committee thanked Chief Minister Punjab for establishing Sargodha Waste Management Company. In the meeting, Deputy Director Development Mehtab Yasin informed about the development schemes and allocated funds of various departments for the current financial year. The Deputy Director of Agriculture gave a detailed briefing on the features of Kisan Card and Agriculture Graduates Internship Programme. Deputy Director Local Government Babar Ranjha gave a briefing about the operational setup of the Waste Management Company and the Punjab Socio-Economic Registry. CO Health Dr. Asad Aslam informed about the Health Monitoring Committee. The committee emphasized on ensuring foolproof security of CO Health and other government officials.

BoK & Abasin Art Council Celebrate Creativity At Award Distribution Ceremony



Soon Times Correspondent Peshawar: Bank of Khyber (BoK), in collaboration with the Abasin Art Council, hosted an Award Distribution ceremony at the BoK Head Office in Peshawar. The event was a celebration of creativity and culture, and featured the work of some of the most talented artists in the region. Irfan Saleem Awan, MD/CEO (A) & CFO of BoK, congratulated the winners and appreciated the efforts of the Abasin Art Council and committee members for ensuring the integrity of the selection process. He also spoke about the bank's commitment to fostering creativity and supporting the regions cultural landscape. Muhammad Asif, Group Head HRD, provided insights into the bank's long-standing relationship with the Abasin Art Council team. He highlighted the enduring partnership, which dates back to the 1990s, and reaffirmed BoK's support for the council's initiatives in literature, drama, music, and fine art.

event was a celebration of creativity and culture, and featured the work of some of the most talented artists in the region. Irfan Saleem Awan, MD/CEO (A) & CFO of BoK, congratulated the winners and appreciated the efforts of the Abasin Art Council and committee members for ensuring the integrity of the selection process. He also spoke about the bank's commitment to fostering creativity and supporting the regions cultural landscape. Muhammad Asif, Group Head HRD, provided insights into the bank's long-standing relationship with the Abasin Art Council team. He highlighted the enduring partnership, which dates back to the 1990s, and reaffirmed BoK's support for the council's initiatives in literature, drama, music, and fine art.



Well-known librarians have a meeting at Gujar Khan

Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad: The National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) has successfully completed a research study titled Gap Analysis Study on Safe & Environmentally Sound Ship Recycling (SENSREC) program in Pakistan in compliance with the Hong Kong Convention (HKC) 2009 through systematic capacity-building. This research work was sponsored by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Pakistan & Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway. The first edition of the report was handed over to Miss Hellenne Amussen, Political Secretary of the Royal Norwegian Embassy to Pakistan, in a simple ceremony held at the NIMA Head office in Islamabad. The study identifies current gaps and proposes actionable strategies. It is pertinent to mention that the implementation of the HKC Convention is mandatory for all ship breaking yards by 26 June 2025.

Free Medical Camp organized by "Elaaj Int'l Hospital" at Khanna Pul Islamabad.



Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad: A free medical camp was organized on behalf of Elaaj International Hospital, in which a large number of people participated in the health issues. Experienced doctors in the fields of medicine, dermatology, international medicine, ear, nose and throat diseases and gynecology provided free check-up and laboratory test facilities to a large number of men and women. The internal central leadership worked hard and other members completed all the stages of the full day medical camp in a very organized manner. Separate arrangements were made for check-ups in the building. Hospital management personnel were providing guidance to the ladies and gents at the reception and registering the patients prior to the check-up, said on this occasion that our aim is to serve the deserving people and we consider it as a religious duty. During the free medical camp, senior doctors provided counseling about sugar blood pressure and cholesterol while ENT specialist nose ear throat and cardiologists continued to provide guidance on cardiologists, along with gynecologists who checked up the patients wholeheartedly and gave very useful advice. Appreciated and thanked the work of the Elaaj International Hospital administration.

providing guidance to the ladies and gents at the reception and registering the patients prior to the check-up, said on this occasion that our aim is to serve the deserving people and we consider it as a religious duty. During the free medical camp, senior doctors provided counseling about sugar blood pressure and cholesterol while ENT specialist nose ear throat and cardiologists continued to provide guidance on cardiologists, along with gynecologists who checked up the patients wholeheartedly and gave very useful advice. Appreciated and thanked the work of the Elaaj International Hospital administration.

IESCO Power Suspension Schedules For Today

Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 31st July 2024, From 06:00 AM To 10:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, T&T, Anguri, Treat, Bari Imam, Comsat, Chatta Bakhtawar, Park Enclose, Kandraggaan, Tramri, ISI, Rahara, PHA-II&I, Kurry Road, CM Pak Zong, Isolation Hospital, Athal, Shalpur, T&T, Bhara Kahu-I&II, NIH, Golf City, I-11/I, I-11/3, Metro, PHA-II, I-10/I Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Ameer Hamza Colony, Madina Colony, Noon, E-Block, Badhana Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Jail Park-I, Mehboob Shaheed, Park View, Pindi Board, Jail Park, Car Chowk, Qureshiabad, Garja-I, Hayal, Gulistan Fatima, Ranyal, Murat Feeders, Attock Circle, NASTP, Qaziabad, Colonel Sher Khan, Wahadat Colony, Kohsar Colony, Sarkal, Chakral, Ahdi, Dhoda Feeders, From 05:00 AM to 10:00 AM, GSO Circle, Pindi Point, Barian, Public Health, Gharial, PAF, Upper Top, Laura, Patriata, Company Bagh, Cecil Roaster, Laura-II, MCM, TDCP, Kohala, Sunny Bank, Kaldana, PC, Dhirkot, Chamankot, Ringla, Dana Express, Dhalha, Solhava Minhasa, Nimble, Birut Kazmi, Dhirkot-II, DESTO, PAECE, Shah Dearn feeders and surrounding areas will remain closed. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

Bidari Institute Demands For Timely Elections Of Local Govt



Soon Times Correspondent Mianwali: Organization Bidari specially attended. Abdul Manan from Sargodha, Malik Ghazanfar Tiwana from Khushab, Muhammad Noor Din, Malik Ahmed Khan from Bhakkar, Sumera Shaheen, Mukhtiar Shaheen from Mianwali, Muhammad Javed from Layyah participated in the meeting. Adnan Chauhan, Advocate of Bidari Institute,

told the participants of the meeting that the purpose of the meeting is for all the social organizations to campaign for the holding of the local body elections as soon as possible in their respective areas, including local politicians, ex-councillors, media, lawyers' organizations. Through them convey your message to the Punjab government that the development of all the districts and regions of the province and the development of the Punjab province in particular is hidden in the timely elections of the local governments. Therefore, the process of local government elections should be completed as soon as possible so that people's local level problems can be solved at their doorsteps. It was decided in the meeting that a divisional level seminar will be organized in Sargodha in this regard and its recommendations will be shared with the Punjab government.

SNGPL Intensifies Crackdown on Gas Theft: Disconnects 47 Illegal Connections

Soon Times Correspondent Lahore: In a determined effort to curb gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has conducted extensive raids across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad, resulting in the disconnection of 47 illegal gas connections and the imposition of Rs 3.3 million in fines. In Lahore, the SNGPL team disconnected 18 illegal connections and levied fines totaling Rs 2.72 million. Additionally, 01 FIR was lodged against those involved in gas theft. The Multan team disconnected 16 illegal connections, while the Faisalabad team disconnected 02 connections and imposed fines amounting to Rs 0.04 million. In Bahawalpur, the team disconnected 04 illegal connections and 03 connections involving the use of compressors. The Gujranwala team disconnected 02 illegal connections, imposing fines of Rs 0.09 million. In Sheikhupura, 02 illegal connections were disconnected with fines totaling Rs 0.49 million, and 01 FIR was lodged against gas thieves.

Venezuelan protests against Maduro spread, opposition says it has proof it won the election



CARACAS
Venezuela's opposition said it had voting-tally proof it had won the election claimed by President Nicolás Maduro, as anti-government protests erupted across the country, with police firing tear gas to disperse protesters in the capital Caracas.
Protesters took to the streets after Maduro was declared winner of the disputed poll, including near the presidential Miraflores palace in Caracas.

Many staged "cacerolazo" demonstrations across the country - a traditional Latin American protest in which people bang pots and pans. Some who later marched took their pots and pans with them.



Kerala's Wayanad landslide: At least 41 dead, more rain predicted

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, India
At least 41 people were killed and scores injured after landslides in the hills of India's southern Kerala state, local media reported, with rescue operations obstructed after a main bridge collapsed in the region.
State Health Minister Veena George said that over 70 people were injured and the Indian Express reported that many people are likely to have been washed away in the Chaliyar river.
"The situation is serious. The government has pressed all agencies into rescue," state Forest Minister A K Sasendran told Reuters after the landslides in the Wayanad district of the state.



55,000 Sikhs vote for Khalistan against Indian opposition

The voters and participants of the event cheered slogans in favor of Khalistan.

CALGARY (Canada)
Over 55,000 Sikhs exercised their right to vote in the Khalistan Referendum held in Calgary, Canada under the auspices of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ).
At the conclusion of the referendum, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, the leader of SFJ organisation in a video-link address to Sikh community vowed to take their homeland by the "power of vote".
He said India believed in targeting Sikhs and mentioned the killing of Hardeep Singh.
He, however, warned that if justice was not given by the courts, the Sikhs would resort to "Khalisi Insaaf" (Khalisi Justice). He pointed out that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government were responsible for the massacre of Sikhs in Punjab.
"But for Sikhs, the Khalistan Referendum is the right weapon," he said. Gurpatwant Singh Pannun also raised slogans of "Delhi Banay Ga Khalistan" (Delhi will become Khalistan).
The voters and participants of the event cheered slogans in favor of Khalistan.

Russian navy starts major drills involving most of its fleet

MOSCOW
Russia's navy began planned exercises involving most of its fleet in the Arctic and Pacific oceans as well as the Baltic and Caspian seas, the defence ministry said on Tuesday.
Russia is considered by most military analysts to have the world's third most powerful navy after those of the United States and China, and Russia has a significant ballistic-missile nuclear submarine fleet.
The Russian drills, which include 20,000 personnel and 300 ships, will test the readiness and capabilities of the navy at all levels, the ministry said.
The drills will include over 300 combat exercises including practicing the use of anti-aircraft missiles, artillery, anti-submarine weapons and "passive interference, it added.
"Units and formations of the Russian Navy have



begun conducting planned exercises in the operational zones of the Northern, Pacific and Baltic Fleets, as well as in the area of responsibility of the Caspian Flotilla," the ministry said. "The main purpose of the exercises is to check the actions of the military authorities of the navy at all levels, as well as the readiness of the crews of ships."

France shifts Western Sahara stance, seeking closer ties with Morocco



RABAT, Morocco
France has backed Morocco's autonomy plan for the disputed Western Sahara, shifting a decades-old position and adding itself to a growing list of countries to align with Morocco as a United Nations-mediated peace process remains stalled.
In a letter to King Mohammed VI, France's President Emmanuel Macron called the plan that Morocco proposed in 2007 to offer the region limited autonomy under its sovereignty that "only basis" to solve the conflict. The shift deals a blow to the pro-independence Polisario Front, which has for decades claimed to be the legitimate representative of the indigenous Saharawi people.
"The present and future of Western Sahara fall within the framework of Moroccan sovereignty," Macron wrote in a letter made public on Tuesday. "France intends to act consistently with this position at both national and international level."
France's departure from its historic position is a major victory for Morocco and follows similar shifts from the United States, Israel, Spain and a growing list of African nations which which Morocco aims to deepen trade ties.
The move was preemptively rebuked by both Morocco's regional foe Algeria and the Polisario Front in the days leading up to the publication of the letter.
The Polisario's Mohammed Sidati accused France of acting at odds with international law and backing Moroccan expansionism as its influence wanes throughout Africa.
"Whatever hardships Morocco tries to impose on us with the support of France, the Saharawi people will continue to stubbornly defend their rights until they obtain the definitive departure of the Moroccan aggressor from their territory and general recognition of the legitimacy

Sports & Showbiz

PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi set to become ACC President

With upcoming ACC presidency in 2025, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi to manage three key positions simultaneously



Islamabad Sports Desk
The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) is set to welcome a new leader, with Mohsin Naqvi, the Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), poised to assume the presidency.
According to media reports, Naqvi's term will commence in January 2025 and span two years, marking a significant moment for Pakistan's influence in regional cricket administration.
The ACC presidency is appointed based on a rotation policy among member countries. Currently, Jay Shah, the secretary of the Indian board, holds the position.
Shah was granted a one-year extension to his term this January, ensuring continuity in leadership and allowing for a smooth transition when Naqvi takes over in 2025.
In addition to his role as PCB Chairman, Naqvi also serves as Pakistan's Interior Minister. With his upcoming presidency at the ACC, he will be managing three significant portfolios, reflecting his extensive experience and leadership capabilities.
The official announcement confirming Naqvi's presidency is anticipated to be made at the next ACC meeting, scheduled for October-November.



Brazilian Olympic swimmer expelled for rule violation involving boyfriend

Web Desk
Brazilian Olympic swimmer Ana Carolina Vieira has been sent home from the 2024 Paris Olympic Games after allegedly breaking athlete village rules by leaving with her boyfriend, fellow swimmer Gabriel Santos.
While Santos received a warning, Vieira has been removed from the Games and has shared her side of the story.
Vieira participated in the women's 4x100 metre freestyle relay on 27 July, with the Brazilian team finishing 12th in the heats.
Following the event, she and Santos reportedly left the Olympic Village without authorization to visit the Eiffel Tower, leading to the Brazilian Olympic Committee (COB) deciding her fate based on social media posts.
In a tearful video posted on Instagram, Vieira expressed her distress: "I left there and left my materials. I didn't know what to do. My things are there [in the Olympic Village]. I went to the airport in shorts." She further explained her difficult situation, noting, "I have had no access to anything. I have not been able to speak to any one. They told me to contact the COB channels. But how am I going to get in touch?"
Vieira revealed plans for legal action, asserting her intent to defend her character and nature. "I will speak to my lawyers. I promise to tell everything. I am sad, nervous, but with peace of mind because I know who I am. I hope to be able to defend Brazilian women's swimming with great pride."
The COB issued a statement explaining their decision, citing acts of indiscipline and disrespectful behaviour from Vieira.

Jennifer Garner gets stuck in elevator for over an hour



Web Desk
Jennifer Garner was having a fun outing at Comic-Con San Diego before she found herself stuck in an elevator at the Hard Rock Hotel on Saturday (Jul 27).
The 52-year-old actress, who was at the convention to promote her reprisal of the role of Elektra in the upcoming film Deadpool & Wolverine, documented the ordeal on her Instagram.
Garner shared a series of videos capturing the moments she and several others were trapped in the elevator. The first responders arrived after an hour and 12 minutes.
In the initial video, just two minutes into being stuck, Garner addressed her followers, saying, "Hey guys, um, we're stuck on this elevator." She humorously added, "I could use a Wolverine. I could use a Deadpool."

Sainz to move from Ferrari to Williams in 2025



LONDON
Ferrari's Carlos Sainz will race for Williams next season after signing a multi-year deal, the Formula One team said on Monday in a major coup for a team currently ninth in the championship.
The Spaniard, who will be teammate to Alex Albon in place of U.S. racer Logan Sargeant, is leaving Ferrari at the end of the year to make way for Mercedes' seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton.
Former champions Williams said the 29-year-old winner of three races had signed a two-year agreement with options to extend. "It is no secret that this year's driver market has been exceptionally complex for various reasons and that it has taken me some time to announce my decision," said Sainz in a statement.
"However, I am fully confident that Williams is the right place for me to continue my F1 journey and I am extremely proud of joining such a historic and successful team. "The ultimate goal of bringing Williams back to where it belongs, at the front of the grid, is a challenge that I embrace with excitement and

positivity." Sainz, who had also been of interest to Sauber/Audi and Renault-owned Alpine, said he was convinced Williams had "all the right ingredients to make history again".
Ferrari team boss Fred Vasseur, who was previously principal of Sauber and Renault before the French team rebranded as Alpine, said Sainz had made a good choice.
"I am pleased that Carlos will be joining Williams Racing from next season," he said in a statement.
"It's a team with a great history and legacy, founded by an enlightened man with an ambitious vision, so I know Carlos will feel at home there. "I have great respect for (Williams principal) James (Vowles) and I am sure Carlos will make a valuable contribution to the team."
Alpine are considering switching in 2026 to the same Mercedes engines used by Williams while Sauber recently replaced principal Andreas Seidl with former Ferrari boss Mattia Binotto.
Sainz's decision makes it more likely that Italian rookie Andrea Kimi Antonelli will join Mercedes as Hamilton's replacement since they can no longer place him at Williams to learn the ropes as they did with George Russell.