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Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood, others acquitted in Protest case



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Islamabad's district and session court has acquitted the former PM and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and other PTI leaders accused in a case registered at Aghra police station. The court announced the reserved verdict on the acquittal pleas filed by PTI founder Imran Khan and Judicial Magistrate Yasir Mehmood acquitted Imran Khan, PTI leaders including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Sheikh Rashid, Shehryar Afridi, Faisal Javed, Raja Khurram Nawaz, Ali Nawaz Awan and Assad Qaiser. Sardar Masroof Khan and Ansar Kiyani representing Imran Khan, Sheikh Rashid and others presented the arguments in the case. It is pertinent to note that Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood, Faisal Javed and others booked for protest in Aghra police station against Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision.

Ex-senator Hidayat Ullah among three killed in Bajaur



Soon Times Correspondent BAJAUR:
At least three people including former senator Hidayat Ullah were killed in a "remote-controlled" bomb explosion targeting a vehicle in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district on Wednesday, according to police. The incident took place in Bajaur's Damadola village where the former senator's vehicle was targeted via a remote-controlled device. Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP) Bakht Munir said. Hidayat, who was a former independent senator from erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), was killed in the bomb explosion along with two others, he added.

PTA proposes mandatory local registration for YouTube, Netflix, WhatsApp in Pakistan



Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad
The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has proposed a new regulatory framework requiring all Over-The-Top (OTT) services, including YouTube, Netflix, WhatsApp, Facebook, and X (Twitter), to register locally for a period of 15 years. According to a 14-page draft available on its website, the PTA recommends that OTT Communication Services operating in Pakistan obtain a 15-year license from the regulatory body. Malahat Obaid, the spokesperson for PTA, told Geo Fact Check that the draft paper has been published to solicit feedback from stakeholders, with a deadline for public feedback set for July 10.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif directs restructuring of food department

Maryam committed to making healthcare accessible to every Punjab citizen



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz expressed displeasure with the officers of the Food Department for presenting wrong flour prices. Maryam Nawaz presented flour prices in the meeting. The prices in the briefing of the Food Department were different from the market prices. It was decided to determine the flour prices according to the category of Pakistan Quality Control Standard. Maryam Nawaz directed the restructuring of the food department. She also ordered to take legal action against the corrupt elements besides a

mechanism for digital monitoring of the officers of the food department. The CM said that she would not allow to enhance the prices of flour. She said that mafias are doing their work and the departments are sleeping. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has reaffirmed her commitment to making healthcare accessible to every citizen in Punjab. Chairing a meeting on reforms in the health sector, the chief minister instructed that construction and repairs of health centres must be completed by March this year. During the meeting, it was decided that mandatory biometric attendance in health centres, tehsil and district hospitals would be implemented.

Chaotic party must be ashamed of rowdiness in the premises of Punjab Assembly, Azma Bukhari

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Punjab Minister for Information and Broadcasting and PML-N leader Azma Bukhari has responded to Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) party, opposition in the Punjab Assembly, saying, "anarchic party must be ashamed of rowdiness in the premises of Punjab Assembly. She claimed that opposition party members in the assembly didn't support them, they gathered people defecated in the election for the protest. She hit out at the opposition party for the protest against the



incumbent Punjab government, referring to them as the terrorists of May 9 who were involved in the mischievous acts in the assembly for four months. She lambasted the opposition party for holding protest at the Punjab Assembly gate. "people involved in objectionable language inside the assembly are repeating the same outside the assembly." Faced incompetent government

for running the house who themselves handed over the house to a dictator speaker for four years. Azma Bukhari recalled the suspension of her membership during the former Punjab Assembly speaker Pervez Elahi tenure, asserting, the most suspensions in the Punjab history happened during the opposition tenure. She affirmed that her party faced the dictatorship, bullying and oppression of the opposition party for four years. The PML-N leader asserted that her party always followed the due right of protest considering parliamentary and ethical values. She commended the Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmed Khan for respecting and giving time to the opposition party. Azma Bukhari insisted that her party faced the incompetent government for four years.

In meeting with Putin, PM for expanding barter trade between Pakistan, Russia



(Web Desk) Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has emphasised the need to overcome financial and other banking issues to expand barter trade between Pakistan and Russia. In an exclusive meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Astana on Wednesday, he said Pakistan has long business relations with Russia. He recalled that Pakistan used to import a lot of machinery and goods from erstwhile Soviet Russia and export textile and leather goods under barter. The prime minister further said the two countries can certainly enhance trade, which is at the moment, touching one billion dollars. He also commended the Russian

President for promoting cooperation in the field of energy at his request. He added that Pakistan has received a shipment of oil from Russia and needs to move further in this direction. As regards bilateral relations between Pakistan and Russia, Shehbaz Sharif said these ties have been on the positive trajectory over the last many years and this is a matter of great comfort for the two countries. "Our relations stand on our own strength as neither our relations are driven by any geopolitical contingency nor these are impacted by our ties with other countries," he added. The prime minister, on the occasion, also expressed the desire to work closely with President Vladimir Putin to further cement bilateral relations.

Ji emir Hafiz Naeem announces "Haq do Awaam ko" movement



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Jamai-i-Islami emir Hafiz Naeem announced to start "Haq do Awaam ko" movement. Speaking at a press conference in Islamabad, the Ji chief said that his party would start a "historical sit-in" the capital against the government to raise voice for a common man who, he said, was suffering the most from recently passed budget. He said that the Ji would lodge its protest along with other parties were full of deep splits. He censured the government for oppressing the salaries class in the budget. "I want to ask Shehbaz Sharif why he hasn't imposed taxes on landlords. We want to ask you why you aren't blocking the SIMS of landlords and only blocking those of masses," he bemoaned. He lamented that people were giving taxes on everything, adding that the government was dropping bomb on the masses in form of electricity bills. Speaking about deteriorating security situation in country, the Ji chief deplored that now people were left to fend for themselves.

PTI rift: Imran Khan admits there are groups in party, set to meet 'both factions'

Ex-PM believes US resolution was not "interference"; reiterates stance on Donald Lu's intervention

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) incarcerated founder Imran Khan has admitted to rifts, grouping within the party and will be meeting both factions tomorrow in Adiala jail. Refuting reports of any forward bloc within the PTI, Khan, while speaking to reporters in a courtroom at the Adiala facility, stressed that there were no major differences within the party. The PTI founder's remarks came as the former ruling party has been hit with internal turmoil as leaders are speaking against each other with the PTI's core committee also rejecting the existence of any division earlier this week. Last month, the party's Secretary-General Omar Ayub stepped down as Secretary-



general of the party to focus on his role as National Assembly Opposition leader instead. Ayub's resignation came amid reports of rifts in the ranks of the PTI with sources telling Geo News that 27 PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) lawmakers deliberated on the option of resignation from the National Assembly in protest against the party's top leadership. Of the 27, the insiders had said 21 of its lawmakers hinted at forming a forward bloc over top leadership's inability to secure the release of party founder from jail, the sources added. However, Ayub's resignation has since been rejected by the PTI's parliamentary party which was further followed by the party's core committee asking him to withdraw his decision to step down from the party's coveted post. It is to be noted that PTI's

Putting his weight behind Ayub, the former premier said: "Omar Ayub has sacrificed immensely for the party and has seen a lot of hard times. His services to the party are unforgettable." However, when asked about whether former federal minister and ex-party member Fawad Chaudhry had sent him a meeting message and his continuous criticism of the PTI's current leadership, Khan chose not to respond. Fawad had recently blamed the PTI's current leadership for being a hurdle in the jailed PTI founder and other leaders' release from jail due to lack of political strategy. The ex-federal minister also responded to the PTI leader's criticism that those who parted ways with Khan in the aftermath of the May 9 mayhem have now started speaking in his favour as the "tough time" for the embattled party has now come to an end.

prominent leader Sher Afzal Marwat in May, was issued a show-cause notice after he had refused to work with Ayub and others. Furthermore, a PTI report has held the firebrand leader responsible for a scuffle between the leader of the opposition and workers which took place outside the judicial complex in Islamabad when a

district and sessions court turned down Khan and his spouse's pleas seeking suspension in their sentences in adda case. Last week, Marwat also demanded the resignation from Shibli Faraz, saying that the party would only then be freed from the "qubza mafia". Founder backs Ayub, remains silent on Fawad

BISP is a beacon of hope

Chairman BISP expressed views during a media talk. Rubina Khalid addressed misconceptions about BISP, stating that the program does not make people beggars. Instead, it aligns with global social security initiatives aimed at uplifting the poor. She highlighted that BISP embodies the vision of Shaheed Mohterma Benazir Bhutto for women's empowerment and criticized past attempts to rename the program as acts of intellectual dishonesty. She announced a new initiative in collaboration with NEVTTTC to provide technical skills training to deserving women and their families, aiming to improve their lives and integrate them into

the economy. This initiative will help them play a significant role in the country's economic development. Addressing complaints about fund deductions from deserving women, Rubina Khalid revealed that BISP has introduced a new payment system involving six banks to ensure transparency in fund disbursement. She added that stipends are now distributed through designated payment campsites, with BISP staff regularly monitoring the distribution process to resolve any issues promptly. Rubina Khalid mentioned that President Asif Ali Zardari and Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have issued special instructions to ensure that

the rightful recipients receive their benefits with dignity. BISP is consulting with the State Bank of Pakistan to open bank accounts for all deserving women, enabling them to receive their stipends without compromising their self-esteem. She warned against fraudulent elements exploiting innocent women in BISP's name and announced that BISP is working with the Ministry of Information Technology on a digital solution to curb fraud. She reiterated that 8171 is the only official BISP number and urged people to contact the BISP helpline at 080026477 for any complaints. Rubina Khalid also briefed journalists on BISP's core initiatives, including Unconditional

Cash Transfer, Benazir Kafaalat, Conditional Cash Transfer programs, Benazir Taleemi Wazaf, and Benazir Nashonuma. During the event's Q&A session, Rubina Khalid stated that BISP currently supports over 9.3 million of the poorest families, identified through a scientific method without human intervention. These households are re-surveyed every three years based on their economic situation, ensuring that those with improved conditions are excluded and more deserving households are included. She emphasized that BISP's main focus is on human resource development, aiming to provide trained individuals for employment both in Pakistan and abroad.

"Mineral deposits of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa"



Tariq Khan Yousafzai

Allah Almighty has given Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular and all Pashtuns in general such light in the form of natural landscapes that add to its beauty and charm - go to any country in the world, the beautiful valleys of Pakistan. It is found in hot deserts, deep seas, icy rocks and vast deserts, and the blessings that have been expressed in this country of God are impossible to find in any other country in the world. According to local media and reports, there are more than 10,000 billion dollars worth of natural resources on Pashtun land, including Balochistan's natural resources, coastal areas and geographically important areas. And even there is no mention of unrest on the state writ stake as much as it is regarding these areas. At present, Kaacha area is connected with India. No, while the situation in the Pashtun Baloch land is different, in this regard, in the southern Pashtun areas, where oil and gas, chromite, fluorite, marble or emerald, coal, uranium, gold, copper, nephrite, etc. There are vast reserves of nephrite ore in the corner i.e. currently Shaban Qaheer, Qamar Din, Loralai, Harmai Shahr, Sibi, Daki white North Kirk Swat has 70 million carats of the best emeralds and 220 carats are worth \$4000 to \$6000 in the market. It is up to 40 tons of fluorite was extracted from Khyber in one year. 65000 million mcf of gas was extracted from Kirk in six months. 1935 tons of nephrite was extracted in Mohmand this year. Malakand has 200 million tons, Swabi block has 100 million tons of marble. Mohmand has 1,360,000 tons of marble exported. Chitral, South Waziristan and South Pashtunkhwa produce 640,000 kg of Chalcozera annually, which fetches Rs 18 million

every year, which is controlled by an organization. Pashtunkhwa homeland is full of blessings. While there are millions of tons of marble and other metals in the areas of South Pashtun Khwaja from Bostan to Zhub, while their agriculture, livestock and gardens can be exported not only to the entire country but also to neighboring countries. If it is reviewed, with a small part of its reserves, many countries like Pakistan can be changed into the most prosperous in the world. And as much water as the Baloch belt is from the sea. By saving ten billion dollars spent on imports, he could get many times more dollars by exporting, but that would have been the case. Because these areas have the worst unrest in history. And all the time the state has to take the help of the army in these areas. It is justified about the areas rich in these natural resources that a neighboring country has a hand in it, while now it is also being said that it also includes the Khawarij, whose elimination is mandatory wherever it is. Presently, the satisfactory answers to the questions of Pashtun Baloch are not coming out due to which it is impossible to utilize these resources. Among these many questions, one question is that if Pakistan is with India, which has occupied the power of occupied Kashmir. And India has been made equal to all the angry forces against the integrity of Pakistan, that is, India is responsible for all the unrest in the country. If there can be negotiations instead of war, then how can these matters be talked about in the form of operations instead of negotiations while staying within the country's constitution, at that time the parliament or the leaders kept away from the parliament were invited for negotiations, can be. By which the country can start its stalled journey towards peace and prosperity and surpass the advanced countries in the region. In this regard, if the constitution can be suspended for dictatorship, then a new For social contract because Parliament cannot suspend

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Jifkhar Uddin Anjum

Pakistan is facing numerous economic challenges, one of the most pressing being its rapidly increasing budget deficit. The budget deficit, which occurs when a country's expenditures surpass its revenues, has been a persistent issue for Pakistan. This deficit has far-reaching implications, affecting everything from inflation rates to foreign investment and ultimately the quality of life of its citizens. To grasp the severity of Pakistan's budget deficit, it is essential to understand its components. The budget deficit arises when the government's expenditures exceed its revenues. These expenditures include public sector salaries, defense spending, infrastructure projects, social services and debt servicing. On the revenue side, the government relies primarily on taxes, both direct (income tax, corporate tax) and indirect (sales tax, customs duties), as well as non-tax revenues like profits from state-owned enterprises. In recent years, Pakistan's budget deficit has ballooned to alarming levels. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23, the budget deficit for the fiscal year 2022-23 was estimated at 7.9% of the GDP, one of the highest in the country's history. This deficit is rapidly increasing, for fiscal year 2024-25 it is estimated to 8% of GDP which sky high, but the equation is not so simple it is actually the 45% of the total budget and 82% of the net income. This escalating deficit poses severe risks to the country's economic stability and growth prospects. Several factors contribute to Pakistan's increasing budget deficit. Pakistan has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in the world. Structural weaknesses in the tax system, widespread tax evasion and a narrow tax base are significant challenges. The informal economy, which constitutes a large portion of the overall economy, remains largely untaxed. A substantial portion of the budget is allocated to defense spending and debt servicing. Given Pakistan's geopolitical environment and historical security concerns, defense spending remains high. Moreover, the country has a significant debt burden, both domestic and foreign, leading to substantial interest payments. The government provides various subsidies, particularly in the energy sector, to support consumers and

The Tremendously Increasing Budget Deficit of Pakistan and Solutions.

industries. While necessary for social stability, these subsidies put additional strain on the budget. Furthermore, many state-owned enterprises operate inefficiently, incurring losses that the government has to cover. Investments in infrastructure, education and health are crucial for long-term growth. However, these expenditures add to the fiscal burden in the short term. Balancing developmental needs with fiscal discipline is a delicate task. Slow economic growth limits the government's ability to generate revenue. Factors such as political instability, security concerns, and inadequate infrastructure have hindered economic growth, exacerbating the budget deficit. The increasing budget deficit has several adverse implications for Pakistan's economy and its citizens. To finance the deficit, the government often resorts to borrowing from the central bank, leading to an increase in the money supply. This can result in higher inflation, eroding the purchasing power of the public. Persistent budget deficits lead to an accumulation of public debt. As the debt burden grows, a larger portion of the budget is required for debt servicing, leaving less for developmental and social expenditures. Large deficits can undermine investor confidence, leading to capital flight and depreciation of the national currency. A weaker currency makes imports more expensive, further fueling inflation. High deficits and debt levels can deter foreign and domestic investment. Investors seek stable economic environments, and persistent fiscal imbalances create uncertainty. Budgetary constraints often force the government to cut spending on essential social services like education, healthcare and social safety nets, adversely affecting the quality of life. Addressing Pakistan's budget deficit requires a multifaceted approach, focusing on both increasing revenues and rationalizing expenditures. Here are some potential solutions: Comprehensive tax reforms are crucial to expanding the tax base and increasing revenue. This includes broadening the tax net to include the informal economy, reducing tax evasion through stricter enforcement and simplifying the tax code to improve compliance. Introducing progressive taxation, where higher-income individuals and profitable corporations pay a fair share, can also boost revenues. Improving the efficiency of state-owned enterprises and reducing losses is vital. This can be achieved through better management, privatization of loss-making entities and introducing performance-based incentives. Additionally, reducing subsidies and targeting them more effectively can save significant resources. Effective debt management strategies are essential

to prevent a debt trap. This includes renegotiating debt terms, seeking concessional loans and exploring debt relief options. Strengthening fiscal responsibility and limiting non-productive borrowing can also help manage the debt burden. Rationalizing public expenditures by prioritizing developmental projects with high economic returns and reducing non-essential spending is critical. Implementing zero-based budgeting, where each expense must be justified, can ensure efficient use of resources. Stimulating economic growth is fundamental to increasing revenues and reducing the budget deficit. This can be achieved through structural reforms to improve the business environment, investing in infrastructure and promoting sectors with high growth potential, such as information technology, agriculture and manufacturing. Corruption drains public resources and undermines economic stability. Implementing stringent anti-corruption measures, enhancing transparency and strengthening institutions can improve fiscal discipline and resource allocation. Attracting foreign investment can provide a significant boost to the economy. This requires creating a stable macroeconomic environment, improving infrastructure and offering incentives to investors. Strengthening property rights and enforcing contracts are also crucial. While rationalizing expenditures, it is essential to protect vulnerable segments of society. Strengthening social safety nets, improving targeting mechanisms and ensuring efficient delivery of services can mitigate the impact of fiscal consolidation on the poor. Pakistan's increasing budget deficit is a pressing challenge that requires immediate and sustained attention. The deficit, driven by low tax revenues, high defense and debt servicing costs, subsidies and inefficient public sector enterprises, poses significant risks to the country's economic stability and growth prospects. Addressing this issue demands a comprehensive approach, focusing on tax reforms, public sector efficiency, debt management, expenditure rationalization, economic growth, anti-corruption measures and social safety nets. By implementing these solutions

Pakistan can reduce its budget deficit, stabilize its economy and set the stage for sustainable growth and development. It is imperative for policymakers to take bold and decisive actions to ensure a prosperous future for the country and its citizens. The journey towards fiscal stability will be challenging, but with determination and strategic planning, Pakistan can overcome its budget deficit and achieve economic resilience.

Pakistan Information Commission Orders Higher Education Commission to Finalize Actions on Scholarship Misuse

Sooni Times Correspondent Islamabad: In a significant directive aimed at ensuring accountability and transparency, the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) has ordered the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to expedite and finalize actions regarding the misuse of scholarships and the breach of public trust. The order comes in response to an appeal by citizen Azmat Khan, highlighting the need for immediate governance measures. The appellant has sought list of scholars who went abroad on HEC scholarships over the past decade. Specifically, the list should include

details of scholars from 01-01-2013 to 31-12-2023, distinguishing between those pursuing M.Phil and PhD programs. Additionally, the list should identify students who did not return or complete their study programs within the stipulated time period and detail the actions taken against them by the HEC. In its response to the appeal, HEC cited Section 7(g) of the Right of Access to Information (RTI) Act, 2017, asserting that the sought information is exempt from disclosure as it could potentially lead to the harassment of individuals, particularly female scholars. Instead, HEC provided cumulative statistics for the period

from January 1, 2013, to December 31, 2023. According to these statistics, a total of 3,091 scholars proceeded abroad on HEC scholarships. Out of these, 1,126 scholars successfully completed their studies, while 1,810 are still pursuing their education. However, 65 scholars completed/did not complete their studies and did not return to Pakistan after completing their programs. HEC in its response has expressed strong concerns regarding the scholars who either did not complete their degree programs or did not return, stating that legal proceedings have been initiated against them.

Pak-US Infantry Rifle Company Exchange Exercise-2024



Soon Times Correspondent
Rawalpindi:
Pakistan-United States Infantry Rifle Company Exchange Exercise-2024 is a bilateral joint exercise in Counter Terrorism domain to exchange tactical skills at combating menace of terrorism at sub unit level. Two weeks long exercise commenced on 29 Jun 2024 at National Counter Terrorism Centre, Pabbi with participation of Infantry companies from both sides. The exercise is aimed at sharing Counter Terrorism experiences besides refining drills/procedures vital for Counter Terrorism operations. The scope of Exercise envisages attaining marksmanship skills during urban warfare by understanding best practices adopted at sub unit level. The inaugural event was witnessed by General Officer Commanding Kharian Garrison.

Construction work of Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Hospital has started: Bharath



Soon Times Correspondent
Sargodha:
Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced the construction of hospitals on which the construction work has started.

The construction work of Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Hospital in Sargodha has started. These views were expressed by Provincial Minister for Construction and Communications Malik Sohaib Ahmed Bharath. He

added that the process of demolition of the old building adjacent to DHQ Hospital Sargodha has been started. Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Hospital Sargodha will be built on an area of 85 kanals. Apart from the basement and ground floor, five floors will be constructed. Pathology Lab, Emergency, Radiology, Operation Theatre, ECU, CCU, PEDS ECU, General Ward and Surgical ECU will be constructed. A cafeteria and an inn will also be constructed for the family members accompanying the patient. The hospital construction project will be completed in one and a quarter year. Patients of Sargodha Division suffering from various heart diseases will be provided with the facility of treatment at the local level. The hospital will have modern machinery, lab and test facilities. The projects announced by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif are being practically worked on.

Federal Minister for Housing & Works visits Green Enclave-I & Green Enclave II (Sky Garden) projects

Soon Times Correspondent
Islamabad:
The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA), a subsidiary of the Ministry of Housing and Works, is dedicated to providing low-cost housing projects for Federal Government Employees. Green Enclave-I Bara Kahu is a housing scheme covering approximately 3,375 kanals of land in Islamabad. The Housing Authority's Project Green Enclave II (Sky Garden) in Bara Kahu, Islamabad, is a joint venture. The first part of Green Enclave-II,

covering about 11,000 kanals, is nearing completion. Development on approximately 2,405 kanals is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025. On July 3, 2024, Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mr. Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, along with Secretary of Housing and Works, Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, visited the Green Enclave-I and Green Enclave II (Sky Garden) projects. They were warmly welcomed by Director General Captain (ret'd) Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and senior officers of the Housing Authority. During the visit, the Turkish Commercial Council also attended, showing a keen interest in investing in Green Enclave II (Sky Garden) projects. He expressed his appreciation to Director General Captain (ret'd) Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, senior officers, employees, and Sky Garden CEO Chaudhary Ismail for their outstanding work on Green Enclave II. Federal Minister Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada stated that possession letters for most allottees of Project Green Enclave-II will be issued in Block-A after August 14.

CABI organizes Review and Validation Workshop for Organic Standards and Framework of Accreditation for Pakistan



environmental problem-solving, convened a significant workshop in Islamabad on July 2-3, 2024. The workshop, titled "Review and Validation of Organic Agriculture Standards and Framework Accreditation for Pakistan", brought together a diverse group of representatives from various organizations including MNFS&R, PARC, PNAC, PSQCA, academia, BCI, testing laboratories, NGOs, textile industries, OCA, WWF, Lok Sanjh Foundation, Control Union, GCL, and Fair Trade. The primary objective of the workshop was to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders and boost the organic agriculture sector in Pakistan by raising awareness and advocating for the necessary standards for accreditation and certification. The workshop yielded several key outcomes, including an enhanced understanding of the current landscape and potential of organic

Missing Degree:
My name is Adnan Javed S/O Muhammad Iqbal Javed. On 27th June 2024 in Blue Area Islamabad my original BA degree was lost with registration number 15-US-P-1452. My roll number is 15340 and degree serial number is 304881 issued by University of Sargodha. I have also filed a police report about the loss of my degree, in which my permanent address is also mentioned. If anyone finds my degree, contact me at the given number to inform:
0333 6665098

agriculture in Pakistan, the establishment of a supportive stakeholder network dedicated to advancing organic agriculture, consensus on revised organic agriculture standards, and an assessment of the feasibility and applicability of the accreditation framework. Dr. Babar E. Bajwa, CABI's Senior Regional Director Asia, underscored the critical need for a well-defined and actionable plan to implement the accreditation process at the national level. CABI reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the growth of organic agriculture in Pakistan and expressed its eagerness to continue collaborating with stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the revised standards and accreditation framework. Vice President of Pakistan Central Cotton Committee, Dr. Yousef Zafar stated that the government is actively engaged in the promotion of organic cotton. An organic policy is currently in progress and is anticipated to be finalized within the coming months. This policy is expected to facilitate the establishment of domestic regulations and standards in this regard.

PIC Orders HEC to Finalize Actions on Scholarship Misuse

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Negligence of PHE & Cantonment Board leads to water crisis

Soon Times Correspondent
Sargodha:
The ground water of Cantt Board areas including Bungalow No. 9, Mill Khar Town, Cheema Colony, Mansurabad and Sonjira is unusable. For this reason, two ponds were constructed at Bungalow No. 9 and Khar Town five years ago at a cost of seven crores to supply water to these areas. Separate funds have also been released for installing machinery on them. But the project could not be completed due to the lack of interest of the Public Health Engineering Department and the Cantt Board administration. The residents are forced to bring drinking water from distant areas or buy it for use. The residents of the area have threatened to not pay taxes to the Cantonment Board for not completing the work on time and have announced that if the project is not completed by August, they will protest by blocking University Road until this basic requirement is met.



Protest strike of health workers etera the 5th day

Soon Times Correspondent
Bhera:
The protest strike of health workers across the tehsil against the alleged vandalism and attack on the medical staff at Chak Mubarak primary health center has entered the fifth day. Due to this strike, rural people are deprived of medical facilities. The health workers registered a protest and marched in front of the Bhera police station against the non-arrest of the accused. The nursing staff demanded that the accused named in the FIR should be arrested. They demanded the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif to take notice of the atrocities on the staff of Chak Mubarak Primary Health Center. The alleged suspects are still threatening them. Naseem Bibi, the mother of a woman raised objection to the investigation committee established on the spot and demanded the formation of a new committee in the application given to Assistant Commissioner Bhera.

IESCO Power Suspension Schedules for Today & Tomorrow

Soon Times Correspondent
Islamabad:
According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule:
On 04th July 2024, From 07:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Rawalpindi City Circle, Pind Hoan, 4th Road Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, NPF-II Feeder, On 05th July 2024, From 07:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Rawalpindi City Circle, Range Road, T&T, 6th Road, PITCL Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Car Chowk Feeder 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.



Islamabad: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Senator Rubina Khalid, shares insights on BISP's core and newly launched initiatives during a media talk hosted by WE News on July 3, 2024.

Boris Johnson issues surprise last-ditch UK election rallying cry



LONDON
Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson made a surprise appearance in the British election campaign on Tuesday, issuing a last-ditch bid to rally support for the Conservatives and their leader Rishi Sunak, the man who helped turf him out of office. Johnson won a big majority at the last election in 2019 before being forced to resign in 2022 by a Conservative mutiny which Sunak helped to start, and which exposed deep splits in the governing party, not least between Sunak and Johnson.



Economic warnings dominate as UK election campaign enters final day

LONDON
Britain's Keir Starmer and Rishi Sunak on Wednesday kicked off the last day of campaigning before polls open in a national election, each warning voters of dire economic consequences if the other man wins. Opinion polls show Starmer's Labour Party is set for a big win that would end 14 years of Conservative government and hand the centre-left leader the keys to the prime minister's Number 10 Downing Street office on Friday morning. Fearful that voters could see the result as a foregone conclusion and stay at home when polling opens at 0600 GMT on Thursday or register protest votes with smaller parties, Labour issued a fresh rallying cry. "Don't forget the economic chaos for which the British people are still paying the price," Labour's campaign coordinator Pat McFadden said in a statement. "If you vote Conservative, nothing will change. If you don't vote at all or vote for another party, you run the risk of waking up on Friday to Rishi Sunak walking through the door to Number



Russian missiles and drones strike eastern Ukraine's Dnipro in a daylight attack that kills 5

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KYIV, Ukraine
A Russian missile and drone attack on the eastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro on Wednesday killed five civilians and injured 47 others, including a 14-year-old girl, authorities said. Blasts blew out some windows of a shopping mall, raining shards onto the street, photos published by local officials showed. Mayor Boris Filatov said the daytime attack also shattered windows in two schools and three kindergartens. Debris struck the intensive care unit of a children's hospital, and a fire broke out in another hospital. A video posted on social media by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy showed a missile with a fiery trail streaking over buildings in Ukraine's fourth-largest city, and debris flying into the air from its impact. The war, now in its third year since Russia invaded its neighbor, has killed more than 10,000 civilians and wounded around 20,000 others, the United Nations says. In the Kharkiv region in the northeast, Russian shelling struck a village council building, killing one person and injuring two others, regional head Oleh Sinechubov said. Elsewhere in the region, a Russian glide bomb struck a residential building in the village of Ruska Lozova, injuring at least two people. Others could be trapped under rubble, Sinechubov said. Trump says he can end the Russia-Ukraine war in one day. Russia's UN ambassador says he can't. Also Wednesday, Ukraine received \$2 billion from the International Monetary Fund under an ongoing credit facility. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal announced.

Gazans seek shelter after evacuation order, Israel carries out new strikes

CAIRO/GAZA
Many Palestinians were seeking shelter on Wednesday after fleeing their homes in southern Gaza and complained of water shortages as Israel pressed on with its military offensive in the densely populated enclave. Israeli forces carried out new military strikes in the southern city of Rafah amid fierce fighting with Palestinians overnight, residents said. At least 12 people were killed in new strikes in central and northern Gaza, health officials said. Israel's leaders have said they are winding down the phase of intense fighting against Hamas, the Islamist group that has governed Gaza since 2007, and will soon shift to more targeted operations in the nearly nine-month-old war in Gaza. But fighting continued overnight in two locations at the centre of Rafah, where tanks have seized several districts and advanced further west and north of the city in recent days, and concerns about the plight of hundreds of thousands of displaced people are growing. The Israeli military said its forces had continued targeted, military-based operations in Rafah, dismantled several military sites and killed Palestinian militants. In Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, two Israeli airstrikes killed five Palestinians, health officials said.



China supports Kazakhstan joining BRICS, President Xi



BEIJING
China's President Xi Jinping said he supports Kazakhstan joining the BRICS bloc, Chinese state media reported on Wednesday, as the group of developing nations mulls further expansion to rival a Western-dominated world order it sees as outdated. Speaking to the press alongside Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev following a meeting in the Central Asian state's capital, Xi encouraged Kazakhstan to "play the role of a middle power on the international stage and make its due contribution to global governance," while endorsing Astana's accession. China and Russia are pushing for the expansion of the BRICS grouping, which also includes Brazil, India and South Africa, as they seek to counter Western economic dominance. Originally an acronym coined by Goldman Sachs chief economist Jim O'Neill in 2001, the bloc was founded as an informal four-nation club in 2009 and added South Africa a year later. Last August, the BRICS bloc agreed to admit Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. However, Saudi Arabia has not yet joined the group. Argentina had planned to join BRICS, but President Javier Milei withdrew his country's support after taking office in December. Xi is in Kazakhstan to attend a heads of state meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization from July 3-4. During his meeting with Tokayev, China and Kazakhstan also agreed to double their two-way trade as soon as possible, the report added.

Babar, Shaheen, Rizwan brace for setback ahead of GT20 Canada



AHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has withheld the issuing of the no-objection certificates (NOCs) for the team's skipper Babar Azam, star pacer Shaheen Afridi, and wicket-keeper batter Mohammad Rizwan for taking part in Global T20 Canada League, sources told Geo News. The board, the sources added, has in fact contacted the International Cricket Council (ICC) regarding the affiliation of the said tournament and the decision on issuing the NOCs will be made after the ICC's response on the matter. The development comes as several players had sought PCB's permission to participate in various cricket leagues across the world. A day earlier, 12 cricketers were issued the required NOCs for their participation in different leagues across the globe. Some of the players from the list are Pakistan's central contract while the others have not played for the Green Shirts in a long time. As many as seven Pakistani cricketers have been picked by various franchises in the Global T20 Canada League.



Malen doubles up As Dutch outclass Romania to reach Euro 2024 quarters

MUNICH
After a week of soul-searching, the Netherlands emerged from defeat in their last group game to give a vivid display of their potential on Tuesday in outclassing Romania and booking a quarter-final place at the European Championship. The Netherlands swept into their first European Championship quarter-final since 2008 as Donnyl Malen scored twice in a 3-0 win over Romania in the last 16 on Tuesday. Cody Gakpo gave the Dutch an early lead but they were unable to convert pressure into a crucial second goal until the Liverpool forward set up Malen with seven minutes remaining in Munich. Romania were gritty but out-classed, lacking the quality to punish their opponents' profligacy before Malen added his second on the counter in stoppage-time. The victory put the Oranje on course for a quarter-final clash with Turkey or Austria, who beat the Netherlands in 3-2 in the group stage. "We played a good game. I'm very pleased. Especially after the last game we needed a reaction and today was a good step in the right direction," Gakpo said. "We talked a lot about the aggression, the intensity and defending like a team. It was a good step. Sacrifice something for each other and work really hard to be at your best. Good game overall." Ronald Koeman's side will need to improve their effectiveness in front of goal should they wish to emulate their manager, who was a player for the Dutch when they won the 1988 Euros on German soil. Prior to the game, Netherlands' captain Virgil van Dijk said his side lacked energy and the "will to win" in the loss to Austria. But the Dutch were still strangely flat in the early stages despite Van Dijk's rallying cry. **GAKPO SPARKS ORANJE SURGE**
Group E winners Romania, whose 3-0 victory over Ukraine in their opening game, was just their second ever win in the Euros, pinned the Dutch back early.

Minal Khan's reply to fan over proposal delights netizens



(Web Desk)
A fan's proposal to actor Minal Khan and her response to him draws attention of social media users, who enjoy their exchange of comments. Minal Khan, a mother of a baby boy named Haseem, posted a casual video on her official Instagram, featuring her wearing black and white dress, sharing a caption, "Life is black and white," accompanied by a ghost emoji. The post received nearly 30,000 likes and over a hundred comments, many of which praised the young actor's beauty.

Pakistan coach Gary Kirsten submits 'confidential' report to PCB on team's performance

LAHORE: Pakistan's white-ball coach Gary Kirsten has submitted a "confidential" assessment report on the national side's disastrous performance in the recently concluded T20 World Cup 2024 to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). The report, the sources added, has been sent to PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi who will review the document highlighting players' fitness, discipline and game awareness among other things that led to the team's early exit from the mega event. The development comes as the Green Shirts failed to even make it to the Super Eight stage of the World Cup after suffering an upset loss against the minnows United States followed by a defeat against arch-rivals India. The Babar Azam-led side only managed to win matches against Canada and Ireland which were insufficient to propel the team to the next stage of the tournament. The below-par performance by the national side resulted in scathing criticism from fans and former cricketers alike prompting the PCB chief to announce a "major surgery" in the squad. However, the board decided to wait for Kirsten and senior manager Wahab Riaz's report to make any decision with regard to the team's future. After going through the report, the PCB chief will also consult other board officials and former cricketers before taking a decision on the way forward. Earlier, in a discussion with the team after their elimination from the World Cup, the coach pointed out that the team's skill level is significantly lagging compared to the rest of the world.

