



Daily SOON TIMES

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Wednesday
August 7, 2024
Page: 4 Rs: 20
Vol: 4 Issue: 217
Sargodha
www.soontimes.pk

ABC Certified

Simultaneously Publishing from Islamabad, Sargodha & Karachi

+92 321 888 1135

Democracy better than dictatorship despite shortcomings: Khawaja Asif



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
Democracy is better than dictatorship despite numerous shortcomings, stated Defence Minister Khawaja Asif while addressing the National Assembly. "Every institution should operate within its defined boundaries, as overstepping these limits undermines democracy," said the minister. He asserted the supremacy of parliament, highlighting its role in lawmaking, with other institutions tasked with interpretation. "If you don't support the system, don't attack the institutions. If Constitutional limits are crossed, democracy will weaken," he said, underscoring the importance of reinforcing democratic principles. Addressing the situation in Palestine, he condemned ongoing Israeli atrocities in Gaza, where over 40,000 people have been martyred in just eight to ten months. He reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for the Palestinian cause.

Achakzai opposes anti-India resolution in National Assembly



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai has opposed the resolution against India in the National Assembly. A resolution related to the amendment to the Indian Constitution was presented in Pakistan's National Assembly on Tuesday and was approved with a majority vote. Achakzai said the workers of the Peoples Party made sacrifices for the constitution and parliament. He said they would not let the House proceed if it continued on the same trajectory. More to read: Indian Supreme Court endorses Modi's decision to end special status of Occupied Kashmir

IHC seeks report on facilities provided to Imran Khan in prison



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD
The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has acquired a report from jail authorities on the facilities provided to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in Adiala Jail. He hearing took place before Chief Justice Aamer Farooq who reviewed the petition filed by lawyer Azhar Siddique regarding the facilities available to Imran Khan in prison. The plea asked the IHC to provide Imran Khan the facilities in accordance with international laws and prison rules. The court asked for a report covering the past two weeks. Chief Justice Farooq inquired about the specific amenities provided to Khan and suggested that the Adiala Jail authorities should provide details on the actual conditions and facilities available. Azhar Siddique informed the court that Imran Khan was not able to communicate with his sons via WhatsApp.

NA approves Election Act Amendment Bill amid opposition dissent

The agreements include cooperation in security and judicial assistance in civil matters



Soon Times Correspondent
Islamabad
The National Assembly (NA) passed the Election Act Amendment Bill with a majority vote on Tuesday, despite strong protests and objections from opposition parties. The session, chaired by NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, witnessed heated debates and disruptions as the government moved forward with its legislative agenda. The newly passed Election Act Amendment Bill 2024 imposes restrictions on independent candidates, barring them from joining any political party after a specified period post-election. The bill further states that candidates who do not submit an affidavit of party affiliation to the returning officer will be considered independent. It seeks to amend previous legislation that allowed independents to affiliate with political parties after elections. During today's session, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Affairs Standing Committee Rana Inayat Sharif presented a report on the Election Act Amendment Bill. The bill was introduced for approval, accompanied by a motion that the assembly overwhelmingly supported, despite vociferous opposition. The motion was introduced by Bilal Azhar Kayani, a member of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), which sparked dissent from the opposition. Members of the opposition expressed their dissent by surrounding the speaker's dais, tearing up copies of the agenda, and chanting slogans. Ali Muhammad Khan presented amendments to the bill, which was opposed by the Minister of Law, Azam Nazeer Tarar. The Minister argued that the legislation was in line with the Constitution and not unconstitutional, as alleged by the opposition.

Opposition to challenge Election Act Amendment Bill in Supreme Court



ISLAMABAD:
Barrister Gohar has announced the opposition's plan to challenge the newly approved Election Act Amendment Bill—which prevents independent candidates from joining political parties after a specified post-election period—in the top court. In a statement delivered on the floor of the National Assembly (NA), Gohar criticised the bill, asserting that it undermines democratic principles. The National Assembly (NA) passed the Election Act Amendment Bill with a majority

vote earlier today, despite strong protests and objections from opposition parties. "This parliament is indeed supreme, but the authority to interpret lies with the Supreme Court," Gohar maintained. He emphasised the PTI's commitment to challenging what he described as a "politically motivated" piece of legislation. The chairperson highlighted that PTI had submitted four petitions to the Election Commission Pakistan (ECP) regarding reserved seats, claiming that their electoral symbol was unjustly removed in a conspiracy to defeat the party. "Our nomination papers were submitted, but our electoral symbol was taken away, yet we won with a two-thirds majority," he stated. PTI lawyer Ali Muhammad Khan echoed Gohar's concerns, arguing that the bill was being used to attack the apex court. "The Supreme Court granted us this right through its decision. How can you deny us this right after the Supreme Court's verdict?" Khan questioned, expressing his belief that the bill contains elements of "political fascism".

CJP Qazi Faez Isa grants 31,680 sq ft of federal land to Balochistan Government



Soon Times Correspondent
Web Desk
Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa has allocated 31,680 square feet of federal government land to the Balochistan government, to mark the celebration of Pakistan's 77th Independence Day. In a letter sent via the Chief Secretary of Balochistan, it was announced that the land, measuring 31,680 square feet and located adjacent to the Qaid-e-Azam Residency in Ziarat, is intended to be used as an Environmental Centre for public benefit. The CJ expressed his desire to offer the land license to the provincial government at no cost and included documents

detailed the terms and conditions of the license. He also mentioned that if the federal government agrees, this gift will be presented to the public on the joyous occasion of August 14, 2024. The donation of the land for the Environmental Centre was officially declared in the letter, which was signed by both Qazi Azmat Isa and Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa.

JI announces nationwide shutter down strike on Independence Day

Hafiz Naeem announces protests at Murree Road and Lahore CM's house on August 8 and August 11



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD:
JI Amir Hafiz Naeem Rehman shared his plans for a nationwide shutter-down strike, with a complete countrywide shutdown after August 14. During a press conference at the party's Rawalpindi sit-in, Rehman announced that on August 8, sit-in participants would march on Murree Road, followed by a significant protest outside the Chief Minister's House in Lahore on August 11

and another in Peshawar on August 12. He called for the termination or review of certain agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and demanded a forensic audit of all agreements. Highlighted the impact of rising electricity bills on household budgets, Hafiz Naeem stressed that charges should reflect the actual cost of electricity. He humorously remarked on

the disappearance of the government's negotiation committee, saying, "We might have to advertise the disappearance of the government committee." He further noted that the government was troubled as the sit-in disrupted its luxuries, and suggested that the negotiation committee should include the Auditor General of Pakistan, the Chairman of WAPDA, the Federal Chamber of Commerce, and consumer representatives.

Aurangzeb expects IMF staff-level agreement by month's end

Finance minister expresses concern over country's rapidly growing population, describing it as 'population bomb'

Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD:
Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb on Monday announced that the country is expected to secure the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) staff-level agreement approval by the end of August. Speaking at an event in Islamabad, Aurangzeb emphasised the importance of this agreement for Pakistan's economic stability and highlighted plans for climate finance discussions with the IMF and World Bank. Aurangzeb stated that Pakistan is among the countries significantly impacted by climate change, and following the IMF agreement approval, talks will commence on

climate financing. These discussions are set to take place during the annual meetings with the IMF and World Bank in October. The finance minister expressed concern over Pakistan's rapidly growing population, describing it as a "population bomb" that has already exploded. He stressed the need for effective plans to mitigate the effects of climate change and control population growth,



emphasising the importance of collaboration with international organisations for climate finance. He highlighted the collaborative

efforts between the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Climate Change, the IMF, and the World Bank to develop effective strategies for climate financing. Aurangzeb underscored the importance of improving the monitoring of climate change projects with the support of these organisations. The finance minister also called for private sector involvement in improving the country's economy and developing climate change policies. Aurangzeb pointed out the need for better economic conditions through budget and tax measures, energy sector reforms, and enhanced living standards to address the challenges posed by climate change.



Azma Bokhari made a surprise visit to DGPR

Lahore: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari made a surprise visit to DGPR at the start of office hours yesterday. She visited all DGPR offices and inquired individually about the nature of the staff's work. She checked the attendance of officers and employees and directed all to be present by 9:00 AM. Additionally, she instructed Deputy Director Admin Siddique Kyani to personally submit the daily biometric attendance by 9:30 AM. The

Minister expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the digital media department and instructed them to become more proactive. She also visited the daycare center and clearly advised the women working in the Information Department to report any issues directly to her. Furthermore, Azma Bokhari has mandated immediate action to improve the cleanliness conditions within the office.

Pakistan's Digital Future

A delegation of Huawei Pakistan led by Mr. Ethan Sun, CEO Huawei Pakistan; Mr. Ahmed Bilal Masood, Director Subsidiary Board & Deputy CEO; Mr. Yushaoning, Vice CEO; and called on Planning Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal in his office on Monday. In the meeting, Huawei's latest digitization initiatives in Pakistan were discussed. The Planning Minister had proposed, in his previous meeting with Huawei delegation, to initiate Islamabad as a model smart city, emphasizing the importance of digital infrastructure provision for the new age economy. The delegates updated the Minister about their team's progress on our projects and various other initiatives. The meeting deliberated on digitizing education infrastructure and providing access to smart devices to students in underprivileged areas. The Planning

Minister mentioned ongoing education reforms, which include establishing smart classrooms as one of the priority areas. Huawei officials apprised the minister that the company has online Learning Management System Under the smart class room initiative, students from all across Pakistan can be trained for new ICT courses. It was further discussed that E-government is a much needed project created to meet the target of making the government paperless. Appreciating Huawei's plan for digital transformation in Pakistan, Ahsan Iqbal stated, "Only a robust digital eco-system of learning, innovation and efficiency can make Pakistan capable of meeting 21st century digital needs. Huawei's collaboration to build a digital future for Pakistan is commendable."

Ji's Rebirth & Hafiz Nameen's Latest power show.



Iftikhar Uddin Anjum

adequate social safety nets. Corruption remains a perennial issue in Pakistan's political discourse. Ji leaders have accused the current administration of rampant corruption and failing to take substantive action against those involved in corrupt practices. They argue that this corruption not only undermines public trust but also diverts resources away from critical sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Jamaat-e-Islami has also criticized the government for its perceived lack of transparency and accountability. The party has called for more robust mechanisms to ensure that government officials are held accountable for their actions. They have demanded reforms to strengthen institutions like the judiciary and anti-corruption bodies to ensure they operate independently and effectively. As a party rooted in Islamic ideology, Jamaat-e-Islami has raised concerns over what it perceives as the government's failure to uphold Islamic values and principles. They have criticized policies that they believe are inconsistent with Sharia law and have called for more significant efforts to promote Islamic education and cultural practices. The protests organized by Jamaat-e-Islami have taken various forms, from rallies and sit-ins to more extensive demonstrations across major cities. These protests are significant for several reasons: By organizing protests, Ji aims to galvanize public support and highlight their grievances on a national stage. The large turnout at these events suggests that their message resonates with a significant segment of the population, particularly those disillusioned with the current state of affairs. The protests serve as a means to pressure the government into addressing the issues raised by Ji. By creating a visible and vocal opposition, the party hopes to compel the government to take action, whether through policy changes or more substantial reforms. For Jamaat-e-Islami, the protests are also an opportunity to strengthen its political position ahead of future elections. By positioning itself as a defender of public interests and Islamic values, the party aims to attract voters who are dissatisfied with the current government. The ongoing protests by Jamaat-e-Islami could lead to several potential outcomes, each with significant implications for Pakistan's political landscape. One possible

outcome is that the government, in response to the sustained pressure from Ji and other opposition groups, might offer concessions. These could take the form of policy adjustments, increased efforts to combat corruption, or initiatives aimed at economic relief. Such concessions could help defuse tensions and placate the protesters, at least temporarily. Conversely, if the government fails to address the grievances raised by Jamaat-e-Islami, the protests could escalate. This escalation might include larger demonstrations, strikes, and increased civil disobedience. A prolonged period of unrest could destabilize the government and create a more volatile political environment. The protests could also lead to a political realignment. Jamaat-e-Islami might seek alliances with other opposition parties to create a more formidable front against the government. Such alliances could alter the balance of power and potentially lead to significant changes in Pakistan's political dynamics. In a more extreme scenario, sustained protests and political pressure could lead to early elections. If the government perceives that it has lost the mandate of the people, it might call for fresh elections to seek a new mandate. This outcome would depend on various factors, including the intensity of the protests and the response of other political actors. In the long term, the protests by Jamaat-e-Islami could lead to broader discussions about governance, accountability, and the role of Islamic principles in Pakistan's political system. Regardless of the immediate outcomes, these protests have the potential to shape the national discourse and influence the direction of future policies and reforms. The protests by Jamaat-e-Islami underscore the deep-seated frustrations and challenges facing the country. Whether driven by economic woes, corruption, governance issues, or religious concerns, these protests reflect a broader desire for change and reform. The potential outcomes of these protests are varied, ranging from government concessions to political realignments, and even early elections. As Pakistan navigates this period of unrest, the actions of Jamaat-e-Islami and the government's response will play a crucial role in shaping the country's political future.

Its 14th August, are we independent today?

Maryam Faisal

14th August marks an important day in the history of Pakistan. We successfully gained independence from two entities: the British colonial rule and Indians (the Hindu majority). The mission was to strive as a sovereign state to accommodate people of diverse religious backgrounds under one flag following the rules of Islam. There were several sacrifices made to build this nation into a home where losses were faced, setbacks were experienced, we physically got the independent state we needed but it was not long before geographical independence was no more a help for survival and growth. Pakistan lost strength in its economic and financial foundation. Where does our economy's independence stand. Above all this, where is our mental independence, have we gotten so used to the servitude? Where do we stand if we have not gotten over the old ways, as a nation there seems to be no direction which led the confusion for initial years of independence. There was a dilemma between the efficacy of old British rules and policies or to seek potential in our own governance. Neither we left the old ways nor have we adamantly relied on our own, remaining in a fix. Although there were religious parties that stepped into the arena of politics to direct Pakistan under the appropriate laws. This did not last for long anyway because soon the elites and rulers were indulged in corrupt practices and vested interests. Regression began. Economic crises peeked whilst our institutions entangled themselves in grafting and fraudulent activities to corrupt the system. Our enthusiasm as a nation led us to preserve and build upon the institutions that were inherited from the British. We somehow initially maintained our national organizations like TDPC, PIDC, PETAC, research institutes, agricultural universities, petroleum exploration, scientific research facilities, and agricultural institutions. However it wasn't long before all started deteriorating. The biggest economic crisis developed by all odds through corruption moreover the fact that there are more expats than natives. (Wikipedia contributors, 2024) over 10 million Pakistanis live in foreign countries, where they contribute and earn for the local government and economy. Out of which 5-6% is not just the labor class, it is in fact a brain drain of Pakistan who have been giving



their part to the industry of doctors, scientists, teachers, business men/women and other professions for the outside world, further weakening Pakistan's potential in the global market. Had we continued working on infrastructure, education and the job market, world for us as citizens would have been different rather more secure in context to future prospects and career opportunities of an individual. Can we forget the most crucial factor influencing the downfall of Pakistan's economy, population? Population increased over all, from left to right and center. No avenues to cater additional personnel's educational and professional needs was created for new majority entering the market every year. Crisis kept sinking deep while the rulers of power deepened their pockets. The structure of class has been reclassified with each tier undergoing a shift in their level of standard. The rich becoming richer and poor drowning in poverty, masses have been poorer than before, the standard classes of lower, middle and upper have had a shift. Lower class has expanded to phase out middle class hence creating another level: upper-middle class. This previously consisted of the upper-class. Therefore, upperclass today is the elite who are now also the ruling class. Ruling classes only work for their vested interest but little contribution has been brought by a little percentage of middle class. These are the people who work tirelessly to try to sustain the vanishing discipline in the industrial society. Moreover, due to a lack in acumen, analytical and critical thinking skills, the lower class is unable to pour much of their endeavor into the economic flow. Thus, becoming a part of instability and unrest in the society: corruption, crime and violence. A huge gap has added more lengths to the alignment of class difference making it almost impossible for the society and economy to work in sync. The circular flow of income has toppled its way, it should be a pass down from elite to working class, however it is not the case. We are in an era of IT, Supply chains, and artificial intelligence. Everything around the world has transitioned

from physical infrastructure to digital platforms, incorporating technical aspects for virtual interactions. Consequently the people who are leaving to prefer life outside Pakistan are the ones embracing change and want to evolve while the ones remaining to operate life under their conventional methods are living traditionally. Despite being an agri-friendly country blessed with land full of natural resources available for another several decades the world outside Pakistan has evolved, towards automated and hybrid systems especially in agriculture. We have yielded one third produce from acres of land while other countries in this business have advanced tremendously including China, Ukraine, Cambodia, Turkey, India, and Vietnam, showing little to no progress (World Population Review, 2024). We are the Nokias and Kodaks of the world. Just like them, Pakistan did not innovate their ways and remained at the bottom, while others rose to heights we sat rubbing our hands into old dirt rather than stepping up for evolution. The elites resist change because external involvement into their systems eventually call for scrutiny which ruling class and elites have avoided throughout their tenure. Moreover the absence of family planning and population awareness is over consuming the existing extracted scarce resources bubbling poverty due to the nature of it being unfulfilling for the entire population. These are the same resources we consumed in the early days of independence and now per head growth in numbers and consumers have crossed the line of accommodation in such a way that even cultivation land has been under jurisdictions for residence and not agriculture. The thirst for money has no end, truly. Hence, Pakistanis leaving to work and settle abroad seeking efficient professional and effective personal growth, what does my government do to abstain students like myself from abandoning our home land to live life outside the deprivation of education, job opportunities, potential availability of resources and a safe living environment.

the rising cost of living, unemployment, and the lack of



Khawaja Imran Nazir Inspects Under-Construction Govt Nawaz Sharif Cardiology Hospital

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health Care Khawaja Imran Nazir paid a surprise visit to Sargodha on Tuesday on the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab. He inspected the under-construction Government Nawaz Sharif Cardiology Hospital. On this occasion, XEN Buildings said in a briefing that the work of the cardiology hospital under construction at a cost of 19 billion rupees is going on vigorously. All the allocated funds of Rs 9 billion 86 crore have been released for the current year. He further informed that OPD,



emergency, offices and residences are being constructed in the hospital under construction at 97 Kanal. OPD will be functional in May while the hospital will be fully functional by December 2025. The provincial minister said that Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif will lay the official foundation stone of the hospital soon. Heart Hospital is a gift of PML-N to the people of Sargodha. Khawaja Imran

Nazir also inspected the ongoing construction and repair work of three government hospitals in Sargodha. He scrutinized the quality of construction materials among other issues. On this occasion, it was informed that the construction and repair work of DHQ, TB Hospital and Government Maula Baksh Hospital is in progress at a cost of Rs.85 crore. So far 85% of the work of the three hospitals has been completed. On this occasion, Secretary Health Ali Jan, CO Health Dr. Asad Aslam, MS Dr. Mushtaq Bashir Akif and Principal Sargodha Medical College Prof. Dr. Warris Faroka were also with him.

Doctors suspect Renal issues behind Asad Umar's deteriorating health

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE: Former federal minister Asad Umar on Tuesday suddenly faced health scare on his appearance in court. According to Umar's counsel, the former minister felt pain in his heart. Umar was taken towards the car at the main gate from where he was shifted to hospital. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Zain Qureshi took the former minister to the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) where a team of doctors conducted necessary tests. It must be noted that Umar appeared before the court after expiry of his bail in the May 9



cases. Doctors kept the former PTI leader in the Intensive Care Unit where he underwent multiple tests. They diagnosed that the patient had no heart issue as his ECG was perfect but he had renal issues due to which his blood pressure dropped and he fell unconscious.

Pakistan Is Not Complete Without Kashmir: Mohsin Shirazi



Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: President District Bar Sargodha Mohsin Shirazi has said that Pakistan is not complete without Kashmir. The world knows the freedom spirit and bravery of Kashmiris. He expressed these views while discussing in the program organized on the Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir in Radio

Pakistan's program "Danish". Earlier, Dr. Haroon Al-Rasheed Tabassum, Muniba Safdar Malik, Maria Rasool and others also participated in the discussion. Mohsin Shirazi further said that India is violating human rights. The United Nations should play its role in this regard. Dr. Haroon Al-Rasheed Tabassum said that the people of Kashmir are fighting for our survival. We

should actively participate in solidarity with them. Muniba Safdar Malik said that the martyrdom of a Hurriyat activist like Burhan Wani is a proof of India's brutality. Our rivers come to Pakistan from Kashmir. Kashmiris want to join Pakistan. Maria Rasool said that the international media should raise the voice of the rights of Kashmiris. Shahid Akbar Advocate said that Muslims are being oppressed inside India as well. Hinduism is flourishing under the patronage of Narendra Modi. Shahzada Imran Kashmiri said that many of his relatives have become victims of Indian oppression. Indian army imposes its terrorism on Muslims by firing whenever it wants. The program was presented by Fareeha Kanwal under the special direction of Station Director Ghulam Abbas while Nauman Shafiq was the program engineer.

SNGPL Disconnected 8,722 Connections & Imposed Rs 176.13 Million in Fines Over The Past 04 Months

Soon Times Correspondent Lahore: In a robust effort to combat gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has executed extensive raids across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad over the past four months. This operation has resulted in the disconnection of 8,722 illegal gas connections and the imposition of fines totaling Rs 176.13 million. During this period, SNGPL disconnected 19 commercial and special domestic meters for meter tampering, and an additional 10 connections were terminated for illegal gas usage via bypass or fake meters.

Furthermore, 3,450 domestic meters were disconnected for tampering, while another 4,979 connections were severed due to violations related to meter tampering and bypass or fake meters. Additionally, 264 connections were disconnected for the use of compressors. SNGPL has booked a total of 53,203 HMP of volume against gas theft cases and imposed fines amounting to Rs 176.13 million on the culprits. The company's regional teams have been proactive, lodging 384 FIRs (First Information Reports) against individuals involved in gas theft, resulting in the arrest of 15 offenders.

Pakistan Falah Party Is Struggling For Public Welfare: Nasir Abbas Qadri



Soon Times Correspondent Lahore: Senior Vice President of Pakistan Falah Party Punjab Province North Nasir Abbas Qadri Advocate has said that Pakistan Falah Party is struggling for public welfare and public rights. We thank the participants for coming to the Members Assembly of Pakistan Falah Party Punjab North Province. He further said that the extravagances of the rulers have taken away even the

bread from the people. People are forced to starve. The Members Assembly was presided over by Syed Rashid Ali Gurdizi, the president of PFP Punjab North Province. While the chief guest was Chairman Pakistan Falah Party Amanat Ali Zaib. Central and provincial leaders of Pakistan Falah Party from across Punjab and scholars from different walks of life specially participated in the Members Assembly.

981st Annual Urs Celebrations of Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh Will Start From 24th August: Syed Tahir Raza Bukhari

Soon Times Correspondent Lahore: The three-day Urs celebrations of Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh will start from August 24th and will end on August 26. Apart from important personalities of the federal and provincial governments, a large number of domestic and foreign pilgrims will participate in the Urs celebrations. These views were expressed by Secretary Auqaf Punjab Syed Tahir Raza Bukhari yesterday while presiding over the review meeting of celebrations of the three-day Urs of Darbar Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh. Khalid Mahmood Sindhu and Administrator Auqaf Data Darbar Shahid Hameed Work, officers from Police Department & Law Enforcing Agencies, Safe City Authority, Food Authority, LESCO, Municipal Corporation, Health, Education, Traffic, Rescue 1122, WASA, Civil Defense and many other departments participated in the meeting. Administrator Auqaf Shahid Hamid Virk gave a detailed briefing about the events, arrangements and responsibilities of the

departments. The meeting was informed that a number of celebrations including Mahfil-e-Sama, Mahfil-e-Qirat, Dar-e-Quran, Dar-e-Tasawuf, distribution of food (Lungar) and special prayers for the prosperity of homeland and unity and progress of Muslim Ummah shall resume during consecutive three days. He further informed that fool-proof arrangements will be made for the security. They will perform other responsibilities including security in an efficient manner and will ensure 24-hour monitoring of Urs celebrations with the help of security agencies, CCTV cameras, metal detectors and other modern devices. The staff of the Food Authority will use special mechanisms for fool proof checking of food (Lungar) and milk points established. He said that special passes will be issued to volunteers, media representatives and other service providers. The LESCO officer intimated that Data Darbar vicinity and adjacent areas will be exempted from load shedding for 3 days. SP City said that 1300 POLICE personnel in uniform and plain clothes will be on daily duty during 3-day Urs celebrations.

LHC seeks responses to PTI's Aug 14 rally request

Petitioner urges court to overturn the administration's refusal to grant permission for the rally
Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought responses from all respondent parties by Wednesday regarding the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) request for permission to hold a rally at Minar-e-Pakistan on Aug 14. Justice Ali Baqar Najafi presided over the hearing of the petition filed by Akmal Khan. The petitioner argued that holding a rally was a constitutional and democratic right



of every political party. He further urged the court to overturn the administration's refusal to grant permission for the rally.

During the hearing, Justice Najafi questioned the district administration's lawyers, asking how they could prevent political activities and whether they had established any policies regarding rallies. Justice Naqvi remarked that he could not simply accept a refusal (without logical reasoning) to permit the rally. Consequently, the LHC directed the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore and other relevant parties to submit their responses to the PTI's request for holding a rally at Minar-e-Pakistan.

PMD predicts more rain in various parts of country

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has predicted more rain/windstorm/thundershower in Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, south and upper Punjab, Pothohar region, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during next 24 hours. Heavy falls are likely at isolated places in northeastern and south Balochistan, upper Sindh, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Northeast Punjab, Pothohar region and Kashmir. As per synoptic situation, strong monsoon currents, continuously penetrating from Arabian Sea in central and southern parts of the country, entered into the upper



parts. Torrential rains may generate flash flooding in local nullahs and streams of hilly areas of Dera Ghazi Khan, Zhob, Barkhan, Musa Khel, Loralai, Sibbi, Harmai, Kohlu, Dera Bugti, Jhal Magasi, Nasirabad, Jaffarabad, Kalat, Khuzdar,

Lasbella, Awaran, Kech, Panjgur, Jacobabad, Qamber Shahdad Kot, Larkana, Dadu, Jamshoro, Murree, Gulliyat, Manshera, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Nowshera, Swabi, Gujrat and Kashmir. Heavy downpour may cause urban flooding in low lying areas of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rajanpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukkur, Kashmir, Ghotki, Shikarpur and Khairpur. Landslides may cause road closure at the vulnerable hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Gulliyat, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during the wet period.

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 07th August 2024, From 08:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, Upper Topa, Patriata, TDCP, Dhala Feeders, From 06:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Lohi Bhr, Fazalia, I & II, Top City, Mumtaz City, Bjanival, F-17/1&II, Nogzi Feeders,

Rawalpindi City Circle, Officer Colony, Teneh Bhatta, 6th Road, FOECHS, Swan Garden, II, River Garden, Raja Sultan Feeders, Attock Circle, Darya Sharif Feeder, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Zaraq I & II, IST, Dhok Avam, Mohra Nagval Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Dhoda, Sarkal, Chakral 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.



US State Department endorses formation of interim govt in Bangladesh

WASHINGTON
The US State Department expressed its support for the establishment of an interim government in Bangladesh. In a recent press briefing, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller stated that the US was closely monitoring the situation in Bangladesh, where several lives have been lost in recent days. He emphasized the need for thorough and transparent investigations into these deaths to ensure accountability. Miller reaffirmed that the United States stood with the people of Bangladesh and stressed that the transfer of power should be in accordance with the Bangladeshi constitution.



Israeli forces kill At least eight Palestinians in West Bank clashes, medics say

Web Desk
Israeli forces killed at least four people in the volatile city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank, medics said on Tuesday, following a night of violence in which four others were killed in clashes near Tubas, close to the border with Jordan. The Israeli military said it conducted two separate air strikes in the West Bank, hitting armed men, but gave no details. The Palestinian Red Crescent confirmed that four people were killed in the strikes against two vehicles in Jenin, one of the most explosive hotspots in the West Bank. Another person was critically wounded. The strikes came during an operation in Jenin in which footage shared on social media showed a column of armoured personnel carriers entering the city and armoured bulldozers digging up roads.



Bangladesh dissolves parliament in face of students' pressure

President Mohammad Shahabuddin has dissolved the Bangladesh Parliament

DHAKA
Web Desk
President Mohammad Shahabuddin of Bangladesh has dissolved the Parliament following the resignation and subsequent departure of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. After Hasina's resignation and her fleeing the country, the student movement rejected any military-backed or military-supported government. The student leaders issued an ultimatum, demanding the dissolution of Parliament by 3 PM. Leaders of the student movement, Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmood, and Abu Bakr Mazumdar, released a video message proposing a framework for an interim government led by Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus. **PRIME MINISTER FLEES COUNTRY**
Following violent protests that resulted in over 300 deaths by Sunday, Sheikh Hasina resigned from her position as prime minister, and army chief Wajez UZ Zaman announced the formation of an interim government. On Monday, President Mohammad Shahabuddin met military leaders and expressed readiness to form an interim government comprising various political parties and civil society representatives. The president instructed the military to halt ongoing looting and restore the rule of law. Army Chief Zaman had also met leaders of political parties and civil society, indicating that the interim government would be established soon. He had also planned to meet students and teachers as well. According to the Indian media, the resigned prime minister of Bangladesh had applied for political asylum in the UK, while her sister, Sheikh Rehana,

Lebanon's Hezbollah launches drone attacks on Israel, says more to come

BEIRUT
Web Desk
Lebanon's armed group Hezbollah launched a series of drone and rocket attacks into northern Israel on Tuesday but warned that its much-anticipated retaliation for Israel's killing of a top commander last week was yet to come. Hezbollah said it launched a swarm of attack drones at two military sites near Acre in northern Israel, and also attacked an Israeli military vehicle in another location. The Israeli military said a number of hostile drones were identified crossing from Lebanon and one was intercepted. It said several civilians were injured to the south of the coastal city of Nahariya. Reuters TV footage showed one impact site near a bus stop on a main road outside the city. In a statement, the Israeli military said sirens sounded around Acre, but that turned out to be a false alarm. It said its air force struck two Hezbollah facilities in south Lebanon. **Feuds are rising that the Middle East**



could be tipped into full-blown war following vows by Hezbollah to avenge Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur's killing, and by Iran to respond to the assassination in Tehran last week of the head of Palestinian militant group Hamas. A Hezbollah source told Reuters that "the response to the assassination of commander Fuad Shukur has not yet come." Earlier on Tuesday, four people were killed in a strike on a home in the Lebanese town of Mayfadoun, nearly 30 km (19 miles) north of the border, medics and a security source said.

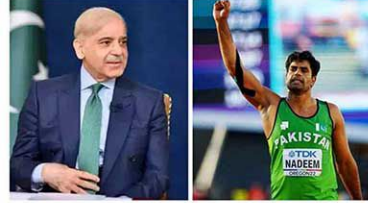
Harris readies a Philadelphia rally to introduce her running mate. But her pick is still unknown



WASHINGTON
Vice President Kamala Harris will introduce her new running mate at a rally Tuesday evening in Philadelphia — but with the event mere hours away, her choice remains a mystery. In recent days, she has zeroed in on a trio of potential finalists: Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, but decisions beyond that aren't yet publicly known. Harris' campaign planned to make the announcement via video message before the rally, though the exact timing remained unclear, according to a person involved in the planning who spoke on the condition of anonymity to detail discussions occurring behind closed doors. Doing so would be similar to how then-candidate Joe Biden revealed Harris as his vice presidential choice during the pandemic-marred presidential race of 2020. It will mark yet another major milestone in the barely two weeks since the vice president moved to take over the top of the Democratic ticket heading into November's election. She has been scrambling to build out a campaign since then, and to breathe new life into the Democratic race against Republican Donald Trump. Harris, second gentleman Doug Emhoff and her No. 2 pick are set to appear together for an evening rally in Philadelphia, recalling a joint 2020 appearance by Biden and Harris in Wilmington, Delaware. Likewise, in 2016, newly selected running mate Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia appeared with Hillary Clinton in Miami. After Tuesday's day trip to Pennsylvania, Harris and her running mate will spend the next five days flying thousands of miles around the country, touring critical battleground states. They'll visit Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and Detroit on Wednesday.

PM Shehbaz felicitates Arshad Nadeem on qualifying for Paris Olympics final

Pakistan athlete hurled javelin to a distance of 86.59 meters and qualified for the final round



ISLAMABAD
Sports Desk
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday congratulated Pakistani athlete Arshad Nadeem on qualifying for javelin throw final at the Paris Olympics. The premier in a statement said Arshad Nadeem had won hearts of the entire nation with his outstanding performance and hard work. Shehbaz Sharif also prayed and expressed good wishes for the success of Arshad Nadeem in Olympics 2024. Appreciating Arshad Nadeem for the promotion of javelin throw game in the country, he said Pakistan has immense talent that needs to be developed further. The prime minister said the government will continue encouraging athletes participating in international level competitions. Earlier in the day, Pakistan's lone medal hope, Arshad Nadeem, hurled javelin to a distance of 86.59 meters and qualified for the final round of the event.



Record-breaker Duplantis soars to Olympic pole vault gold, Hodgkinson wins 800m

PARIS
Armand Duplantis soared over his rivals in clinching back-to-back Olympic pole vault crowns on Monday with a new world record as Keady Hodgkinson won Britain's first gold of the Paris Games on the track with a sensational 800m final victory. Swedish star Duplantis cemented his status as the greatest pole vaulter in history with a superb display, blowing the roof off the Stade de France with a world record-breaking final leap of 6.25 metres. The 24-year-old Duplantis, popularly known as "Mondo", is the first man to win consecutive Olympic pole vault golds since the USA's Bob Richards, who achieved the feat with victories in 1952 and 1956. In perfect, warm conditions in Paris, defending champion Duplantis never looked like being threatened by his rivals he clinched victory. The only suspense in a dominant performance was whether the US-born Swede could break his own world record to crown victory. He duly delivered with his third and final attempt, beating his previous best of 6.24m to deafening roars of appreciation from the Parisian crowd. American Sam Kendrick won silver with a best of 5.95m, Greece's Emmanouil Karalis taking bronze (5.90). "What can I say? I just broke a world record at the Olympics, biggest possible stage for a pole vaulter," Duplantis said after his incredible performance. "The biggest dream since a kid was to break the world record at the Olympics, and I've been able to do that in front of the most ridiculous crowd I've ever competed in front of." Duplantis' gold was one of four titles up for grabs at the Stade de France on Monday. On the track, British middle distance runner Hodgkinson finally ended her long wait to capture a major global championship title with gold in the 800m. Hodgkinson, who had claimed three consecutive silver medals at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and the World Championships in 2022 and 2023, led from start-to-finish to win in 1min 56.72sec. Ethiopia's Tsige Dugema claimed silver in 1:57.15 and Kenya's Mary Moraa took bronze (1:57.42).

Waqar Younis' appointment as adviser to PCB chief challenged in LHC



LAHORE (Web Desk) – A petition has been filed in the Lahore High Court (LHC) against the appointment of former skipper Waqar Younis as adviser to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman. A citizen, Mashkoor Hussain, moved the high court through his lawyer, Nadeem Sarwar. The federal government, PCB and Younis have been made respondents in the case. The petitioner argued that the appointment was made in violation of law as no advertisement was released for the vacancy. He has pleaded the high court to declare the appointment of Waqar Younis as adviser to PCB chairman null and void.

Ireland announce squads for upcoming bilateral engagements against Sri Lanka

(Web Desk)
Ireland women have named squads for the upcoming T20I and ODI series against Sri Lanka. Laura Delany will lead Ireland women in both formats against Sri Lanka, the series beginning with two T20Is to be played on 11 and 13 August in Dublin. It will be followed by three ODIs, all played in Belfast between 16-20 August. These games will be part of the ICC Women's Championship. Ireland will be looking to lift themselves from the bottom position in the points table. They currently have 2 points from 12 games, whereas Sri Lanka have 20 points from 21 games. Christina Coulter Reilly, Jane Maguire, and Cara Murray will feature only in the T20Is, while Joanna Loughran, Aimee Maguire, and Alice Tector will play only in the ODIs. The remaining players are part of both the squads. **T20I Squad:**
Laura Delany (c), Ava Canning, Christina Coulter Reilly, Alana Dalzell, Amy Hunter, Arlene Kelly, Gaby Lewis, Jane Maguire, Cara Murray, Leah Paul, Orla Prendergast, Una Raymond-Hoey, Freya Sargent, Rebecca Stokell **ODI Squad:**
Laura Delany (c), Ava Canning, Alana Dalzell, Amy Hunter, Arlene Kelly, Gaby Lewis, Joanna Loughran, Aimee Maguire, Leah Paul, Orla Prendergast, Una Raymond-Hoey, Freya Sargent, Rebecca Stokell, Alice Tector

