

Monthly

Safarti Tarjuman
Lahore

Information about Pakistan and International diplomatic
affairs in Urdu and English languages

Volume 14, • Issue No. 165, • Month: May, 2024

Saudi Government Requires

HAJJ VISA

for Hajj Performances

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Ebrahim Raisi's
Visit to Pakistan**

US State Department's
Annual Report Expressed
Concern Over Targeting
IMRAN KHAN
on Political Grounds.

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DISCLAIMER: The opinions, belief and viewpoints expressed by the various authors and forum participants in the Magazine do not necessarily the opinion, beliefs and viewpoint and official policies of the Magazine.

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P rime
Minist
er of
Pakistan Shehbaz
Sharif's visit to
Saudi Arabia

Will Saudi investors come to Pakistan?

**Report by
Syed Farzand Ali**

During the recent visit of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia and the visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan with a high-level delegation to Pakistan last month, no formal written agreement on investment was signed. However, Saudi Arabia assured Pakistan that it would invest in the country. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, upon his return from Saudi Arabia, reiterated his hope that Saudi investors would soon come to Pakistan. The visit of the Saudi Foreign Minister took place about a week after



Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's meeting with Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman in Makkah in April, where the Saudi government reaffirmed its commitment to investing five billion dollars in Pakistan

The Pakistani Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Ahmed Farooq, stated that the visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan to Pakistan was a serious attempt to move forward with investment agreements discussed between the two countries in recent years. Additionally, discussions were held on some new areas of cooperation.

A h m e d F a r o o q mentioned that based on the clear guidance from the leadership, the economic teams from both countries are in discussions about various sectors such as energy, renewable resources, connectivity, mining, agriculture, IT, construction, and human resources. The Pakistani ambassador expressed optimism that the large number of members in the Saudi delegation and the positions of the officials in the delegation indicate Saudi Arabia's strong interest in expanding economic relations with Pakistan.

After the return of the Saudi Foreign

Minister, Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif arrived in Riyadh to participate in a special session of the World Economic Forum. On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, the Prime Minister met with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and Saudi ministers. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif welcomed Saudi Arabia's interest in increasing economic partnership with Pakistan and expressed hope that the technical teams from both countries would soon complete their work, allowing many mutually beneficial projects to start. The Prime Minister emphasized the need to focus on energy, especially the construction and improvement of existing infrastructure, renewable energy, and bringing efficiency to the entire energy ecosystem. Upon returning to Pakistan, Prime Minister Shahbaz

Sharif stated that the relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and their economic partnership are becoming stronger. In his message at the end of his Saudi Arabia visit, he announced that a delegation of Saudi businesspeople would visit Pakistan in the coming days. He expressed his deep gratitude for Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's special directives regarding Pakistan. He assured that they would work diligently to turn the leadership's agreements into reality and that the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and their economic partnership are becoming increasingly strong. He mentioned that the discussions with global leaders were positive in terms of mutual cooperation, trade, and investment. He emphasized that achieving lasting peace in Gaza is crucial for global peace.

There's no doubt that Saudi Arabia has always played an

important role in Pakistan's economic stability. Now that Pakistan is facing severe economic difficulties, Saudi Arabia has stepped forward, not with financial aid but through investment to provide stability. The recent visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan with a high-level delegation to Pakistan and the earlier celebration of Eid al-Fitr by the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League, Dr. Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Al-Issa, with the Pakistani people, is proof of the deep historical brotherly relations between the two countries. During the two-day visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, he met with Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and Army Chief. They reiterated Saudi Arabia's commitment to strengthening the relationship, promoting trade and investment partnership, and fostering closer ties between the two countries.

Iran President Ebrahim Raisi's Visit to Pakistan.

Report: Syed Farzand Ali

After Iran's missile attacks on Israel, the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Pakistan gained significant importance. The eyes of the whole world were on Pakistan-Iran relations. During President Raisi's visit to Pakistan, where he signed memorandums on

old agreements, no new agreements were concluded, and there was no progress on significant old projects like the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline. Despite this, the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi was deemed crucial. After his three-day visit, the Iranian president visited not only the federal capital Islamabad but also Lahore in Punjab and Karachi in Sindh, where he was given a grand reception at both governmental and public levels to demonstrate to the world that both neighboring Islamic countries are united as

one.

During President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Pakistan, both countries issued a 28-point joint declaration, indicating that at the invitation of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, President Ebrahim Raisi conducted an official visit to Pakistan. Along with him was a high-level delegation, including Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian and other senior officials from the Iranian cabinet. During the visit, regional and global issues of mutual concern were discussed,



and several memorandums of understanding and agreements were signed. The joint declaration stated that during the visit of the Iranian president, both countries agreed to strengthen mutual relations through regular exchanges of high-level visits, emphasizing the historical, cultural, religious, and civilizational ties between the neighboring Islamic countries.



Regarding this visit, the Foreign Office spokesperson stated that the Pakistan-Iran joint declaration contains 28 points. During the visit, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi had discussions at the delegation level with the Prime Minister. The parties reviewed all aspects of Pakistan-Iran bilateral relations. They agreed to quickly finalize the Free Trade Agreement. A decision was also made to release citizens from both countries who are incarcerated in each other's prisons.

During his visit,

the Iranian president made it clear that "We cannot sever historical ties with Pakistan." In addition to meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, and the Army Chief, President Raisi also met with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Punjab Governor Baligh-ur-Rehman, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, and Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori. He visited the mausoleums of Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal, as well as various universities.

As news spread

about billions of dollars in trade agreements between Pakistan and Iran during the Iranian president's visit, the U.S. also expressed concern. The U.S. Department of State had to issue a statement saying that it is closely monitoring Pakistan-Iran relations and agreements with the Iranian president. This might be why the discussions on the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline and petroleum product agreements were not publicized.

It is questionable why, despite Iran completing the gas pipeline to the Pakistani



border, Pakistan has not moved ahead with its section of the project. An American official revealed last month that stopping the construction of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline has been a key objective for Washington. American efforts have delayed the project for over a decade. Last March, during a hearing in Congress, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu said that stopping the gas pipeline was one of their main objectives.

The completion of the Pakistan-Iran gas project is critical for Pakistan. It can meet Pakistan's gas needs and directly benefit Pakistan's industry. Similarly, if Pakistan obtains petroleum products from Iran, it would also benefit the Pakistani public, potentially reducing inflation. However, due to global sanctions against Iran, Pakistan seems hesitant to complete agreements with Iran, as the country's economy has become heavily

dependent on the IMF and international financial institutions due to the policies of Pakistani rulers.

Thus, the visit of the Iranian president to Pakistan can lead to the resolution of minor differences and strengthen relations. However, for Pakistan to complete trade agreements, it will need a truly democratic government committed to protecting Pakistan's sovereignty.

US State Department's Annual Report Expresses Concern Over Targeting Imran Khan on Political Grounds.

Pakistan's Foreign Office Rejects the Report

Is US Interference in Removing PTI Government and Labeling Treatment of PTI Leaders as Human Rights Violations Proof of American Double Standards?

Report: Faisal bin Aziz

The US State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor has reviewed the state of human rights in nearly



200 countries around the world. In its annual report, it expressed concern over targeting Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his party on political grounds, the ban on broadcasting his speeches, and the difficulty in participating freely in elections.

The report noted that during 2023, there were no significant changes in the human rights situation in Pakistan. According to the report, serious issues like extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, inhumane treatment by the government and its

representatives, restrictions on freedom of expression and media, unjustified arrests and disappearances of journalists, censorship, criminal defamation laws, blasphemy laws, and internet restrictions persist in Pakistan. The report further stated that peaceful assembly, political detention, and lack of fair judicial processes were among the critical human rights issues facing the country in 2023.

Concerning unjust judicial proceedings, the report mentioned cases filed against former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his party,

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), including charges against 22 PTI leaders and workers, including Imran Khan and his sisters, for allegedly attacking the Corps Commander's house in Lahore.

Regarding court proceedings, the report pointed out that Pakistan's law allows the government to try cases involving terrorism and sectarian violence in anti-terrorism courts (ATCs). Human rights activists claim that officials often try high-profile cases in ATCs to expedite proceedings, regardless of whether the cases have any connection to

terrorism.

The report also referenced the Pakistani media, including online media, and cited instances of press restrictions. It noted that the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) issued directives to TV channels and other media outlets to avoid critical reporting on state institutions. The report stated that in March 2023, following a speech by former Prime Minister Imran Khan in Lahore, there was a ban on his media coverage. In his speech, Imran Khan claimed that former Army Chief General Qamar

Javed Bajwa was responsible for his ouster from power. The report referenced a Qatari media group, Al Jazeera, indicating that about two hours after the ban, PEMRA suspended the license of ARY News for broadcasting Imran Khan's speech.

Regarding political party restrictions, the report noted that following the violent protests after Imran Khan's arrest on May 9, the government initiated a crackdown, arresting thousands of protesters, including PTI workers and journalists. Subsequently, many PTI leaders remained in



detention, and the government and military announced that those involved in the May 9 incidents would be tried in military courts. According to the report, many PTI leaders were repeatedly arrested despite being granted bail, and PTI was denied permits for several rallies.

In response to the US State Department's report, Pakistan's Foreign Office rejected the report, calling it "inappropriate, based on incorrect information, and completely contrary to ground realities." The Foreign Office stated that they were concerned about the report's neglect of grave human rights violations in Gaza and Indian-administered Kashmir. The Foreign Office noted that only a politically motivated report could ignore the dire situation in Gaza and the killing of 33,000 people. Pakistan's Foreign Office added that American silence on the Gaza massacre undermines the objectives of the human rights report. The statement concluded by



asserting that Pakistan is committed to improving its system to protect human rights.

In analyzing the impact of the US State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor report, some independent analysts suggest that such reports have been used by the US to serve its ulterior motives. On one hand, there are reports of US interference in removing the PTI government, while on the other hand, US agencies label the

removal of the PTI government and the treatment of PTI leaders as human rights violations, which is evidence of American double standards.

Former Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh believes that the report is unlikely to cause significant diplomatic complications for Pakistan. He further stated that the report's purpose is merely to document where human rights violations occur.

Israel's Preparations to Attack Rafah After Gaza

Will UN and US Warnings Stop the Attack?

A potential Israeli attack on Rafah would cause such devastation that no humanitarian plan could manage it. (The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs)

Report: Ishrat Yasmeeen

After the brutal attacks in Gaza, Israel has started preparing for a ground assault on the southern city of Rafah, located near the Gaza border. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has approved military plans and moved troops and tanks to southern Israel, indicating that a new war



could start at any moment.

It's unclear whether the Israeli prime minister's threat is genuine or if he's using it as leverage to pressure Hamas into releasing Israeli hostages without conditions. Israel has repeatedly expressed its intent to carry out ground operations against Hamas in Rafah, but there's considerable international opposition to this plan. The United States, Egypt, and Qatar are pushing for a ceasefire agreement, hoping it will deter the planned attack on Rafah. However, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, during a

meeting with families of Israeli hostages, reaffirmed his commitment to destroying Hamas, stating that the Israeli army would enter Rafah with or without an agreement.

Netanyahu said, "We will enter Rafah because we have no other choice. We will destroy Hamas's battalion. We will achieve all our war objectives, including the return of all hostages."

More than 1.4 million Palestinians—over half of Gaza's population—have taken refuge in Rafah due to

Israeli attacks, forced to relocate there. Meanwhile, some northern entry points have been opened, and the US has promised that a port for maritime shipments will be ready within weeks. However, much of the food, medicine, and other supplies enter Gaza from Egypt through Rafah or the nearby Kerem Shalom crossing, and an attack would make this movement impossible.

The US has urged Israel not to start operations in Rafah without a "viable plan." The US has also suggested that Israel conduct "pinpoint operations" against Hamas without a large ground assault in Rafah.

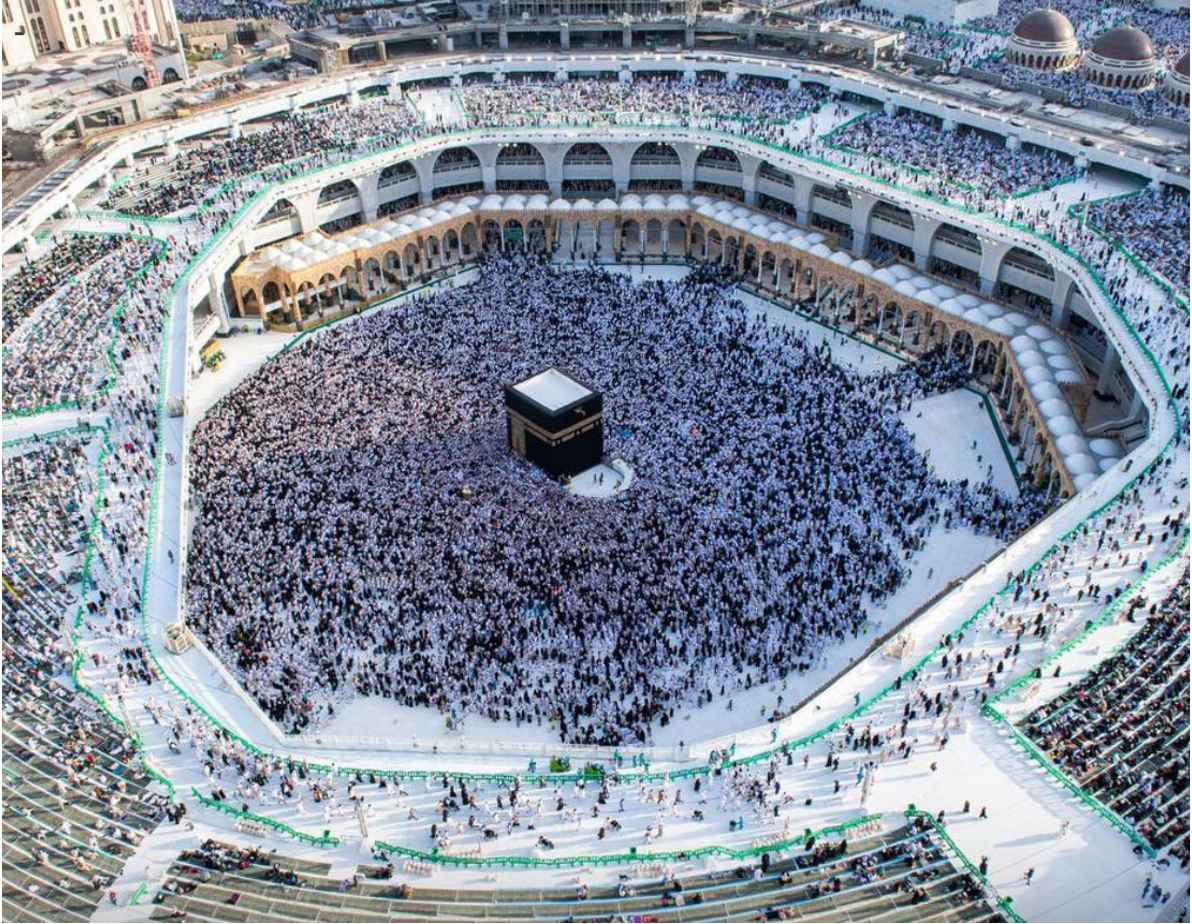
UN Secretary-General António Guterres has warned that an Israeli attack on Rafah would lead to unbearable escalation and destruction, impacting not only Palestinians but potentially spreading to other regions in Gaza and beyond. He emphasized that the possible ground operation in Rafah would



be an "unfathomable tragedy," causing significant harm to Palestinians in Gaza and potentially leading to severe consequences for the West Bank and the wider Middle East region. This action could result in thousands more Palestinian civilian casualties and displace millions.

António Guterres mentioned that all UN Security Council members and many

countries have clearly opposed a possible Israeli military operation in Rafah. He appealed to all those with influence over Israel to do everything possible to prevent military operations in Gaza. Meanwhile, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Martin Griffiths, stated that an Israeli attack on Rafah would cause such destruction that no humanitarian plan could cope with it.



Saudi Government Requires Hajj Visa for Hajj Performance

Individuals with Visit, Tourist, Work, and Transit Visas Cannot Perform Hajj Performing Hajj Without a Hajj Visa is a Violation of Law and Will Result in Penalties.

Deadline to Apply for Hajj Permit or Obtain a Permit is June 13, 2024 (7 Dhu al-Hijjah 1445H)

Visitors, tourists, workers, and those on transit visas are not allowed to perform Hajj.

(Web Report)

The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has issued a list of visas under which individuals cannot perform Hajj. The Ministry stated on its Twitter (X) account that performing Hajj without

a Hajj visa is a violation of the law and can lead to penalties. The Ministry of Hajj emphasized that it is mandatory to obtain a visa before arriving in the Kingdom to perform Hajj. It clarified that individuals with visit, tourist, work, and transit visas cannot perform Hajj.

The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has made it clear that the deadline for applying for Hajj or obtaining a permit is June 13, 2024 (7 Dhu al-Hijjah 1445H). Those who have

not performed Hajj before can apply for available seats. The Ministry stated that for this year's Hajj, domestic pilgrims must have completed vaccination courses, including a COVID-19 vaccine, one dose of the influenza vaccine, and one dose of the meningitis vaccine within the last five years. All this information must be recorded on the Sehhaty app.

The Ministry of Hajj indicated that once the Hajj application is approved, the permit will be issued on the Absher platform, from where it can be printed. To print the Hajj permit, first, log



in to Absher, then click on "Services," select the Ministry of Hajj, and finally print the Hajj permit.

By imposing these requirements, the Saudi government aims to ensure that Hajj is performed by those who

meet the legal and health criteria, while also streamlining the process for obtaining the necessary permits. If you have further questions or need additional information, you can refer to the official websites or contact the relevant authorities.

