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PTI made every possible attempt to sabotage recent elections: Jan Achakzai

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) strived very hard to make the recent general elections controversial, and for the purpose, it (PTI) also made propaganda.
 In an official statement issued here the other day, the caretaker Minister for Information maintained that the fake videos were made viral, the narrative of fake form-45 was made and then the Commissioner Rawalpindi was launched too.
 In addition to this, the PTI also wrote a letter to IMF, and even made it every possible attempt to sabotage the elections, but it failed in its designs.
 The caretaker minister for Information said that PTI has no other option except accepting the results of elections as the fake propaganda would not work now. He said that it is a reality that PTI has just lost and as such it has to accept its defeat.

Jan Achakzai stressed that the PTI should work with new government for development and prosperity of the country so that the country is economically stabilized.
 He said that development is not possible from the politics of disturbance and instability and the public rights are also violated.
 The caretaker Minister Information also asked the PTI not to prefer its personal interests in the larger interest of the country and may adopt the course of practical politics so as to steer the country out of current challenges.
 He said that there is a need to present positive image of Pakistan before the world. He believed that Pakistan has to move ahead for development and prosperity, and if anyone made any attempt to hinder its way, then one would be dealt with iron hands.
 He said that the new government would emphasize on taking the country along while following the constitution and law.



QUETTA: Activists of Markazi Muslim League holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Quetta press club

Over 2.655 million children to be vaccinated as anti-polio campaign begins today

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The seven-day polio immunization is due to start from today (Monday) all over the Balochistan province.
 The Coordinator Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication Balochistan, Syed Zahid Shah informed that more than 26,55,000 children would be administered anti-polio drops during the campaign that would last March 3, 2024.
 Approximately 11,000 teams would be taking part in the anti-polio campaign, the EOC Coordinator adding that the Vitamin "A" drops would also be administered to the children this time. Syed Zahid Shah mentioned that no fresh case of polio has been reported from the province for last three months.
 However, the polio virus was detected in the sewerage and environmental samples collected from different districts of the province.
 Coordinator EOC said that all available resources are being mobilized to ensure complete eradication of the polio virus from Balochistan.
 He assured that foolproof security would be ensured for the teams taking part in the anti-polio campaign in the province.
 Syed Zahid Shah reiterated the government's resolve to fully eradicate the virus from Balochistan saying that we would not sit with ease until and unless the virus is eradicated.

PPP secures speaker, deputy speaker slots in Sindh Assembly

Awais Qadir Shah pledges unbiased attitude irrespective of party affiliation

KARACHI (INP): Members of the Sindh Assembly through a secret ballot on Sunday elected PPP's Awais Qadir Shah and Anthony Naveed as speaker and deputy speaker, respectively.
 Out of a total of 147 votes cast on Sunday, Shah secured 111 votes while MQM-P's Sofia Shah clinched 36. Meanwhile, Naveed also secured 111 votes while MQM-P's Advocate Rashid Khan won 36.
 The development comes a day after as many as 147 legislators-elect of the PPP and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) were sworn in as members of the 16th provincial assembly.
 Outgoing Sindh Assembly speaker, Agha Siraj Durrani, administered the oath to 111 PPP members and 36 from the MQM-P on Saturday. Notably absent were nine PTI-backed independent candidates, three from the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) and two from Jamaat-i-Islami, all protesting the election outcome.
 Meanwhile the newly elected Speaker of the Sindh Assembly, Syed Awais Qadir Shah, pledged on Sunday to show an unbiased attitude towards MPAs, irrespective of their party affiliation.
 Soon after taking the oath, he invited them to work together for the welfare of the people. Awais, who polled 111 votes in the election for the post of Speaker, thanked his party leadership for nominating him as Speaker.
 He also expressed his gratitude for the support of the people in electing him as MPA. The speaker said that it was a proud moment for him. He said this assembly passed a resolution for the creation of the country. The father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, sat in this assembly, adding that Liaquat Ali Khan waved the Pakistani flag here.
 He said that the assembly, in line with the constitution, would complete the next five years.



7th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit Exercise-2024 opened at the National Counter Terrorism Centre at Pabbi.

Shehbaz stresses joint efforts against poverty, unemployment, ignorance

LAHORE (INP): President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and prime minister-designate Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the need of joint efforts to get rid the country of poverty, unemployment and ignorance.
 In a statement issued on Sunday, he said that political stability was of significance importance for economic stability in the country.
 Shehbaz Sharif said that the today need of national unity for political and economic stability was greater than it was felt every before in the country's history.
 He said that adopting the attitude of simplicity and frugality, we would have to spend maximum resources on welfare of the people.
 The PM designate said that political stability and a peaceful atmosphere were extremely important for attracting foreign investment.
 He said that Pakistan will be prosperous only when all its units were prosperous.
 Shehbaz Sharif said that he has set a bright example of economic development and stability in the past and practical and concrete measures will be taken to improve the economy.
 He said, "Alive nations face challenges and difficulties with bravery and hardwork. We will move forward together and solve the problems faced by the country."
 The PML-N President said that during his government, he saved billions of rupees on development projects in Punjab and set a new record of economy and savings. It was a golden era of prosperity, he added.
 Shehbaz Sharif said that he will lead the country on the path of prosperity and development under the prudent leadership of the people.

New PM to take oath of office by March 1

ISLAMABAD (INP): The country's new prime minister will take oath of his office by March 1, 2024, it was learnt on Sunday.
 President Arif Alvi will administer the oath at a ceremony to be held at the President's House either on February 29 (Thursday) or March 1 (Friday).
 Before that either on February 28 or February 29, the newly elected members of the National Assembly (MNAs) will elect leader of the House through 'show of hands'.

Maryam Nawaz poised to make history as Punjab to elect CM today

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab Assembly is set to witness a one-to-one contest for the post of chief minister (CM) tomorrow (Monday) as nomination papers of PML-N nominee Maryam Nawaz and Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) Rana Aftab were declared valid after scrutiny.
 Sunday noon was the deadline, announced by newly-elected Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmed Khan for submission of nomination papers for the post.
 Malik Ahmed Khan did the verification of nomination papers. He said that the election for the coveted slot will be held in tomorrow's assembly session.
 ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi said the provision of health and education facilities were critical factors for achieving the goal of women's empowerment. He underscored the need for the provision of a harassment-free environment to women so that they could become part of the workforce and contribute to economic growth.
 The President expressed these views while speaking at the 5th edition of the HUM Women Leaders Awards 2024.
 The President said, "Today we celebrate women leaders for their endeavors and men who contributed to the economic empowerment of women."
 Talking about the rights of women, he cited the saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who said that a man who raised two daughters earned his place in paradise.
 President Dr Arif Alvi stated that women in human societies, through the ages, were epitome of love and hope and they taught children love and kept the family system intact. He pointed out that women suffered the most in wars and acts of genocide, adding millions lost their lives in genocides in the previous centuries.
 The President criticized the acts of genocide by Israeli forces in Gaza, saying that thousands of women and children were killed.
 The President further said genocide was committed in Gaza for the vested interests and in negation of humanitarian values.
 The President said that the Pakistani nation had capability to overcome challenges as it did during the COVID-19 pandemic, through collective efforts and Pakistan remained the third most successful country in tackling the deadly disease.
 He urged the nation to work together and forge unity to address the numerous challenges including poverty, malnutrition, stunting and maternal and neonatal deaths.
 The President lamented that more than 26 million children in the country were still out of school. In comparison, enrollment of children in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India were higher, he mentioned.
 He said China focused on health and education sectors to lift 700 million people out of poverty and Pakistan should adopt the same path.
 The President also lauded the nation, particularly women and youth for their participation in the voting process during the general election.
 Speaking on the occasion, First Lady Samina Alvi commended the efforts of organizers and added that these awards recognized and encouraged our unsung heroes; our sisters for their valuable contribution in different walks of life. She urged women to come forward to avail the easy loans offered by banks for setting up businesses.



QUETTA: Abdul Qahar Wadan, Haji Atta Muhammad Bangulzai, Ghulam Nabi Marri, Qadir Nayel, Kabir Afghan and Riaz Baloch addressing a protest sit-in organized by Four-Parties Alliance in front of RO office

37 experienced parliamentarians along with: 25 new faces to be part of Balochistan Assembly taking oath on Feb 28

Five former CMs including Nawab Aslam Raisani, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Jam Kamal Khan & Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch among those 37 experienced parliamentarians became part of Provincial Assembly

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly is going to be comprised 60 percent experienced members and 40 percent new members, elected for the first time in the recent general elections.
 All the parliamentarians-elect are likely to take oath of the membership of provincial assembly on February 28 (Monday) for its (Assembly) session has already been summoned by the Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.
 The experienced members, who became part of the new assembly are included five former Chief Ministers. They are included: Nawab Aslam Raisani, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Jam Kamal Khan & Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch
 Among them, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri has elected as member of provincial assembly for 7th term.
 Other experienced parliamentarians who have made their way into the provincial assembly so far are included:
 Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Nawab Jangz Marri, Jam Kamal Khan, Nawabzada Tariq Magso, Sardar Sarfraz Domki, Mir Zahoore Ahmed Buledi, Ali Madad Jatak, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Sardar Sarfraz Bugti, Asghar Rind, Asfandyar Kakar, Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, Ms. Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani, Ms. Ghazala Gola, Mir Shoaib Noshervani, Muhammad Khan Toor Utmankhail, Sardar Masood Luni, Mir Asim Kurd, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman meeting with leader of the house in Senate Ishaq Dar.

Decides to prolong protest all over province: Protest sit-in of 4-Parties Alliance ends in Quetta

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The protest sit-in (dharna) being staged by the four Parties Alliance in front of Deputy Commissioner's office for last 17 days came to an end on Sunday afternoon.
 The four Parties Alliance comprising Balochistan National Party (BNP), Pashtoonkhaw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), National Party and Hazara Democratic Party (HDP) had started dharna against alleged rigging in the elections and change in the results of different constituencies of the province.
 Speaking to the media, a leader of Balochistan National Party, Ghulam Nabi Marri told that he recorded our protest in democratic manner by staging protest sit-in in front of the office of Deputy Commissioner / District Returning Officer Quetta. However, no one paid hearing to our protest, Mr. Marri maintained. He also said that the four Parties Alliance has decided to expand the protest in the province after ending it in Quetta.
 He announced to hold protest demonstrations and take out rallies all over the province as a mark of protest against alleged rigging in the elections.

Human error blamed for 2020 Karachi plane crash

KARACHI (INP): The PIA investigation board has released an inquiry report into the Karachi plane on Sunday, which claimed 99 lives, four years after the heart-wrenching tragedy. Amid lack of coordination, human error was reported to be the main cause of the crash, said the inquiry report. The final investigation report was released by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board regarding PIA Airbus A320 nearly four years after the crash that claimed 99 lives on May 22, 2020.
 The report clearly said there was a lack of communication and harmony between the two pilots and air traffic controllers. It further revealed that four times before landing, the air traffic controller stopped the pilot from landing, telling him that the plane's key height was too high.
 For the fifth time, the air traffic controller allowed for landing. However, the air traffic controller did not tell the pilot that the plane's engine hit the runway and burst into flames during the first landing attempt.
 Moreover, for the first landing, the airplane's landing gears were opened, however at the second landing time one of the pilots again closed the landing gear. Hence, the plane made an attempt for landing without opening the landing gears for the first time, during which its engines struck the runway which ignited flames. Both the engines were affected due to this.
 The findings revealed that data from the plane's last four minutes could not be recorded as engine failure cut the electricity supply.
 The report said "the administrative responsibility for the accident lies on PIA and Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority. Due to lack of flight data analysis, mistakes of pilots related to flight procedures were not revealed," the report concluded.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Pipeline progress

The outgoing caretaker government has decided to move forward with the much-delayed Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project, and the incoming administration will be required to take further diplomatic and legal steps so that the scheme is no longer hindered. The Cabinet Committee on Energy on Friday decided to construct an 80km stretch of the pipeline running from the Iranian border to Gwadar. The Iranians have built the pipeline at their end, but Pakistan has been unable to start work on its side of the border, apparently due to concerns of attracting US sanctions. The interim administration seems to have made the decision considering Iran's option of moving the International Court of Arbitration, which could bring a \$18bn penalty for Pakistan, as the state had issued a sovereign guarantee for the project.

The caretaker set-up's move should bring some clarity regarding the project's future. First agreed to in 2009, the scheme has been in limbo mainly because successive governments here have failed to take a concrete decision on its fate. The caretaker administration had consulted neutral foreign experts on the issue, who had said that while the scheme could attract US sanctions, Pakistan's citing of force majeure to justify its inability to proceed with the scheme was a weak defence. Therefore, executing the project was preferable. With regard to the incoming rulers, the PML-N in its latest election manifesto has also cited its desire to "enhance economic and energy ties" with Iran, specifically mentioning the oil and gas sectors. Hence, there should be no contradictions between the caretaker administration's decision and the new rulers' policies.

The fact is that Pakistan needs regular and affordable access to natural gas. Dwindling local supplies cannot meet demand, as the gas load-shedding in both the domestic and industrial sectors, especially during the winter months, shows. Therefore, importing Iranian gas is a sensible economic decision; it is the geopolitics of the matter that have caused lengthy delays in the scheme's implementation. The fear of US sanctions should be dispensed with. For example, both China and India have been importing Russian oil, despite the West's displeasure with this trade in the context of the Ukraine war. The US has sanctioned hundreds of entities and individuals linked to Russia. This includes firms in China, Turkey and the UAE. And while it can be argued that China and India have the economic heft to ignore American and European sanctions, Pakistan, if it plays its cards right, can also trade with Iran without attracting Washington's ire. The state should go ahead with the pipeline, while the legal and diplomatic fronts need to be monitored to ensure that the project is protected from American sanctions. The new government must do what is in the country's best interests.

Smoke and mirrors?

Muna Khan

A line from a piece I quoted a few weeks ago has stayed with me: "Does social media cause this anger or does it reveal it?" This was from a 2022 interview Vox did with Lucy Allais, a philosopher at Johns Hopkins University. I've been paying more attention to exchanges in the real world and the virtual world to see if I can attempt to answer whether X held up a mirror to show us we are rude and angry, were we always like this?

I couldn't get anywhere because I was rudely disconnected from the platform I hoped would allow me to show you a glimpse of the aforementioned frustration. But I think we all kind of know that how we got here is the result of years of stoking anger, resentment, fear about 'the others' — for one side the others are corrupt, another blames the cult followers for all ills in Pakistan.

An explanation may be needed here, especially for an older generation unfamiliar with how algorithms select content that elicits anger and outrage as an audience engagement strategy. These platforms allow for people's inhibitions to be lowered online because the nature of the interaction offers anonymity, invisibility and no fear of consequences. Social media is an unforgiving place. Users are baying for blood and unable to imagine, let alone accept, that someone made a mistake in their 280-word tweet. You can get away with saying truly horrible things and at most, your account is suspended, only for you to create another one. Studies show how extreme emotions coupled with lack of accountability can lead to bullying, harassment and — this is scary — arguments that end in vio-

lence in-person confrontations. Max Fisher documented some incidents in his book Chaos Machine. He cites a study conducted in 2017 where researchers tried to understand why refugees in some towns in Germany experienced violence and others didn't. They found that where people used Facebook a lot in that area, violence was up. If there was a decrease or disruption in Facebook usage, violence was down. There's equally compelling, and terrible, stories of how people used WhatsApp to organise massacres of Muslims in Myanmar and the violence in the US Capitol on Jan 6, 2021, has been linked to vlogs on YouTube promoting radical views. Social media platforms are, as the founder of Twitter Jack Dorsey told a Congressional hearing in the US, "ultimately [...] a business. And a business wants to grow the number of its customers". The way it does so is by keeping users online longer, in their echo chambers, hearing what they want to hear. However, they don't want to accept responsibility for what people do after they've been fed content on their platforms. This is where it gets tricky. Social media isn't shaping worldview but world events too, as Fisher writes in his book.

And Facebook — which also owns WhatsApp — doesn't really want to take responsibility for the mobs that went on an anti-Muslim rampage in Sri Lanka in 2018. Fisher writes how Facebook did not respond to the Sri Lankan government's calls to help them — broke the violence broke out — but did write to ask why their traffic had dropped after the government banned Facebook for a short period to quell the violence. Facebook did eventually

apologise for its role after conducting a probe into the events.

Unfortunately, not much has changed since. The answer is not to impose a ban, says Fisher. This must be especially disappointing to read for policymakers in Pakistan, whose favoured form of solution is to ban. I don't know when it has served them well but here we are, with no access to X and no let-up in the disinformation.

Fisher believes platforms could try turning off algorithms and "engagement-maximising features" — like the like button and the counter at the bottom which shows you how many people have liked it, shared it. Policymakers around the world have to work with these platforms to get them to remove the harmful aspects within their platforms because there is good in social media. I believe most governments don't want to risk alienating these platforms that can pack up and go elsewhere, taking their millions with them.

Right now, unfortunately, these platforms are showing us our worst sides. And it's playing out in the real world as we saw when women diners attacked — verbally and physically — PML-N's Hanif Abbasi at a restaurant in Islamabad. I fear once their identities are revealed and shared, their safety is at risk. I suspect they didn't think of the consequences because they were driven by moral outrage online, not rational thinking in real life. It is impossible to avoid harassment, misogyny, videos of violence and atrocities, conspiracy theories online. We have to move fast if we want to stop that from trending in our physical world. -- Courtesy Dawn

Gandhi and Jinnah

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

As relations between India and Pakistan remain frosty, a theatrical play in Washington has stirred conversations on peaceful coexistence, inter-faith harmony, and the need for a fresh look at the history of the two countries. The play Gandhi and Jinnah return home, discussed at the Karachi Literature Festival last week, describes how far the two countries have drifted from the vision of their respective founding fathers, Gandhi, the Mahatma, and Jinnah, the Quaid-e-Azam, who both hailed from Gujarat and played central roles in the struggle for independence.

Gandhi had envisioned that India would be a united, secular and pluralistic country once the British left. Fondly called Babu, he built his freedom struggle on the principle of non-violence, famously remarking that an eye for an eye would make the whole world blind.

Jinnah, too, was a strong proponent of peace, harmony and pluralism, as clearly stipulated in his speech of Aug 11, 1947. He also was not opposed to the unity of India per se, as he had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946. However, Jinnah was concerned that the legacy of parliamentary democracy the British were leaving behind would keep the Muslim minority perpetually subservient to the rule of the Hindu majority. He did not wish to see British Raj replaced by Ram Raj. Jinnah's efforts to create Pakistan were essentially aimed at enabling the Muslims of India to protect their political, economic, and cultural rights.

Seventy-six years later, if Gandhi and Jinnah were to, fictionally, return home in 2024,

they would find their respective countries to be very different from the ones they had envisioned. Gandhi would find India on course to becoming a Hindu nationalist state, with shrinking space for minorities, growing communal violence, mosques being replaced with mandirs, and the Ayodhya syndrome in full swing to make India a Hindu rashtra. He would be particularly dejected to find that his own state Gujarat had seen the worst kind of violence against Muslims in 2002.

For his part, if Jinnah were to return home in 2024, he would find his country mired in corruption, religious extremism, lawlessness, unemployment and poverty. He would be grieved to see a country blessed with such fertile land, minerals, mountains, and splendid coastline ranking depressingly low in social and economic indicators.

The play, conceived by Akbar S. Ahmad, the Iqbal Chair at the American University, Washington, and directed by Manjula Kumar of Global Performing Arts, sends out a powerful message that in the interest of peace, both countries must return to the vision of their founding fathers.

Another, perhaps more important, message that Akbar S. Ahmad sends through this play is that the prevailing hostility between India and Pakistan does not serve either country well. The past cannot be changed. There is a need to look at each other afresh as friends and neighbours.

Jinnah had envisioned India and Pakistan living in peaceful coexistence, much like the US and Canada. He even maintained his residence in Mumbai. Gandhi was opposed to partition. Yet, when it happened, he used all his

influence on the Indian government to ensure that Pakistan got its share of financial and other dues, signalling his advice for a peaceful co-existence.

For the past seven decades, mutual mistrust has bedevilled relations between India and Pakistan. Since 2016, the two have suspended all bilateral contacts. Such a hostile environment deepens misunderstanding between the two countries. Dialogue is not a favour by one to the other, but an essential means with which to address each other's concerns. For Pakistan, a resolution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people is a high priority. For India, the issue of cross-border terrorism is important, which incidentally has also assumed urgency for Pakistan, given the evidence that recently emerged that India had sent assassins to Pakistan to kill so-called anti-India elements, much like what it did lately in Canada and the US. India and Pakistan must, therefore, engage to address these and other issues in order to pave the ground for creating a good-neighbourly relationship. It is clear that there is a gloomy future for South Asia if India and Pakistan live in perpetual hostility. The play Gandhi and Jinnah return home was a creative way to drive home the message that during these times of hostility, it is worth restudying the lives and works of Jinnah and Gandhi and appreciate how their goals were ultimately common in the desire to see prosperity for their peoples in a post-colonial South Asia. And that they never envisioned nor desired such a hostile relationship that has set back both countries. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

KTH chief says:

Pak exports have great potential in Kyrgyzstan

LAHORE (APP): Kyrgyzstan Trade House (KTH) Chairman Meher Kashif Younis said on Sunday that exporting pharmaceuticals, agricultural products, dry fruit and leather goods to Kyrgyzstan offers a promising opportunity for economic growth and international trade relations.

Talking to a delegation of exporters and importers led by Faran Shahid here, he said Pak exported pharmaceutical, agricultural, dry fruit and leather products of USD 15.95 million during the first ten months of 2023 which is not up to existing potential. Meher added that in 2023, Kyrgyzstan's

foreign trade turnover increased by 29.9 percent (USD 15.7 billion) compared to the previous year. Kyrgyz exports reached up to USD 3.3 billion, a 46.8 percent increase, compared to 2022, while the imports grew by 26 percent to USD 12.4 billion.

The KTH Chairman said that China was Kyrgyzstan's top trading partner in 2023, accounting for 34.7 percent of Kyrgyzstan's foreign trade but Pakistan's share is negligible. He mentioned that trade with the member states of Eurasian Economic Union accounted for 27.8 percent of the country's total trade volume. He said Kyrgyzstan, located in

Central Asia, is a country with a developing economy and a growing demand for various goods and commodities. Pharmaceuticals constitute a vital component of any nation's healthcare system, and Kyrgyzstan is no exception. Exporting pharmaceutical products to Kyrgyzstan can contribute to improving access to essential medications, enhancing healthcare infrastructure, and ultimately, fostering better public health outcomes. He said pharmaceutical companies can tap into Kyrgyzstan's healthcare market and establish long-term partnerships with local distributors and healthcare institutions.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary General IEAA Zahid Rafiq, CEO Taber Developers & marketing Musawar Abbasi, Executive Member Usman Shaheen, and others pose for a group photo during the inauguration ceremony of the new office of Taber Developers and Marketing.

Tapas invites business community to participate in upcoming Chamber Expo-2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador Tapas Adhikari of Nepal to Pakistan extended an invitation to the Sialkot business community on Sunday, urging them to participate in the upcoming Nepal Chamber Expo-2024 in March and the Investment Summit in April 2024.

During his visit to the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry and interaction with Abdul Gafour Malik, President of the Chamber, and other executive members, he said that the participation of

Sialkot entrepreneurs could pave the way for bilateral business promotion, investment, and technology transfer.

"The Government of Nepal is ready to extend all kinds of support to foreign direct investment," he added.

"Sialkot could be a role model for Nepali people that it has emerged from a small town to a global business hub because of the hard work, innovation, and entrepreneurship of its people," he added.

He said Nepal and

Pakistan needed more economic engagements and as Ambassador of Nepal, "I want to tap the business opportunity in Pakistan that could be beneficial to both countries." During the interaction, he highly appreciated the contribution of Sialkot entrepreneurs making Sialkot a hub of sports goods, surgical items, and kitchen cutlery products in Pakistan.

He informed that recently Nepal has been able to export 6 containers of Nepali tea to the Pakistani market after decades.

Effective policy needed to promote demand-driven technical education: Saigol

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) Fahimur Rahman Saigol has said that educated and skilled people can play a better role in national and economic development, calling for formulating an effective policy for the promotion of demand-driven technical education, as the present setup of technical training is not addressing the requirements of modern industrialization.

He stated this while addressing the audience as special guest at the annual meeting of Defense Welfare Society.

Fahimur Rahman Saigol appreciated the



HYDERABAD: A vendor displaying the rose flowers to attract the customers in connection with shab-e-barat at flowers market.

work and passion of the organizers of Defense Welfare Society who are providing technical education to students in this era of inflation, which is valuable and praiseworthy.

He observed that promotion of technical education is vital and much-needed for economic growth. He said that the collaboration between industry and academia will ultimately bridge the skill gap, leading to a quantum jump in the country's exports.

The PIAF Chairman said that the young generation should pay full attention to their studies because they have to take care of the country's future.



LAHORE: Women purchasing artificial jewelry from the stall during the Lahore Literary Festival at AlHamra.

PFC board for industry status to furniture sector

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council's Board of Directors (PFC-BoD) has demanded the government to grant furniture sector the status of an industry in order to increase country's overall exports. Chairing the board meeting here Sunday, PFC Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq said the furniture sector in Pakistan was a vital component of its economy, employing millions and showcasing the craftsmanship and skill of its people. However, it had long been overlooked

and undervalued, he said, adding that granting industry status to the furniture sector was crucial for several reasons as it provide access to various incentives, subsidies, and support mechanisms tailored for industrial sectors, thus fostering growth and innovation within the furniture industry. He said, it would enhance the sector's credibility and attract much-needed investment, both domestic and foreign, leading to modernization and expansion.

Economy another victim of war in impoverished Sudan

PORT SUDAN, Sudan (AFP/APP): Before the Sudanese army and paramilitary fighters turned their guns on each other last year, Ahmed used to sell one of Sudan's main exports: gum arabic, a vital ingredient for global industry. Now he's out of business, and his story encapsulates the broader economic collapse of Sudan during 10 months of war.

Since combat between two rival generals began on April 15, Ahmed has been at the fighters' mercy.

"When the war began, I had a stock of gum arabic in a warehouse south of Khartoum that was intended for export," Ahmed told AFP, asking to use only his first name for fear of retaliation.

"To get it out I had to pay huge sums to the Rapid Support Forces," the paramilitaries commanded by Mohamed Hamdan Daglo who are at war with the Sudanese Armed Forces led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

Businessmen pin great hopes from new government

FAISALABAD (APP): As consultations for new government culminate with political bigwigs agreeing to a coalition government, the business community and other strata of life are pinning great hopes from the new set up for economic revival, reduction in cost of living, energy prices and inflation and creating job opportunities.

Recent political instability coupled with economic recession had severely choked business activities with discontinuation of economic policies, depreciation of Pakistani Rupee versus US dollar and high production cost further aggravating the

situation.

But, the experts and business community still expect better days ahead if the new government resolves for e-governance and IT based mechanism, eradication of corruption and nepotism and sustainable economic policies.

"Political uncertainty played havoc with national economy. The rumors spread by myopic elements shattered the confidence of investors as witnessed from rise and fall of stock market," remarked Acting President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Dr Sajjad Arshad.

"Pakistan's dollar bonds shed heavily as in wake of rumors that People's Party and Muslim League-Nawaz had failed to finalize the future government," he said. "But, as soon as these parties reached an agreement, a visible increase was recorded in Pak dollar bonds, clearly indicating the importance of political stability in the country."

He regretted that during the transitional phase of government formation, some elements started trolling the political leadership to appease their foreign masters.

"In such a scenario, consistent economic

policies can be a strong reply to these elements and for setting businesses on strong footing to steer country out of present crisis," Sajjad Arshad said. "Our money market remained highly volatile due to depleting reserves and we can boost our trade and reserves by bringing in investment and sorting out dollars shortage."

"Cost of production is another element pegging our exports. Our industry pays higher energy cost as compared to regional competitors that makes our exportable surplus costlier in international markets," he added.

He informed that electricity consumption in

FESCO region recorded a massive decline due to reduced economic and industrial activities. "Most of SMEs cannot afford high cost of electricity and have reduced their operation. Poor law and order is another challenge for healthy economic activities."

Gauging the gravity of situation, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz floated the idea of Charter of Economy that was initially rejected by its political opponents. But, now as almost all political forces have realized the challenge, it is hoped that they would join hands to ensure continuity of policies for a stable economy.

Naqvi opens new museum in Badshahi masjid, upgradation project of Mazaar-e-Iqbal

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, along with provincial ministers, visited the historic Badshahi Mosque and the Mazaar-e-Iqbal here on Sunday.

The CM inaugurated the new museum for placing the holy relics in the Badshahi Mosque and the upgradation project of the Mazaar-e-Iqbal.

Mohsin Naqvi also inaugurated the Lahore Fort Cafe being built at the exterior wall of the Lahore Fort and appreciated high quality of the new museum being built for placing the holy relics. He inspected the new and beautiful showcase for placing the holy relics.

The CM ordered early completion of the

transfer work of the holy relics in the new museum. Mohsin Naqvi maintained that safely keeping the holy relics attributed to the great personalities at an appropriate place is our foremost responsibility. The holy relics would be kept separately and safely in an excellent manner in the new museum. The installation work of new tiles, marbles in the exterior corridor of Mazaar-e-Iqbal and renovation work of its interior part has been completed. He inspected the construction, rehabilitation and upgradation work of the Mazaar-e-Iqbal. Mohsin Naqvi along with the provincial ministers paid a visit to the Mazaar-e-Iqbal and prayed for the prosperity, stability and

integrity of Pakistan. He directed to prepare SOPs for using the back door to pay a visit to the Mazaar-e-Iqbal. Mohsin Naqvi remarked that the tourists would feel entertained with the establishment of the Lahore Fort Cafe at the exterior wall of the Lahore Fort. Provincial ministers Dr. Javed Akram, Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Adviser Wahab Riaz, Chief Secretary, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Chairman Planning & Development Board, Khateeb Badshahi Mosque Abdul Khabeer Azad, IG Police, DG WCLA Kamran Lashari, Secretary Auqaf, Commissioner Lahore, CCPO, Deputy Commissioner and officials concerned were present.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi in a meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman.

Governor praises CM Naqvi, cabinet for completion of public welfare projects in record time

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a farewell call on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore. On this occasion, the Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab briefed the Governor Punjab about the performance of the Caretaker setup for 13 months in detail.

The Punjab Chief Minister also presented a report on the performance of the caretaker government. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman praised Mohsin Naqvi and the cabinet for the completion of public welfare projects in record time. He added that under the leadership of the caretaker chief minister Punjab, the caretaker

cabinet has set a good example of public service, transparency and governance. He said that continuity of policies is very important for the development of the country. Governor Punjab expressed the hope that the newly elected government will take forward the policies and projects of public welfare and bring development and stability in the country.



BAHAWALPUR: Rangers Cholistan Camel band presenting their skills at a ceremony held in connection with 19th TDCP Cholistan Desert Rally 2024 at Cholistan desert Jeep Rally.

Efforts to be made to overcome inflation, poverty: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz leader Azma Bukhari has said that an all-out effort will be made to overcome inflation and poverty in Punjab.

Taking to media outside the Punjab Assembly on Sunday she hoped that the opposition would accept the PML-N's mandate and added that her party wanted to

take along the opposition. She said, "The PML-N does not believe in politics of revenge."

Azma Bukhari said that the leader of the house in the Punjab Assembly would be elected through division of the house procedure. She said that in 2018, the PML-N had accepted the then PTI government despite all reservations.

Women among nine injured in truck-bus collision

FAISALABAD (INP): At least nine people including women were injured when an over speeding truck rammed into a passenger bus here on Sunday, rescue sources said.

According to details, due to bursting of tyre, a truck hit a passenger bus in Mushtaq Chowk of Tandlianwala in district Faisalabad.

Due to collision, the bus went off road and overturned resultantly nine people including 35-year-old Mohsin s/o Asghar Ali, 24-year-old Aqsa w/o Hafiz Amjad, 60-year-old Shehbaz s/o Muhammad Boota, 50-year-old Zahida Bibi w/o Noor Ahmed, 28-year-old Hafiz Amjad s/o Muhammad Aslam, 45-year-old Irshad Bibi w/o Abdul Razzad, 31-year-old Irfan s/o Abdul Rasheed, 30-year-old Parveen d/o Ahmed Umer and 32-year-old Nazeer Ahmed s/o Muhammad Sharif were injured.

The injured were shifted to Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Tandlianwala for treatment.

New population policy draft complete: Salman

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Population Welfare Department Secretary Salman Ejaz has announced the completion of a draft for a new population policy, soon to be presented for cabinet approval.

Presiding over a meeting here on Sunday, he highlighted the policy's transformative approach to family planning services and counselling, aiming to bring these vital services directly to the public. Through communication channels, the initiative seeks to raise awareness about family planning and its benefits. The planning welfare secretary stressed that the prospective Population Policy 2024-29 envisions a society characterized by

prosperity, health, and education. Recognizing fundamental rights to reproductive health, sufficient nutrition, and an elevated quality of life for all citizens, the policy targets a reduction in population growth rates, emphasizing coordination with stakeholders, including religious leaders and community engagement. The Population Welfare Department in Punjab, renowned for its reproductive health services, is dedicated to extending its accessible model beyond provincial borders. Leveraging transportation, awareness campaigns, and education, the department aims for comprehensive coverage.

SSC student shot dead by class fellow over petty issue

FAISALABAD (INP): A matriculation student was shot dead by class fellow over petty dispute in Chak No 7 GB on Sunday, police said.

According to details, a group of class fellows had gathered in a private academy to prepare for annual SSC exam where two class fellows Abdullah Irshad s/o Irshad Ali and Ali Arman exchanged hot words.

Other class fellows present on the scene settled the dispute between the two but Ali Arman considering it to be his insolence opened fire Abdullah Irshad while returning home.

Will not make verbal claims, to prove eligibility via good governance: Gandapur

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) chief minister office, Ali Amin Gandapur has said that he was not in favour of making verbal claims and pledges but will prove his eligibility through good governance.

Interacting with a private news channel on Sunday, he said that uplifting the country's economy was among the top priorities of PTI and it would present pro-people budget. Ali Amin Gandapur said that he would spare no efforts to provide maximum relief to

the people of province, ensuring law and order, restoration of health cards and to improve the education system of KP.

He said the PTI founder picked a team that won the world cup [in 1992] and he would adopt same passion to elect the provincial cabinet.

The PTI's candidate for KPC's slot said that 55 percent of the newly-elected members of his party were those who won for the first time. The recent elections have exposed the turncoats and separated them from those who were loyal to the party, he added.



LAHORE: People selecting and purchasing old books from a roadside setup at Mall Road.

Educating new generation about importance of clean, green environment stressed

MULTAN (APP): Secretary School Education of South Punjab, Dr. Obaidullah Khokhar, said that it was the need of the hour to educate the new generation about the importance of a clean and green environment and its related issues to deal with the dangers of climate change.

The aim of introducing Green Book as a curriculum in government schools by the Education Department of South Punjab was to prepare students for the changing climate.

He expressed these views while talking to senior civil servants, former Secretary of School

Education, South Punjab, Ghulam Farid, and a climate change consultant associated with an international organization, Ghazanfar Ali, regarding steps to deal with the threats of environmental and climate change.

On the occasion, Additional Secretary Khawaja Mazharul Haq Siddiqui, Deputy Secretary Saif-ur-Rehman Khan Balwani, and related officials were present in the meeting.

Dr. Obaidullah Khokhar said that Pakistan was on the fifth list among the countries most affected by the effects of climate change.

International News

92 killed in Gaza as Israel, Hamas seek ceasefire deal

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Dozens of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been killed in the latest Israeli strikes, the territory's health ministry said on Saturday, after Israel's spy chief joined talks in Paris seeking to unblock negotiations on a truce.

The talks come after a plan for a post-war Gaza unveiled by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu drew criticism from key ally the United States, and was rejected by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The talks also come alongside deepening fears for Gaza's civilians desperate for food. The United Nations' main aid body for Palestinians, UNRWA, said Gazans were "in extreme peril while

the world watches". Hamas said on Saturday that Israeli forces had launched more than 70 strikes on civilian homes in Gaza cities, including Deir-al-Balah, Khan Yunis and Rafah over the previous 24 hours. The health ministry said at least 92 people were killed.

Israel's military said it was "intensifying the operations" in western Khan Yunis using tanks, close-range fire and aircraft. "The soldiers raided the residence of a senior military intelligence operative" in the area and destroyed a tunnel shaft, a military statement said.

Hamas, the Palestinian movement that has ruled Gaza since 2007, said fighting was raging in the northern Gaza district of Zeitun. In nearby Jabalia refugee

camp, tempers are rising and on Friday dozens of people held an impromptu protest.

"We didn't die from air strikes but we are dying from hunger," said a sign held by one child.

In the camp, bedraggled children waited expectantly, holding plastic containers and battered cooking pots for what little food is available. Residents have taken to eating scavenged scraps of rotten corn, animal fodder unfit for human consumption and even leaves.

Gaza's health ministry said a two-month-old baby identified as Mahmud Fathu had died of "malnutrition". "The risk of famine is projected to increase as long as the government of Israel continues to impede the entry of aid into Gaza," as well as access to water.

Murder of 5 women shakes Vienna

Monitoring Desk
VIENNA: Austrian authorities were on Saturday investigating the killings of five women in the capital Vienna within a single day, sowing panic in the city. The dead included three women found brutally stabbed to death in a brothel.

The bodies of three young women were found with fatal knife wounds in a brothel in Vienna's underprivileged Brigittenau district on Friday night after a witness alerted police.

A 27-year-old man still carrying a knife that was believed to be the murder weapon was arrested nearby on suspicion of committing the murders, police said on Saturday. No motive has been given for the killings with the suspect still being questioned, Austrian press agency APA reported. In a separate case, a mother and her 13-year-old daughter had been found dead in a Vienna apartment.



Palestinians help an injured man at the site of a strike on a house in Rafah.

How Russia's military uses volunteer fighters to plug gaps in Ukraine

BALAKLIA (Internews): When Russian forces withdrew from the town of Balaklia in eastern Ukraine in late 2022, pursued by Ukrainian troops and under artillery fire, they left a poorly equipped group of volunteers to guard their retreat.

The force of around 50 men came from the National Army Combat Reserve - known by its Russian acronym BARS - a loose assembly of units totaling several thousand fighters that Russia's defense ministry has deployed in Ukraine to supplement its regular forces.

About four hours of footage from a bodycam

worn by one of the fighters, obtained by provides a rare first-hand view of the combat operations of a BARS unit, according to three military experts who reviewed the video to provide an assessment for the news agency of the unit's military capability.

The invasion of Ukraine marked the first time BARS, which was founded in 2015, deployed units in combat. The video, coupled with interviews with four platoon members, shows the BARS unit was left to defend Balaklia with no heavy weaponry or air support, malfunctioning communications, and confused coordination with the regular military.

ANC kicks off poll season from key battleground

Monitoring Desk
DURBAN: South Africa's ruling ANC launched its election campaign on Saturday, hoping to overcome anger over high unemployment and a sluggish economy and to protect its three-decade-old majority.

In power since the advent of democracy in 1994, President Cyril Ramaphosa's African National Congress has suffered a sharp decline in support, beset by allegations of corruption and mismanagement. Yet the party remains a formidable machine, with supporters at all levels of government across most of the country, and many South Africans retain proud memories of its lead role in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Jets intercept high-altitude balloon over US

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A small balloon floating at a high altitude over the US state of Utah was intercepted by fighter aircraft on Friday but deemed to pose no national security or flight risk, a US-Canada military agency said, according to US media.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said in a statement it had detected the balloon traveling at an altitude between 43,000-45,000 feet (13,100-13,700 metres), CBS News reported. "The balloon was intercepted by NORAD fighters over Utah, who determined it was not maneuverable and did not present a threat to national security."

Manipur college blast claims one life

Monitoring Desk
GUWAHATI: One person died and another was injured in a bomb blast at a college in Imphal, the capital of India's northeastern state of Manipur, on Friday night, security officials said. No group has taken responsibility for the blast of the improvised explosive device (IED), the officials said. The IED exploded in the campus of a college [DM College campus] in the city.

US, British forces carry out more strikes against Houthis in Yemen

WASHINGTON (Internews): U.S. and British forces carried out strikes against more than a dozen Houthi targets in Yemen on Saturday, officials said, the latest round of military action against the Iran-linked group that continues to attack shipping in the region.

The United States has carried out near daily strikes against the Houthis, who control the most populous parts of Yemen and have said their attacks on shipping are in solidarity with Palestinians as Israel strikes Gaza.

The strikes have so far failed to halt the Houthis' attacks, which have upset global trade and raised shipping rates.

A joint statement from countries that either took part in the strikes or

provided support, said the military action was against 18 Houthi targets across eight locations in Yemen including underground weapons and missile storage facilities, air defense systems, radars and a helicopter.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the strikes were meant "to further disrupt and degrade the capabilities of the Iranian-backed Houthi militia."

"We will continue to make clear to the Houthis that they will bear the consequences if they do not stop their illegal attacks, which harm Middle Eastern economies, cause environmental damage and disrupt the delivery of humanitarian aid to Yemen and other countries," Austin said.

Australia PM pledges 'whatever support' needed as wild fires destroy homes

SYDNEY (Internews): Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese pledged on Sunday to provide whatever support was needed to assist Victoria state in a days-long wildfire emergency that has razed homes after authorities warned extreme heat could fan the blazes this week.

"We will provide whatever support is requested from Victoria," Albanese told reporters in the city of Frankston, Victoria, according to a transcript. "It's a reminder of the need for us to be vigilant for us to continue to work and act on the threat that is climate change."

The emergency has killed livestock, destroyed six homes and forced more than 2,000 people to leave western towns and head to the city of Ballarat, 95 km (60 miles) west of the state capital, Melbourne.

Australia is in the grips of an El Nino weather pattern, which is typically associated with extreme phenomena such as wildfires, cyclones and droughts.

More than 15 bushfires were burning in Victoria on Sunday, with the most serious blaze, ranked at the second highest danger rating, near several remote towns, according to the state's emergency authority. State authorities have said there are concerns about the weather this week particularly Wednesday into Thursday when extreme heat is forecast that could further fan the fires.

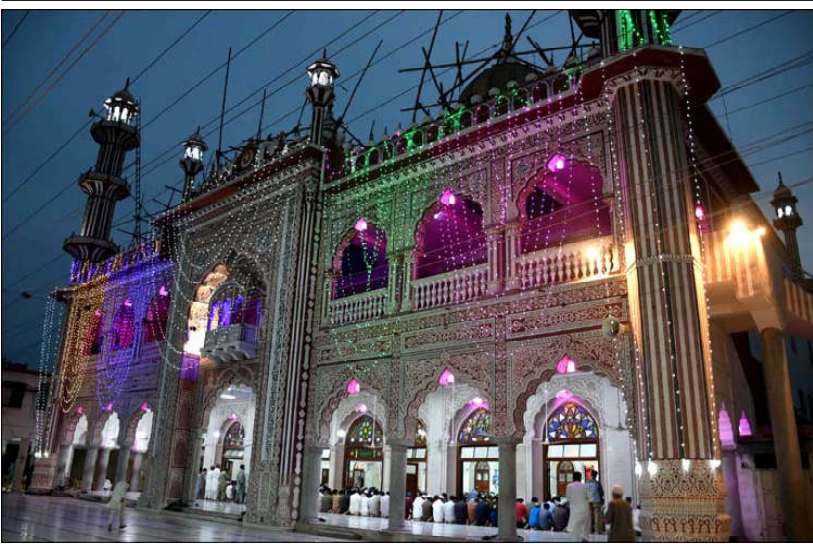


Republican presidential candidate and former US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley speaks on stage at her watch party during the South Carolina Republican presidential primary election in Charleston, South Carolina.

15 killed in Chinese building blaze

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: At least 15 people have been killed and 44 injured in a fire at a residential building in eastern China's Nanjing, local authorities said on Saturday.

The fire broke out early Friday morning, officials said at a press conference, with a preliminary investigation suggesting the blaze started on the building's first floor, where electric bikes had been placed. The building is located in Yuhuatai district of Nanjing, a city of more than eight million that lies about 260 kilometres (162 miles) northwest of Shanghai.



KARACHI: Aram Bagh mosque, illuminated for the Muslim holy night of Lailat al-Barat, in Karachi

Secretary Health speaks at Paediatric Conference: Comprehensive strategy needed to cope with challenge of increasing Neuro diseases among kids

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Secretary Health Balochistan, Abdullah Khan has underlined the need to prepare a comprehensive strategy to cope with the growing challenge of Neuro related diseases among children.

The Secretary Health was addressing the closing ceremony of Pakistan Paediatric Neurology Conference held under the auspices of Pakistan Paediatric Association (PPA) here at a local hotel on Sunday.

Also present on the occasion were the Pediatric Neurology, Professor Dr Shahzad Ibrahim, Chairman

Organizing Committee of course Conference, Professor Dr Habibullah Babar, Professor Dr Jamal Raza, Dr Attaullah Bizenjo, Dr Tipu Sultan besides people belonging to different walks of life.

Addressing the conference, Secretary Health appreciated the organizers for holding conference on very important and sensitive issue. He said that there are certain reasons behind increasing Neuro related diseases among children and as such we need to adopt multidimensional strategy to tackle them.

In this regard, awareness campaign should also be launched at local and national level, adding he stressed.

Moreover, the mental health should also be made part of academic syllabus to create much needed awareness, he stressed further.

The Chairman Organizing Committee Professor Dr Habibullah Babar also addressed the closing ceremony.

In the end, the Chief guest Secretary Health distributed gifts and commemorative shields among the participant doctors and organizers of the conference.

Bilawal felicitates office bearers of Bar Associations

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended heartfelt congratulations to the recently elected office-bearers of different High Court Bar Associations of the country.

He applauds the commitment and dedication demonstrated by the legal fraternity in choosing capable leaders who will undoubtedly contribute to the advancement of justice and the rule of law.

He extended greetings to newly elected office bearers of bar associations, including Islamabad High

Court Bar Association (IHCB), Lahore High Court Bar Association (LHCBA), High Court Bar Association Hyderabad (HCBAH), and Multan High Court Bar Association (MHCBA). He extended his best wishes to the newly elected President of IHCB, Riasat Ali Azad, President of LHCBA, Asad Manzoor Butt, Ayaz Tunio of HCBAH and Advocate Sajjad Haider Meta of MHBA, among others. He further said that the bar associations play a pivotal role in upholding the supremacy of the constitution and the principles of justice.

Sharmila, Sehar becomes MNAs on PPP reserved seats

KARACHI (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a notification of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) nominated female leaders on reserved seats Sharmila Farooqui and Sahar Kamran. Both now became elected members of the National Assembly from PPP. PPP Shazia Murri and Nafisa Shah resigned from the reserved seat after winning the general elections. The notification of the successful independent candidate Khizr Hussain Mazari from the Punjab Assembly seat PP 297 has also been issued.



QUETTA: Nominated Chairman PTI Gohar Khan presiding over a meeting regarding Intra-Party elections. Alam Khan Kakar, Dr. Munir Baloch, Sardar Khadim Hussain Wardag, Malik Naseebullah Batini, Faisal Dehwar, Tariq Aziz and other participated

Election winners Shazia, Nafisa Shah relinquish reserved Assembly seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ms Shazia Marri and Nafisa Shah tendered their resignations from the reserved seats in the National Assembly from Sindh province after grabbing a berth in the assembly in the general elections. Syeda Nafisa Shah won in the NA-202 Khairpur constituency by defeating former Sindh Chief Minister Syed Ghous Ali Shah, while Shazia Marri won in NA-209 Sanghar by defeating Muhammad Khan Junejo of the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA).

According to the notification from the Election Commission, Sharmila Sahiba Faruqui Hashaam and Muddassir Sehar Kamran, both members of the People's Party, have been declared elected on the reserved seats held by Shazia Marri and Syeda Nafisa Shah to the National Assembly. Meanwhile, the Election Commission issued a notification announcing the independent candidate Khizr Hussain Mazari's success in securing the Punjab Assembly seat PP 297.

SIC wants to bury past; move ahead: Amir Dogar

LAHORE (INP): Sunni Ittehad Council leader Amir Dogar said on Sunday that despite the fact that the PTI-backed candidates had to face a lot of repression and even the party's candidate for the slot of Punjab CM was not even allowed to attend the provincial assembly's session, still the party wanted to bury the past and move ahead for the progress and prosperity of the country.

PTI-supported nine members take oath in Sindh Assembly

KARACHI (INP): Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) PTI-supported nine members and a Jamaat-e-Islami member took oath in Sindh Assembly on Sunday.

Murad Ali Shah welcomed the members who take oath today and said, "We hope we all will play a role for betterment of the province". People's Party's candidate for Speaker's office, Ovais Qadir Shah also held a meeting with the PTI's independent members and welcomed them in the house. "Hopefully you will sit in a better environment in the house," he added. Sindh Assembly has been in session to elect the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the house today.

The People's Party has nominated Ovais Qadir Shah as its candidate for Speaker and Naveed Anthony as Deputy Speaker for Sindh.

India 'fully stops' water flow to Pakistan with Shahpur Kandi barrage on Ravi river

ISLAMABAD (INP): The water flow of Ravi river has reportedly been stopped to Pakistan after the completion of Shahpur Kandi barrage which is situated on the borders of Indian Punjab and the state of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, as per Indian media reports.

India Today reported that previously allotted 1150 cusecs water of Pakistan, will now benefit the region of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The water will be benefiting 32,000 hectares of land in the Kathua and Samba districts.

Indian perusing the water terrorism agenda, now executing the latest project of Shahkandi barrage that would supposedly be used for 'irrigation and for hydro power generation' but at the cost of cutting the flow towards Pakistan.

Already India so far constructed many dams like Bhakra Dam on Sutlej, Pong and Pandoh Dam on the Beas and Thein (Ranjitsagar) on the Ravi.

The Indus Waters Treaty is a water-sharing agreement between India and Pakistan, arranged by the World Bank, signed on September 19, 1960.

The treaty divides the rivers into two categories: Eastern Rivers (Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi) which are allocated to India, and Western Rivers (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab) which are allocated to Pakistan.

Indian media reported Shahpur Kandi dam completion allows India to make maximum use of the River Ravi water previously flowing towards Pakistan from the Lakhapur dam. It is pertinence to note that former Indian Prime Minister Narsima Rao laid the foundation stone for the shahpur kandi in 1995 and remained disputed for almost over four and a half years.

Earlier, addressing the UN Security Council, Pakistan Permanent Representative in the United Nations Ambassador Munir Akram said Pakistan aims to reinvigorate the Indus River basin which provides food security to over 225 million people.

Pakistan has called for strict implementation of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty to address the looming water crisis. He said that to this end, Pakistan has launched the multi-dimensional Living Indus projects.



KARACHI: Senior leader of PPP Syed Khurshid Shah greets Syed Ovais Qadir Shah on assuming charge of Speaker Sindh Assembly

USC unveils generous price cuts during Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a commendable move to assist its valued customers during the upcoming month of Ramadan, the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) has taken a stride towards affordability.

The reduction in prices encompassed a variety of essential items, including ghee, cooking oil, tea, and other everyday necessities, the spokesman said on Sunday.

He said that the prices of various branded ghee and cooking oils have witnessed a notable decrease, ranging from Rs 4 to a substantial Rs 100 per kilogram. Similarly, branded tea, a staple in many households, is now available at a reduced cost, with a significant Rs 100 off on the 800-gram packs.

Noteworthy among the price adjustments is Dalda Cooking Oil, which can now be purchased at a discounted rate of Rs 508, down from the previous Rs 523. Other branded ghee and cooking oils are also being offered at highly competitive prices compared to the general market rates, he added.

The relief doesn't stop at kitchen essentials, beyond ghee, cooking oil, and tea, prices of other daily-use items have been slashed, making them considerably more affordable than prevailing market rates, he added.

He further emphasized that as part of its ongoing commitment to customer welfare, the Utility Stores Corporation is set to launch a Ramadan relief package next month. This initiative is expected to bring about further reductions in prices, ensuring that customers can celebrate the holy month without bearing the burden of inflated costs.

The Utility Stores Corporation has a track record of being proactive in providing relief to its esteemed customers. This latest endeavour aligns with its mission to make essential commodities more accessible, particularly during times when communities come together to observe religious and cultural traditions.



QUETTA: Secretary Health Abdullah Khan in a group photo with doctors during Pakistan Paediatric Neurology Conference.

Hassan Zehri says: Development and prosperity of the people is our motto

Independent Report
HUB: The voice of the people cannot be suppressed by bullying threats and undemocratic methods; it will never be allowed to rob the people's rights. These views were expressed by the senior leader of Pakistan People's Party and spokesperson Asif Ali Zardari and president of Hub District Mir Ali Hassan Zehri in a statement. He said that the so-called representatives who have been imposed for forty years are responsible for the backwardness of Hub and Lasbela, who have pushed Hub and Lasbela into the Stone Age. These self-interested elements always robbed people's rights and worked for their personal interests.

They did not pay any attention to the development work, due to which the district of Hub and Lasbela remained backward. He said that there was no health facility here, nor did the condition of the schools improve.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri while talking to the trustees and public representatives of Hub said that in Balochistan Pakistan Peoples party will make government and people will listen good news very soon.

He said that the development and prosperity of the people is our aim and the work we are doing is our duty. People have trusted us and we will try our best to fulfill the expectations of our people.

Whatever projects we have started or the projects that have been completed are for our own people i.e. the people of Hub and Lasbela. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that our effort is to provide facilities to the people as much as possible and the looters will not be allowed to succeed in their nefarious purposes and all possible measures will be taken to stop this looting.

He said that the public interest projects we are working on were the needs of the area and these projects will change the fate of the area.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that the so-called representatives do not want development and prosperity in the area and these areas remain backward in the future as in the past and this is the reason why obstacles are being put in this work.

He assured that being uncalled for Color, race and religion will work day and night for the interests of the people of Hub and Lasbela and to solve their problems and the provision of their legitimate rights and resources to the people of Hub and Lasbela will be the first priority. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri expressed the commitment that in future we will stand against every negative move that is against the public interest, while we will continue to raise our voice for the betterment and prosperity of the common man, because selfless service to the people is our motto.

Kharan Youth Festival concludes with great thrill

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs department Dr. Javed Anwar Shahwani said that the government has taken efforts to engage the youth in healthy activities aimed to provide opportunities to exhibit their hidden talents.

He said the Balochistan government is organizing academic, literary, research and cultural programs in order to engage the youth in different sports and other healthy activities to enable them to play a role in the development of the country.

The initiatives would encourage the youth to indulge in healthy activities, besides polishing their talent, he expressed these views at the closing ceremony of the two-day first Kharan Youth Festival of Rakhsan Division at Kharan, said a news release.

A large number of civil society, women and students participated in the youth festival. The purpose of the Youth Festival is to improve the skills of the youth of Balochistan and to engage the young folk in positive activities.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Sports and Youth Affairs Department has planned to organize more youth festivals in various cities of the province to highlight the talents of the youth.

The sports and youth affairs department would also organize inter-school sports festivals soon to provide healthy activities to the students.

He said that youth can play a key role in the development and prosperity of the country by being a part of positive activities.

Shahwani said the future of the country is in the hands of the youth and Balochistan has immense potential to move forward.

The secretary said the youth should devote their time and capabilities to positive activities and development of the country and their province.

PTI boycotts SA's Speaker election

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Sunday announced to boycott the election of speaker and deputy speaker of Sindh Assembly.

As per details, the PTI-backed independent candidates jointly announced that they will neither support MQM-P candidate nor PPP nominated candidate for the speaker and the deputy speaker of Sindh Assembly.

Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) PTI-supported nine members and a Jamaat-e-Islami member took oath in Sindh Assembly earlier today (Sunday).

Murad Ali Shah welcomed the members who took oath today and said, "We hope we all will play a role in betterment of the province".

People's Party's candidate for Speaker's office, Ovais Qadir Shah also held a meeting with the PTI's independent members and welcomed them in the house.

"Hopefully you will sit in a better environment in the house," he added.

PML-N Ulema accuse PTI of attempting to undermine national economy

LAHORE (APP): PML-N Ulema and Mashaikh Wing Punjab General Secretary Sahibzada Hafiz Muhammad Amjad lambasted the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder for allegedly sabotaging the nation's economic stability by corresponding with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Addressing an Ulema Convention on Sunday, Amjad asserted that the PTI's purported agenda is to dismantle the national economy, citing the recent letter to the IMF as evidence. He criticized the PTI for burdening the country with loans and then shifting the responsibility of repayment onto future generations. Highlighting the PML-N's track record, Amjad claimed that his party has historically navigated the nation out of crises towards progress. He emphasized the role of Ulema and Mashaikh in safeguarding Pakistan's ideological boundaries and promoting social consciousness.

Amjad called upon Ulema and Mashaikh to utilize their platforms to cultivate awareness among the populace, advocating for the establishment of an Islamic, prosperous society.

Govt support vital for growth of Pakistani film Industry: Shah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Sports, Culture, and Youth Affairs Sindh Dr. Syed Junaid Ali Shah on Sunday emphasized the importance of government support in unlocking the potential of the Pakistani film industry.

Speaking to a private news channel during the screening of the movie 'Texali Gate' in Karachi, Dr. Shah emphasized the need for significant improvement in the Pakistani film industry. He highlighted the challenges faced by the film industry in the era of commercialization. He proposed that the government should either provide subsidies or support cinema houses to make movie tickets more affordable for the general public. Dr. Shah underscored the untapped potential within the film industry, emphasizing that with government attention and patronage, the industry could flourish. Ayesha Umar, the producer and leading actress of the film, expressed optimism about the success of 'Texali Gate,' describing it as a portrayal of the harsh realities.



QUETTA: Residents of Pashtunabad are holding protest demonstration against prolong sui-gas load shedding in their area, held at Quetta press club.

One stop facility center set up for incoming members of Parliament

ISLAMABAD (INP): With aim to facilitate and acquaint the newly elected members of the 16th National Assembly of Pakistan, a dedicated facility center has been established within the hallowed halls of the Parliament House in Islamabad. The arrival of these elected officials has commenced, marking the beginning of their journey in the legislative arena.

Under the guidance of Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Sharaf, welcoming banners adorn the precincts of Parliament, extending warm greetings to the incoming legislators. To streamline the induction process, a comprehensive one-window facility center has been instituted in Committee Room Number Two of the Parliament House. Here, members are undergoing essential formalities, including obtaining their assembly cards and familiarizing themselves with the protocols of the National Assembly through provided booklets.

Among the privileges extended to the newly inducted members is the issuance of blue passports for themselves, their spouses, parents, and unmarried children under 28 years of age. This passport grants visa-free travel to 46 countries worldwide, albeit necessitating a sworn oath.



QUETTA: Security Personnel blocked the road going towards the RO office during the 4-Party Ittehad sit-in protest against the alleged vote-rigging in the general election.