

# Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

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LAHORE: President PML (N) Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif meeting with Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari.

## PML-N, PPP agree to cooperate for Pak stability

Leadership of both parties express commitment to putting nation's interest and well-being above everything

LAHORE (Agencies): The leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) held a crucial meeting in Lahore as the elders of both parties principally agreed to cooperate for Pakistan's stability following the general elections.

This understanding between the parties was reached during a high-profile meeting, where top leaders from both parties convened to discuss the current political landscape and chart a course for collaboration.

The meeting, which took place at Lahore's Bilawal House, saw the participation of key figures including PPP President Asif Ali Zardari, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, and former prime minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif of the PML-N.

According to a joint statement, the meeting, held in a cordial environment, expressed commitment to putting

the nation's interest and well-being above everything.

The leaders of both parties engaged in substantive discussions regarding the prevailing political landscape and the imperative of collaborative efforts for the betterment of the country.

Reflecting a spirit of consensus-building, the leaders acknowledged the importance of establishing a framework for sustained political cooperation between the PML-N and PPP, laying the groundwork for a stronger, more united approach to addressing the challenges facing the nation.

The statement added that key points of discussion included the assessment of Pakistan's overall situation, deliberations on future political strategies, and the exchange of recommendations aimed at promoting stability and progress across the board.

## Independents grab 101 NA seats

PML-N emerges as largest party with 75 seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): Independent candidates have emerged as the front-runners with winning 101 National Assembly seats in the General Election 2024 held on February 8.

The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) becomes the single largest party in the NA by grabbing 75 constituencies, according to the unofficial results of 264 out of 266 constituencies announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) has secured 54 seats, and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) 17 seats.

The Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam Pakistan (JUI-P) has managed to win four, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) three, and the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and Balochistan National Party (BNP) two seats each. The Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen Pakistan, Pakhtunkhwa National Awami Party, Pakhtoonkhw Milli Awami Party, Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), National Party and Pakistan Muslim League-Zia (PML-Z) have won one seat each.

Elections for an NA general seat (NA-8) were postponed due to the death of a candidate, while the results of NA-88 were not announced as re-polling would be conducted at 15 out of 25 polling stations on February 15. In the Punjab Assembly, out of 297 seats, independents secured 138, PML-N 137, PPPP 10, PML eight, and IPP, PML-Z, and Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan one each, while the election for PP-266 Rahim Yar Khan could not be conducted due to a candidate's death.

With the results of one of the 130 Sindh Assembly seats withheld due to re-polling at certain polling stations, the PPPP leads the chart by winning 84 seats, followed by the MQM-P with 28, independent candidates 13, and the Grand Democratic Alliance and

## President lauds high female voter turnout in general elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi Sunday congratulated people on taking part in the voting process during the general elections.

In a statement on X, he said he must congratulate the people of Pakistan, specially the women for coming out in huge numbers and strengthening democracy.

"The youth deserve a special mention, and I praise them for having decided to take charge of the country by participating peacefully in the voting process. They have put their faith in democracy. This belief is very precious, it will write history and must be recognized," he added.

He said, "A true mandate is essential to come out of the severe financial



ABU DHABI: Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to the UAE, representing Pakistan, in a group photo with other delegates during the 7th Ministerial Consultation of Abu Dhabi Dialogue. Pakistan is the current Chair of Abu Dhabi Dialogue.

## Five NA, two PA independent candidates join PML-N

LAHORE (INP): Newly-elected seven independent candidates of National and Provincial Assemblies joined Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

Independent candidates Raja Khurram Nawaz from NA-48, Barrister Aqeel Malik from NA-54, Pir Zahoor Hussain Qureshi from NA-146, Sardar Shamsheer Mazari from NA-189 and Barrister Mian Khan Bugti from NA-253 announced joining the PML-N.

Similarly, Khurram Wark from PP-48 and Muhammad Sohail from PP-240 also joined the PML-N.

Barrister Aqeel in a video message congratulated his supporters and said his seat belonged to Nawaz Sharif, adding, "I congratulate our leadership Mian Nawaz Sharif, Mian Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz."

Raja Khurram Nawaz said he joined the PML-N for the stability of Pakistan and said he would be the part of the new government.

## Malicious propaganda about Pakistan Army stands exposed

ISLAMABAD: The fabricated and malicious propaganda related to the army deployment on election duty has been exposed.

According to the details, some miscreant political elements are misguiding their supporters for political gains and after inciting the security troops, deployed for elections duty, recording videos of riots and anti-army propaganda on social media.

Similarly, from the Elections Day till today, various anonymous propaganda accounts have been creating chaos and agitation in the country.

By spreading lies, propaganda and disinformation, these anti-national elements aim to create chaos and instability in Pakistan.

Absconder You Tubers, sitting outside the country, are leading this anti-Pakistan and disinformation campaign. Such malicious elements who are engaged in this propaganda on social media are being identified and the relevant institutions have started work to take strict disciplinary action against them as per the law.

It is pertinent to mention that according to the notification of the Election Commission of Pakistan and the Ministry of Interior, troops of the Army and Civil Armed Forces are required to provide security outside the offices of ROs until the election process is completed.



PESHAWAR: President Awami National Party (ANP) Aimal Wali Khan along with other party leaders addressing a Press conference at Bacha Khan Markaz.

## Daesh ring leader killed in Khyber operation: ISPR

Independent Report RAWALPINDI: The security forces on Sunday killed a high-profile terrorist ring leader, associated with the banned extremist organization Daesh, in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the Khyber District. According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the security forces conducted the operation in the Khyber District on the reported presence of terrorist Surat Gul alias Saif Ullah of Daesh, who was killed during an intense exchange of fire. Weapons, ammunition

and explosives were recovered from the killed terrorist commander, who remained actively involved in terror activities, including target killing of innocent civilians as well as extortion. He was highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies.

"Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support for the security forces to eliminate the menace of terrorism," the ISPR said.

## Barrister Gohar warns against defections, affirms commitment to electoral integrity

ISLAMABAD (INP): Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, a senior leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has strongly reacted to the decision of PTI-backed independent Member of the National Assembly, Waseem Qadir, to join the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

In his statement, Khan emphasized that all independent candidates supported by the PTI have remained in contact with the party. He clarified that there had been no communication with Waseem Qadir regarding his decision

to join the PML-N.

The PTI leader cautioned against the consequences of changing loyalties after benefiting from someone's support, citing the fate of those who had done so in the past.

He further asserted that the people had rejected leaders like Mehmood Khan and Pervez Khattak. He emphasized that the PTI did not coerce anyone into submitting affidavits or resignations, expressing concern over the possibility of some individuals switching allegiances.

## FO rejects reports regarding killing of 9 Pakistanis in Iran

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch has rejected the news reports regarding the killing of nine Pakistani nationals in Iran.

In a post on social media platform X, she termed the news as fake and recycling of old news of the tragic death of nine Pakistani nationals in Iran last month.

## Six people including an ASI killed in firing between two groups in Larkana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Six people were killed and five injured on Sunday in a firing incident between two groups near Nodero Bypass Larkana. According to the private news channel, a fight between two groups over the issue of voting in Larkana's Nodero turned into violence, with firing and indiscriminate use of sticks by both groups.

According to the police, as soon as the incident was reported, the Mahota police officers arrived at the scene. Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Sultan Shah was shot dead, whereas, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Bashir Ahmed Sharad Constable Saddam Hussain were among the injured.

## Caretaker govt fulfills its constitutional responsibility by holding polls: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said the government had fulfilled its constitutional responsibility by holding free, fair and transparent elections in a peaceful manner.

Speaking in a TV talk show on private media, the minister said the caretaker government had extended all-out facilitation to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in holding the polls.

The results of the elections were a testament to the transparency of the elections, he added.

To a query, Solangi said there was a procedure for the transfer of power under the constitution and law.

He said the incumbent

speakers would call sessions of all the assemblies as soon as the official results of the general election conveyed to the respective assemblies officially.

The caretaker governments would be dissolved when the elected Prime Minister and Chief Ministers would take oaths of their positions, he added.

The Ministry of Interior had responded to the queries about the suspension of mobile service on election day, he said, adding the citizens' lives were of paramount importance for the state.

There were threats to the citizens and polling staff, he said in response to another query. "It was important for us to ensure that there was no hindrance to the people's mobility on the election day."

## Capital Police enhances security measures in High Security Zone



Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police heightened the security measures in the High Security Zone aimed to swiftly respond to any untoward incidents, a public relations officer said.

He said that the Islamabad Police has bolstered its efforts to intensify checking on entry and exit routes, ensuring a proactive approach to maintaining security and promptly handling any disruptive situations.

Moreover, the Capital Police remains vigilant and ready to address any potential disruptions. In case of any unlawful activities, legal actions will be taken promptly, underscoring the importance of adhering to the law.

Respect for the law is imperative for everyone. All measures are being taken to ensure the safety of citizen life and property, along with maintaining the overall security of the city.

Citizens are requested to dial "Pucar-15" or report via the "ICT-15 App" regarding any suspicious person or activity.

## PTI workers stage sit-in outside RO office Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed candidate of NA 47, Barrister Shoaib Shaheen Sunday staged a sit-in outside the Returning Officer (RO) office Islamabad, demanding transparency in the electoral process.

Accompanied by his supporters and party workers, Shaheen staged demonstration outside the office to register protest against alleged rigging in the Feb 8 elections.

The demonstration, which unfolded outside the RO office, witnessed chants and slogans against the returning officer's alleged discrepancies in the electoral process.

Shaheen, along with party workers, highlighted the importance of fair and impartial elections.

They observed that sit-in was staged in reaction as the Islamabad police did not allow them to stage a peaceful demonstration.

However, the sit-in also faced opposition from Islamabad police. A heavy contingent of police was also deployed outside the RO office. The police also took the prisoner van outside the RO office.



LAHORE: Police officials are arresting the workers of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) who came to protest against rigging in General Election 2024, at Liberty Chowk in Lahore.

## U.S lawmakers tell Biden not to accept Pakistan election results

WASHINGTON (INP): Both Democratic and Republican politicians in the United States have urged President Biden not to accept Pakistan election results until the investigation of alleged irregularities.

Claims of interference or fraud should be fully investigated "a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department stated in a statement, voiced worries on the interference in the election process.

"We join credible international and local election observers in their assessment that these elections included undue restrictions on freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly," the statement said.

Congressman Brad Sherman, a prominent member of the influential House of Foreign Affairs Committee stated that "press organizations in Pakistan ought to have liberty

to disclose vote tallying and there should not be any needless postponement in declaring the outcome".

Rashida Talib a congresswoman said that we must stand with the Pakistani people because their democracy is seriously at risk. In addition to that the U.S. must make sure the tax monies don't go to anyone who undermines their right to freely choose their leaders.

They should be able to do so without intervention or meddling. Another congresswoman Ilhan Omar asked the State Department that there should be independent bodies who conduct investigations regarding the alleged interference in the electoral process until they refrain from recognizing the results.

She further said that I am deeply troubled by the news of meddling and interference in the election result process.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

More uncertainty

It appears that a coalition government is in the offing, as no single party has enough seats to form a government.

After his 'victory speech' some days ago, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif said his was the single largest party, and called on other political leaders to initiate discussions and negotiate a way forward.

Of course, the role of parties such as MQM-P and other smaller parties, is key as they too will lend support to reach the magic number of seats.

As the numbers game plays out, the country once again finds itself in a familiar place — one that is steeped in political uncertainty.

Similarly, the PPP has been vocal in its criticism of the N-League, with its chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari taking potshots at Mr Nawaz Sharif during his campaign, and even telling this newspaper in an interview that he was "disappointed" in the former prime minister.

With these misgivings, how will this motley crew sit together in parliament? Whose agenda will take priority? And how will they bring the stability, reforms and leadership the country so badly needs?

As the wheeling and dealing proceeds, two things are clear: one, that however the PML-N cobbles this coalition together, its 'victory' will be more bitter than sweet.

Hope is everything

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Pakistan is in the grip of bad news. While much of it is fake because the detractors of Pakistan are at work, some of the bad news is also real.

How did we reach this sorry state? Foremost, we must recognise that whatever has happened is of our own doing.

We also want others to adjust their stance towards us rather than changing ourselves. For instance, we expect India to reduce its hostility towards Pakistan.

It is not how inter-state relations work. It is Pakistan which should adjust to the evolving global and regional geopolitics, and not the other way round.

That means that a change of attitude is needed in how we Pakistanis see ourselves as a nation and how we view the outside world.

The country is the 10th largest producer of rice in the world, the eighth leading producer of wheat, and the fifth largest producer of sugarcane.

According to the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, the country has the sixth largest reserves of marble, the second largest salt mines, the fifth largest reserves of copper and gold.

With such abundant wealth and a young energised population, we have every reason to be hopeful about the future of our country.

As a new elected government takes office, it must lift up the

morale of the nation by setting the stage for good governance. First and foremost, we need to stabilise political governance, which is so fractured.

Second, there needs to be a much stronger commitment to local governments. The de-volution of power and resources agreed upon in 18th Amendment should not have stopped at provinces.

Third, a charter of economy is required to forge a consensus among political parties on key economic issues and priorities.

Fourth, national security should be viewed more comprehensively than it was in the past, with equal attention being given to traditional, economic and human securities.

Fifth, on the external front, we must view all our relationships, including with neighbours, through the lens of economic benefit to Pakistan.

'This is us too'

Muna Khan

Imran Khan and his supporters, according to the Twitterati, are 'the worst thing to happen to society' — they've ruined tehzeeb, family get-togethers, WhatsApp chats, marriages, friendships, even diets.

I'm here to offer a sliver of hope.

In 2013 and 2018, when I went to vote in Karachi, I was surrounded by PTI supporters, excited and assured of victory.

A few days ago, as I stood in line to cast my vote, there was a lot of camaraderie as PTI supporters welcomed each other in the line.

woman said no, it should not be like that, you don't have to reply, we just have to vote.

I'm not that naïve to think people have decided to reclaim polite discourse, but I do believe this tiny exchange points to a people's awakening and then mobilising to challenge the status quo.

This division across party lines benefits those angling for power at whatever cost, who know they have accomplices to help them achieve their goal.

Another group that continues to defy the powerful is the media. As a keen follower, and sometime practitioner, I

was thrilled to watch the reporting and analysis of the clear criticism of the election process — there was nothing ambiguous about it.

A special mention must be made of the journalists and analysts who suffered from PTI's abusive campaigns, but did not let that impact their professionalism.

I believe the very platforms that caused polarisation can also reduce it. I see a glimmer of hope there too.

Commerce News

PDM economic management led to sharp rise in per capita debt

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: A new legally mandated fiscal policy statement has revealed the worst economic management by the coalition government of the Pakistan Democratic Movement, resulting in expenditures over Rs2.2 trillion higher than budgeted and a 25% increase in the debt burden for every citizen.

year, according to the statement. A year ago, the per person debt burden was Rs216,925, according to the Ministry of Finance report. The statement is prepared under the Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Act (FRDL) and will be placed before the new National Assembly.

for this rise are interest payments on debt and the exchange rate devaluation effect. The Ministry of Finance has calculated the per capita debt based on the assumption of a population of 231.5 million people.



LAHORE: Women visiting stall during Faiz Mela at Al-Hamra.

Agri dept to organize sugarcane production contest among farmers

MULTAN (APP): The Punjab Agriculture Department decided to organize production competitions among sugarcane growers.

According to a spokesman for the Punjab Agriculture Department (Multan), sugarcane is a crucial cash crop, and increasing its production per acre is essential.

S&P 500 earnings growth seen at 9%

Monitoring Desk NEW YORK: With results in from about two-thirds of companies, fourth-quarter 2023 S&P 500, tab earnings growth is now seen at 9.0%, almost double a Jan 1 forecast for 4.7% growth, according to LSEG data on Friday.

About 81% of reports are beating analysts' expectations, compared with an average of 76% in the previous four reporting periods, the data showed.

Traders express concerns on dacoities in markets

MULTAN (APP): Tanzeem-e-Tajraan Pakistan expressed concerns over rising incidents of dacoities in city's busiest markets and demanded of Punjab government to take immediate notice of the poor law and order situation.



First set of Pakistanis among batch of 600 start Overseas Careers post landmark agreements by Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development.

Pakistan fully capable of becoming AI development hub in South Asia

BEIJING (APP): CPInS Lab Director Dr Wu Jun has said that Pakistan, through further cooperation with China, is fully capable of becoming an artificial intelligence (AI) development hub in South Asia and the wider region.

The CPInS Lab has been officially established at Pakistan's National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in the beginning of year 2022 with joint efforts with the Guangzhou Institute of Software Application Technology.

progress in areas such as UAV control systems and AI recognition localization. Our lab is starting the application of smart cities in Pakistan."

LESCO collects over Rs 8m from 446 defaulters

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), recovered more than Rs 8 million from 446 chronic defaulters in all its five districts - Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara - on the 147th day of its campaign.

from 51 defaulters in Eastern Circle respectively. Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Watto along with Tehsildar Model Town Rana Aarsal and Tehsildar Cant. Sajjad Qureshi recovered Rs 2.19 million from 63 defaulters in Central Circle, and Rs 0.72 million from 27 defaulters in South Circle; while Manager (Technical) Engineer Muhammad Farooq with the assistance of Tehsildar Nankana Sahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhupura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar recovered Rs 0.48 million from 44 defaulters in Nankana Circle and Rs 1.06 million from 62 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle.

Launching New Horizons: 600 Pakistani professionals embark on international careers

ISLAMABAD (Online): In a landmark moment for employment mobility, 600 Pakistani professionals have embarked on international careers, following the successful negotiation of strategic employment agreements with global partners.

The initiative, under the guidance of Mr. Jawad Sohrab Malik, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development, has seen the fruition of agreements signed merely 90 days ago.

professionals expressed gratitude for the seamless process facilitated by the government. Their departure, witnessed by families and ministry officials, with Mr. Malik personally seeing off Islamabad's contingent, illustrates the government's dedication to supporting its citizens' aspirations.

PFC delegation off to USA for Las Vegas Expo

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) delegation Sunday left for Las Vegas, USA, to partake in a three-day expo commencing on February 13 to showcase the diverse range of Pakistan's furniture products and to explore new opportunities in the global market.

The delegation comprises representatives from various segments of the furniture sector including manufacturers, designers, and exporters, all poised to highlight the richness and uniqueness of Pakistani furniture designs.

PFC CEO Mian Kashif Ashfaq told the media that with an aim to bolster the country's furniture industry on an international platform, the delegation was set to exhibit the craftsmanship.

Abu Dhabi Dialogue focuses on labour issues, enhancing women jobs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Faisal Niaz Tirmizi on Sunday while highlighting the role of Abu Dhabi Dialogue said that it was a unique event that brought 17 member states from the Gulf and Asia together with the core objective to address issues pertaining to labour mobility and women's jobs.

Pakistan is the current chair of the ADD, a press release said. The envoy stressed that the technology was changing demands for various skills and they needed to be innovative in meeting the labour demands.

The ambassador addressed the 7th Ministerial Consultation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) here in Abu Dhabi.



