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Terrorist among three killed in Karachi grenade explosion 28 dead, 50 others injured in two separate explosions in Pishin and Killa Saifullah districts

Independent Report QUITTA: At least 28 people were killed and 50 others injured in two separate explosions targeting election candidates' offices in Pishin and Killa Saifullah districts on Wednesday. The caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki announced three-day mourning to mourn the loss of lives in both attacks, Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai said in a presser. The first attack claimed at least 16 people's lives while 25 were injured after an explosion took place outside an independent candidate's office in Khanozai area of Pishin while the second blast took place outside the Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) election office in Killa Saifullah. The Pishin blast took place outside the political office of independent cand...



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Royal Foundation of Gilgit Baltistan.

Election campaign ends as polling process to begin at 8 am today

KARACHI (APP): The election campaign for general polls scheduled on February 08 (Thursday) has ended at the mid night of Tuesday as mainstream political, religious parties and independent candidates tried their best to convince their voters in city of nearly 20 million population. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan People's Party, PML (N), Fahtek e Labaik Pakistan and the independent candidates organized the rallies, public and corner meetings of their workers and made them aware about their manifestos. PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq, Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, MQM Pakistan's Convenor Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Dr Farooq Sattar, Mustafa Kamal, PML N's Nehal Hashmi, Zubair Ahmed, Saleem Zia, TLP's leadership addressed public meetings in different areas of the mega city to convince their electorates and vote for their parties in February 8 election. According to Provincial Election Commissioner Sharifullah, "All arrangements have been completed and polling material including ballot papers have been handed over to the concerned polling official while transport facilities were also provided to them to...



KARACHI: Security officials examine the site of bomb blast in Provincial Capital.

General Elections 2024 'most expensive' in Pakistan's history Nation to elect its representatives for five years today

ECP declares 16,766 polling stations highly sensitive, 29,985 sensitive; Over 596,000 Army, CAF's & Police personnel to perform election security

ISLAMABAD (INP): The nation is all set to elect its representatives on Thursday for a democratic term of five years, with extensive arrangements put in place by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in coordination with various supporting departments, including law enforcement agencies. Approximately 18,000 candidates across the country are in the electoral arena to woo the registered voters (128,587,760) for about 855 general seats of National and Provincial Assemblies. The ECP has announced a public holiday on February 8, in order to provide the voters an opportunity to exercise of right of franchise in a smooth and convenient manner. The Commission has already issued a Code of Conduct for the voters as well for media-persons for the election day. The polling agents have been advised to display authorization cards. The ECP said that there would be a complete ban on any campaign within the radius of 400 meters of a polling station and added that no candidate, polling agent or their supporters would interfere or hinder the official functioning. The ECP has categorized over 17,500 as highly sensitive, 32,508 as sensitive and 42,500 as normal, out of a total of 92,500 polling stations nationwide. About 2,038 polling stations in Balochistan and 4,344 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been categorized as highly sensitive. Likewise, 15,829 polling stations in Punjab, 8,030 in Sindh, 2,068 in Balochistan, and over 6,000 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are classified as sensitive. The ECP has completed the training of approximately 1.49 million election staff to ensure the smooth execution of the electoral process. The Commission has established an Election City in its premises, equipped with the latest technology to swiftly disseminate election results of 855 constituencies to the media. A comprehensive strategy has been worked out to receive election results via WhatsApp, email, and fax.



KARACHI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Muhammad Ahmed Shah giving directions to Staff during his visit to Election Cell establish at Information Department.

Caretaker government stood by commitment of holding elections on Feb 8: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Wednesday that the caretaker government had stood by its commitment of holding general elections on the schedule given by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Addressing the inaugural ceremony of Media Coordination and Facilitation Center established by Press Information Department here, he said tomorrow morning the voting would start and by midday half of the polling would have been done. Referring to speculations, he said there were doubts and concerns in people's minds regarding the elections. "We stood by the promise of holding polls and elections are being held (tomorrow), putting aside all fears and rumours." Murtaza Solangi maintained. The minister said that the caretaker government had taken all possible steps for ensuring the conduct of free and transparent elections. He said after oath-taking of caretaker government on August 17 last year, in his first press briefing here the very next day, the first question he was asked about the elections and his answer was that elections would be held on the timeframe given by the ECP. Murtaza Solangi said that this country was established under constitutional democracy and constitutional federal parliamentary system was the foundation of its political system.

Bilawal, Asif Zardari condemn terrorist incidents in Qila Saifullah, Pishin KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday strongly condemned terrorist incidents in Qila Saifullah and Pishin areas of Balochistan. The two leaders sympathized with the families of those who lost their lives in the bomb blasts and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. Bilawal said the criminals involved in cowardly acts of terrorism should not be spared and urged federal and Balochistan governments to arrest them at the earliest.

ECP sets up complaint desk for women, minorities, physically challenged voters

KARACHI (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan has established a complaint desk for the convenience of women, physically challenged voters and voters belonging to minority communities. The voters including women, physically challenged persons and those belonging to minority communities can register their complaint on 99205338021 or 99202624021 while on WhatsApp 0327-5056610.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi inaugurates "the Media Coordination and Facilitation Center" for Election Coverage at the Principal Information Department, Federal Information Secretary Ms. Shahera Shahid and Principal Information Officer Dr. Tariq Mahmood Khan also present on the occasion.

Bilawal says PPP free of any bias, represents centre

Asks PTI workers to vote for "Arrow"

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that only his party held public gatherings across Pakistan in connection with the General Elections 2024 which he said showed PPP's support in all parts of the country. While talking to a private news channel, the PPP Chairman said that he went to every part of the country for the election canvassing and received a 'great response' from the people. He said that his election campaign across the country is tantamount to the 'fact' that only the PPP represents the center. Bilawal also took a jibe at the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for 'restricting' its election campaign to 'few' parts of the country. "The PML-N held electioneering in only a few constituencies and once again proved itself to be a party of Punjab," he added. The PPP Chairman said that the PML-N's leadership could not spare even half an hour to come to Karachi and run the election campaign in the port city. "The PML-N has also failed to turn to South Punjab and Balochistan. "Those who raised 'Vote Ko Izzat Do' (Respect the vote) slogans did not go to three provinces," Bilawal added. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari asked the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers and supporters to vote for the PPP instead of the independent candidates backed by the latter.



NAWABSHAH: Peoples Party (PPP) President, Asif Ali Zardari showering rose petals and offers Fatcha on the graves of his parents during his visit, at Baloo Ja Quba Graveyard in Nawabshah.

Ahmed Shah visits Sindh Information Dept Election Cell

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Caretaker Minister for Information, Minority Affairs and Social Security Muhammad Ahmad Shah, Wednesday, visited the Election Cell established in the Sindh Information Department. The information minister inspected arrangements made at the election cell and issued various instructions for ensuring the timely dissemination of authentic information regarding the electoral process to media persons. The minister, speaking on the occasion said that the Sindh Information Department's election cell will work round the clock from February 7 to 9, so that the election results can be conveyed to the people authentically and timely through the media. Director General Public Relations Muhammad Salim Khan, Director Press Information Akhtar Hussain Surlho, Director Admin and Accounts Muhammad Yusuf Kaburo.

Interior Sindh Minister visits polling stations

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Home Minister of Sindh Brigadier (Rtd) Hariz Nawaz on Wednesday visited various highly sensitive polling stations of the metropolis and reviewed the security arrangements. He visited the polling stations set up at DJ Science College (Burns Road) and Ghulam Abbas School (Maripur Road). The minister also visited the centre set up for distribution of election materials at CMS Boys School, Napier Road. He said that ensuring the implementation of the code of conduct and SOPs issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan and conducting peaceful elections is the first priority of the caretaker government. He appealed to the public to cooperate with the police and other law enforcement agencies to maintain peace and report any suspicious activity immediately. He further said that aerial firing and display of weapons will not be tolerated and immediate action will be taken against those who take the law into their hands.



KARACHI: Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh Shareefullah being briefed during his visit to display center at Karachi South.

PEC review distribution of polling material at display centres

KARACHI (INP): Provincial Election Commissioner (PEC) Sindh, Sharifullah visited display centres set up in different districts of Karachi division on Wednesday and reviewed the arrangements for distribution of election material to polling staff. PEC along with Joint Election Commissioner Nazir Abbas and Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Saleem Rajput visited display centre set up in district South and asked questions from staff deputied in the centre. The provincial Election Commissioner also visited the display centres set up in district Keamari, Central and the East districts and reviewed disbursement of polling material to the concerned staff. Speaking on the occasion, Sharifullah said polling material is being distributed among election staff on fixed time and in peaceful manner.



KARACHI: Army personnel standing alert on the eve of General Elections 2024 at Korangi Girls College.

Rangers conduct extensive flag march across Karachi ahead of election

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh has implemented stringent security protocols across Karachi in anticipation of the upcoming general election scheduled for February 8th. As per a spokesperson for the Rangers, a coordinated flag march involving Pakistan Rangers Sindh, the Pakistan Army, and the local police was carried out on late Tuesday night across various neighborhoods of Karachi in preparation for the impending elections. The extensive flag march covered key areas such as New Karachi, Saba Cinema, Power House Chowranghi, Disco Mor, UP Mor, Liaquatabad, Golimar Chowranghi, Post Office, Sindhi Hotel, Sharifabad, Nazimabad No. 4, Gol Market, Baldia Town, Ruby Mor, Furniture Market, Chandni Chowk, Tank Chowk, Bismillah Market, Gulshan Ghazi Mor, PTC Saeedabad, Musharraf Colony, Naval Colony, Hub River Road, Orangi Town, Habib Chowranghi, Ghani Chowranghi, Manghpor Road, Banaras Bridge, Kasbah Mor, Kasbah Colony, Katti Pahari, Jamshed Pump.

Bannu police repulse terrorists' attack on Miryan police station

PESHAWAR (APP): An attack by the terrorists on Miryan police station was repulsed by the police, making the terrorists run for their lives and flee the area, police said on Wednesday. According to police, the terrorists attacked Miryan police station from two sides resulting only in damage to the thermal cameras installed on the walls of the police station. In retaliation for an effective police response, the terrorists escaped from the area.

Original CNIC mandatory for casting vote: ECP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has advised people to bring their Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) to cast vote on the election day. The ECP, in a message, said no person would be allowed to cast his vote at the polling station without having original CNIC. No other document including a copy of CNIC, passport and driving license would be acceptable for casting a vote.

Daily Voice of Masses, Independent

The day before

With political parties instructed yesterday to suspend their campaigns at the stroke of midnight, the 'pre-poll' part of election 2024 stands completed.

It is slightly disconcerting how suddenly this election seems to have passed us by. The past two months already seem like a haze of court cases and stop-start political activity.

Much of this was due, perhaps, to the prevailing impression that it was not a fair fight. Out of the two parties that consistently polled among the top two that voters intended to support, one was not allowed to campaign.

Most of the attempts made by the PTI to mobilise were met with arrests and intimidation. Thereafter, it moved its activities online, where its innovations not only helped it survive, but may have also put it in a position to mount a real challenge.

The other party, the PML-N, only hit the road towards the tail-end of the campaigning period. Indeed, it seemed at one point that it would need a push to start participating, considering how disinterested its leaders were.

Just as the momentum seemed to be picking up, however, time had to be called. Today, voters will discuss and debate their choices with their families, friends, neighbours and fellow citizens.

The PML-N seems to be in a comparatively strong position after its late burst of activity, and because it seems to have the backing of powerful forces within the state. It will be an uphill struggle for the PTI, which is contesting without its traditional symbol and wasn't able to canvass.

The PPP may prove a dark horse in this race. Even with its support base outside Sindh having dwindled over the years, its deal-making abilities have often seen it beat the odds.

Election 2024: Reaffirmation democratic journey

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President(Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Amid swirling rumors, concerns, and a charged atmosphere both domestically and internationally, Pakistan is set to conduct its highly contested and controversial 2024 elections amidst significant economic challenges including stagnant growth, acute balance of payment issues, hyperinflation, and high unemployment rates.

tions, both PTI and PML(N) have issued a 'record' number of National Assembly tickets to women, which might further encourage female voter participation reflecting a broader movement towards gender inclusivity in Pakistani politics.

dia coverage. These reports underscore the restrictive conditions facing political parties, particularly PTI, whose leadership is significantly constrained, impacting their ability to campaign freely.

ability to run an effective campaign is highly compromised due to the absence of its chairman and key leaders, coupled with the lack of its own election symbol. Moreover its public meetings have completely been blocked on the mainstream media, and as alternative it is struggling to leverage Social media that too is subjected to planned slow down as and when required.

ception that provinces offer larger budgets, greater decision-making freedom with less scrutiny, and fewer financial obligations compared to the federal government. The center, conversely, faces stricter oversight, smaller budgets, and heavier debts, often relying on foreign loans to function, while spending primarily occurs in the provinces, seemingly without responsibility for loan repayment.

up to the elections could be key to determining the outcome in this crucial province.

PPP, led by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, may continue to hold sway in its traditional stronghold of Sindh but could face challenges expanding its influence beyond this province due to the current political dynamics and its need to form crucial alliances in Punjab??.

The elections 2024 being the fourth elections since the era of martial law under Pervez Musharraf starting with governments of PPP, PML(N), and PTI reflects the evolving political landscape amidst the pre-election phase, where the PTI faced significant challenges and allegations of unfair advantages to the PML(N), highlighting underlying challenges in Pakistan's democratic processes which has been intermittently disrupted by martial laws posing setbacks to the democratic continuum.

International media, including the Council on Foreign Relations, Al Jazeera, The Diplomat, and DW, along with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the European Union, have raised concerns about the 2024 elections in Pakistan, highlighting issues such as "election engineering," disinformation, extensive media censorship, and state intervention in media coverage.

In this election season, media outlets, both traditional and social, have been exceptionally active, providing extensive coverage of the election campaigns. Renowned anchorpersons took to the streets, engaging with everyday citizens to gauge their electoral preferences. While these interactions were not scientifically structured, they did unveil some regional inclinations.

Amidst challenges, Pakistan's move towards the 2024 elections epitomizes the nation's resolve to sustain its democratic ethos. Despite the pre-election phase's uneven playing field and significant political entities facing hurdles, the unanimous decision against election boycotts or delays reflects a collective dedication to democratic values. This commitment, coupled with a notable surge in voter registration highlighting gender inclusivity, underscores the importance of a transparent, fair electoral process for Pakistan's democratic integrity and future stability.

Commerce News

Germany provides Eur45m support to Pak on Technical Development Cooperation

ISLAMABAD (Online): Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary for Economic Affairs Pakistan, and Mr. Alfred Grannas, German Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, witnessed the ceremony for signing of Euro 45 million agreements on Technical Development Cooperation for starting new bilateral cooperation projects.

and energy, just transition; Sustainable economic development, training and employment; Health, social protection and population policy.

targeting the development sectors in need. Germany stands Shana ba shana with Pakistan. Ambassador Alfred Grannas: "The German-Pakistani development cooperation has left its footprints in the country. With the agreement we signed today, we aim to continue our joint path towards a sustainable future in Pakistan."

Both parties highlighted the immense efforts taken in the past decades. The impact of the German development cooperation is proof for a successful cooperation



Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, and Mr. Alfred Grannas, German Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, witnessed the ceremony for signing of Euro 45 million agreements on Technical Development Cooperation for starting new bilateral cooperation projects on 7th February, 2024 in Islamabad.

Chairman Businessmen Group & Former President KCCI Zubair Motiwala speaks at a meeting of Special Committee for Small Traders held here at Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry. President KCCI Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh, Senior Vice President Altaf A Ghaffar, Vice President Tanveer Ahmed Barry, Chairman Special Committee for Small Traders Majeed Memon and PCLC Chief Hafeez Aziz are also seen in the picture.

PM AJK chaired meeting about agriculture, livestock

MIRPUR (APP): A meeting of the AJK Department of Agriculture and Livestock, held in the state metropolis on Wednesday, tabled various healthy ideas and recommendations for boosting the livestock besides enlarging the per-acre yield of agrarian products in the state to meet local needs.

China's vehicle sales, output soar in January

BEIJING (APP): China's vehicle sales surged 47.9 percent year on year in January 2024 to nearly 2.44 million units, said the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers on Wednesday.

The country's vehicle output last month increased by 51.2 percent year on year to 2.41 million units, according to the association. Specifically, passenger car output and sales stood at 2.08 million units and 2.12 million units, up 49.1 percent and 44 percent year on year, respectively, according to data released by the association.

Kyrgyzstan interested in boosting business ties with Pakistan: Kyrgyz Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuaev on Wednesday said that his country was interested in further boosting its business ties with Pakistan to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

He stressed that both countries should develop sustainable business relations as they have good potential to cooperate in many sectors of the economy. He said that a business delegation from Pakistan should visit Kyrgyzstan to explore joint ventures and business partnerships, said a press release issued here. The ambassador said that Kyrgyzstan was importing pharmaceuticals, sports goods, and other products from Pakistan while it was exporting dry fruits, and agricultural products to Pakistan and added both countries should do business in more products as they have good potential for it.

Naqvi chairs 3rd Chambers of Commerce Coordination Committee meeting

Independent Report LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi presided over the 3rd Punjab Chambers of Commerce Coordination Committee meeting held at CM office, here on Wednesday.

accorded a standing ovation and paid tributes to the exemplary performance of the CM. They credited CM Naqvi for the establishment of 6 Business Facilitation Centres in Punjab. Kashif Anwar LCCI President acknowledged that the day and night work being undertaken by the CM for the well-being of the masses has set a unique example of rendering public service. President Sargodha

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Imitiaz Dogar said that neither any Chief Minister has done such a huge amount of work since the inception of Pakistan nor "we have seen such an amount of work being done by any other".

President Federation of Pakistan Women Chambers said that Mohsin Naqvi before the completion of his tenure has set an emulating precedent for the coming government.

Gold rates up by 400 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 400 and was sold at Rs.215,500 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs. 215,100 on the last trading day.

Exports increase by 7.89 % to \$17.7bln in 7 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country witnessed an increase of 7.89 percent during the first seven months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

from the country increased up to \$17.782 billion during July-January (2023-24) as against the exports of \$16.481 billion in July-January (2022-23), showing a growth of 7.89 percent. On the other hand, imports into the country declined by 14.11 percent to \$30.949 billion this year against the imports of \$36.034 billion last year.

Governor urges masses to exercise right to vote

Appeals people to maintain brotherhood in election PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has urged the masses to participate in the electoral process abiding by the norms of democracy and respecting the electoral rights of each other.

PEC KP says: All arrangements for election completed

15, 696 polling stations for 21.928mn voters setup in KP PESHAWAR (APP): All arrangements have been completed by Election Commission of Pakistan for free and transparent election in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where over 21.928 million registered voters would decide fate of 713 candidates contesting for national assembly seats and 1,814 candidates of provincial assembly seats on Thursday (tomorrow).



LAHORE: Punjab's Election Commissioner Ijaz Anwar Chohan talking with media persons at University of Engineering, in Provincial Capital.

NA-43 Tank anticipates exciting electoral battle

PESHAWAR (APP): In the upcoming 2024 general elections, the Tank district is gearing up for fierce competition in the National Assembly constituency NA-43 Dera-cum-Tank and PK-108.

KP CS reviews arrangements for general elections

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry along with IG Police Akhtar Hayat Khan, Additional Secretary Home Abid Majeed and Commissioner Peshawar Muhammad Zubair visited the office of Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Minister Information says: Arrangements finalized for general elections

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Provincial Caretaker Minister for Information, Barrister Feroze Jamal Kakakhel Wednesday said that all the necessary arrangements had been completed for general elections that was the mandate of caretaker government.

2.6 mln people to cast votes in Sargodha

SARGODHA (APP): A total of 2,668,700 voters are set to exercise their right to vote for five National Assembly and ten Provincial Assembly seats of general election 2024 in Sargodha district.

Rasool Bangash says: ECNEC approved two projects for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved two projects for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Caretaker Finance Minister Ahmed Rasool Bangash.

Journalists under RUDA LHC seeks reply from respondents on petition against allotment of plots

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought reply from the respondents on March 13 in respect of the petition filed against allotment of plots to the journalists under Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA).

International News

US lawmakers reject \$17.6 billion Israel aid bill

WASHINGTON (INP): US lawmakers voted Tuesday to reject a standalone Israel aid bill denounced by critics as a "cynical" bid to thwart a cross-party border security and foreign assistance package that would include cash for war-torn Ukraine.



People gather to inspect the remains of a wrecked police vehicle that was destroyed by reported Israeli bombardment at Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

UN calls Rafah invasion war crime; Hamas responds to truce offer

Monitoring Desk UNITED NATIONS: The UN aid coordination office (OCHA) warned on Tuesday that Israel's invasion of the densely populated southern city of Rafah would constitute a war crime.

Houthis claim fresh Red Sea ship attacks

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: Yemen's Houthi rebels said on Tuesday they had struck US and British ships in two attacks in the Red Sea, the latest among dozens of incidents that have disrupted global shipping.

Nikki Haley campaign requests Secret Service after security incidents

WASHINGTON (Internews): Republican presidential contender Nikki Haley, the last remaining rival to Donald Trump in the primary race, has requested U.S. Secret Service protection, the campaign said on Monday.



U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) listens to questions during the weekly Democratic Caucus lunch press conference at the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, U.S.

Palestinians hope Blinken visit can deliver Gaza truce before Rafah assault

DOHA (Internews): The top U.S. diplomat met Saudi Arabia's de-facto ruler on Monday during a Middle East visit. Palestinians hope will clinch a truce before a threatened Israeli assault on Rafah, a border city where about half the Gaza Strip population is sheltering.

100,000-year-old human footprints found in Morocco

Monitoring Desk LARACHE: Archaeologists in Morocco have unearthed more than 80 human footprints dating back around 100,000 years and believed to be the oldest in North Africa.

Russian missile strikes on Ukrainian cities kills three

KYIV (Internews): Russia launched missile strikes on Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities during Wednesday morning's rush hour, killing three people, injuring at least a dozen more and setting blazes across the capital, Ukrainian officials said.

Miss Japan gives up crown after affair

TOKYO (INP): The Miss Japan crown will remain unclaimed this year after its Ukraine-born winner relinquished the title over reports of an affair she had with a married doctor.

President Dr. Alvi briefed: Wafaqi Mohtasib resolves 193,028 complaints; provides relief worth Rs4.898 bn

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wafaqi Mohtasib has resolved a total of 193,028 complaints against the maladministration of government departments and provided relief worth Rs 4.898 billion to the citizens during 2023.

The Mohtasib processed a record 194,099 complaints during 2023, with processing witnessing a surge of 18 per cent, while the disposal of complaints increased by 22 per cent, as compared to 2022.

Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi briefed President Dr Arif Alvi who visited the office of Wafaqi Mohtasib on Wednesday.

The president had a briefing on the complaints received and resolved by the Ombudsman to ensure prompt relief to citizens during the year 2023, Presi-

dent Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Briefing the president, the federal ombudsman highlighted the role and performance of the institution.

He informed that 193,028 complaints were addressed in 2023, with monetary relief of Rs 4.898 billion provided to the complainants.

Furthermore, on the recommendations of Wafaqi Mohtasib, as many as 18,000 street children were enrolled in government schools in Islamabad.

The meeting was informed that 85.4 per cent of Wafaqi Mohtasib's decisions were implemented last year, with efforts underway to further improve the rate of the implementation.

It was stated that the increased use of technology in Mohtasib had enhanced people's accessibility, with

48,190 complaints registered online in 2023, marking an increase of 47 per cent from 2022. Similarly, 22,321 complaints were received through Mohtasib's mobile App in 2023, representing a 21 per cent increase from 2022.

The meeting was also briefed on the Integrated Complaint Resolution System, processing 18,469 complaints in 2023, alongside Mohtasib's teams conducting Khuli Kutcheries and inspection visits to address people's grievances against government agencies. Additionally, 2,113 cases were disposed of through the Informal Resolution of Disputes.

During the meeting, the steps taken for the facilitation and resolution of complaints filed by Overseas Pakistanis were highlighted.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo during his visit to the office of the Wafaqi Mohtasib.

Speakers uphold self-determination at Pak-sponsored event, stressing its integral to freedom

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan Tuesday held a gathering of diplomats and rights advocates at the U.N. that the right of self-determination will not be fulfilled until all peoples who are under foreign occupation or settler-colonialism, especially Palestine and Kashmir, are able to exercise that right.

"The right of self-determination is bedrock of the modern international system," Ambassador Munir Akram said, warning that historically a colonial power has never succeeded in suppressing the right of self-determination of a determined people.

Ambassador Akram was speaking at a largely-attended event, which was sponsored by Pakistan, in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day.

The topic of discussion was "Challenges to the realization of the Right to

Self-Determination in the Contemporary Global Context", with speakers from all regions of the world upholding that inalienable right of peoples struggling for freedom.

"We are confident that the Palestinians, the Kashmiris and other oppressed people will ultimately secure their right to self-determination and freedom as most of us have done through the process of decolonization," the Pakistani envoy said.

Panelists at the Self-determination event were: Ms. Fionnuala NiAolain, a professor at the University of Minnesota and former UN rights expert; Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz, permanent observer of the Arab League at the UN; Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman of the World Forum for Peace and Justice; and Hameed Ajibaiye, permanent observer for OIC at the UN.

After the presentations from the panelists, ambassadors and representatives of Algeria, Turkey, Morocco, Syria, Iran, Venezuela, Eritrea and India participated in the general discussion in which they also raised issues of concern to them.

Ambassador Akram, who opened the debate, highlighted the decades-old Kashmir and Palestine conflicts, warning that these unresolved issues posed a threat to international peace and security.

Noting that the right of self-determination was the fundamental principle of the UN Charter, he said, there were still examples of where peoples continue to be denied the right of self-determination.

"I will focus on the fact that we face two situations at least, where the right of self-determination

Pakistan fully committed to promote an inclusive democratic process: FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign Office (FO) has said Pakistan is fully committed to promote an inclusive democratic process.

This was said by FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch while reacting to remarks made by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the upcoming general elections in Pakistan. She held Pakistan is fully resolved to uphold rule of law and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Guarantees in this regard are enshrined in our law and constitution Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had said in a statement that organization condemns all acts of violence against political parties and candidates

and stresses authorities to maintain necessary fundamental freedom for the sake of meaningful democratic process.

At least 24 incidents of violence against political parties workers have been reported before election.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had appealed to the authorities to ensure fully fair and free election and reiterate their resolve for democratic process.

FO spokesperson said security plans have been given final shape hold the elections on Thursday as per the electoral laws of Pakistan. She said our judicial system provides for fair trial and due process. Domestic legal remedies are available in case of any complaints in the electoral process.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Elections 2024: ECP official dispels fears of 'EMS being hacked'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) IT Director, Khizar Aziz, dispelled the fears of 'hacking Election Management System' (EMS) in upcoming general elections 2024, saying that no public networks are being utilized for transmitting election results.

"Private networks will be employed for the purpose which eliminates concerns about the hacking of the EMS," Aziz told a private news channel.

He highlighted that the EMS was equipped with special software, securely housed in the offices of 859 Returning Officers (RO), with the provision of four data entry operators, four laptops, and IT equipment.

Simultaneously, Aziz stated the EMS was also installed in the mobile phones of Presiding Officers (PO) who will capture an image of Form 45 and send it to the Returning Officer. In case of network issue, Form 45 will automatically deliver to the RO once a signal is restored.

He explained the process of Section 95, where the Presiding Officer is required to visit the RO's office and display Form 45 on their mobile device. The form will self-lock on the Presiding Officer's mobile, ensuring data integrity.

Elucidating the working of EMS, Khizar Aziz stated that during the creation of Form 47 the RO will verify that Form 45 is locked on the Presiding Officer's mobile.

Elections 2024: Polling stuff being dispatched in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): The delivery of polling stuff to various parts of Karachi is underway on Wednesday ahead of general elections, scheduled to take place tomorrow, across the country.

As per details, the polling stuff is being dispatched from nine different parts of the metropolis.

In District East, the polling stuff is being dispatched from the Expo Centre, in Kemari from the JCT Site, and in Malir, Presiding Officers (ROs) receiving stuff from the DC Office.

Furthermore, in the West, the polling stuff is being dispatched from the DC office, in district Central from Government Comprehensive School North Nazimabad, in

Korangi from Superior College and Government Girls College Korangi.

Meanwhile, the polling stuff in District South is being dispatched from Government Commerce College.

It is to be noted that the General Elections of the National Assembly and four provincial assemblies will be held tomorrow.

The election campaign by political parties and independent candidates concluded across the country last night.

The Election Commission has completed all arrangements for the polling. Ninety-thousand six hundred and seventy-five polling stations have been established in all four provinces.



SUKKUR: Polling staff gather for collecting ballot boxes and election materials for their polling station from Election Commission Office, a day before General Elections 2024, in Sukkur.

1.2 million voters to elect 3 MNAs, 6 MPAs in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): Some 1,225,147 voters, including 662,713 male and 562,434 female voters, are registered to cast their votes to elect 3 Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and 6 Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) from Hyderabad on February 8.

According to the statistics shared by an official of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) here on Saturday, as many as 883 polling stations consisting of 3,219 booths, among

which 1,700 would be for male and 1,519 for female voters, are being established.

In Hyderabad and Qasimabad talukas based constituency NA-218, some 339,667 people are registered to exercise their right of adult franchise.

The ECP is setting up 240 polling stations with 861 polling booths for 178,678 male and 160,989 female voters. Likewise, 424,448 people would elect their MNA from Latifabad taluka-based NA-219.



RIYADH: Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (Operations), Air Marshal Abdul Moed Khan in a group photo along with Foreign dignitaries and Pakistan Air Force (PAF) contingent during World Defence Air Show 2024 held in Riyadh.

IGP visits polling station, reviews security arrangements

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP), Sindh Rifhat Mukhtar Raja Wednesday paid a visit to the Commerce College polling station located near PIDC.

During his visit, the IGP interacted with the police personnel who were on duty at the polling station. He instructed the officers to enhance the security measures to ensure the safety of voters, candidates, polling staff, and materials by maintaining a strong police presence in and around the polling stations.

Rifhat Mukhtar Raja emphasized the importance of vigilance and readiness among the police stationed at the polling stations.

He stressed the need for extraordinary security measures based on past and anticipated election scenarios, with no room for any shortcomings.

Rifhat informed that the deployment of police personnel had been completed, and all necessary polling materials had been

delivered. Ensuring safety at all levels remains a top priority, with concerted efforts aimed at conducting peaceful elections, he reiterated. Addressing the media, the IGP highlighted the shared responsibility for ensuring peaceful elections, underscoring the pivotal role of the police in maintaining security.

He assured that the police force was utilizing all available resources, including Quick Response Force (QRF), which was on standby.

Additionally, district Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) have identified sensitive polling locations, along with Designated Returning Officers (DROs), to ensure a swift response to any untoward incidents.

Subsequently, the IGP visited the election control room situated in the office of DIGP South, where he received a briefing on monitoring activities from DIGP South.



LAHORE: Pak Army soldiers patrol a road to ensure security ahead of general election, in Provincial Capital.

Political instability, weak economy root cause of all problems: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that political instability and weak economy was the root of all problems.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he said that an unstable government would never be able to stabilize autonomy, and the masses would continue to reel under multiple problems; therefore, voters must use their votes for a party that can form a stable government.

The business leader said a coalition government after the elections would be unfortunate as they can never resolve the issues confronting the masses and the economy.

He said that a stable government could stabilize the economy and ensure the country's development, so voters should prioritize a stable government above all other factors.

There have been dozens of experiences with unstable governments that have bankrupted a prosperous country like Pakistan, where hunger, poverty, ignorance, diseases and inflation were on the rise, he added. Mian Zahid Hussain said that Pakistan was not essentially a poor country, but the endless series of political engineering has made it a beggar who cannot take a step without the consent of the IMF.

Currently, over two and a half million children were out of the school; 40 per cent were malnourished, and seven per cent die before reaching the age of five, while other health indicators were also very depressing.

Sindh High Court directs to use modern tech in hunt for missing persons

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court has issued a strong directive to law enforcement agencies, demanding they utilize modern technology and devices in their efforts to recover missing individuals. This order came during a hearing on petitions filed by families seeking the return of their loved ones who have vanished.

Justice Naimatullah Phalpot presided over the hearing, questioning the investigating officer about the measures taken to locate missing citizens. While the officer reported conducting 14 Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) and reaching out to various agencies, the court deemed these efforts insufficient.

Specifically, the families of Hasan Dilawar, missing from Landhi, and

Habib Khan, missing from Shah Latif, presented their cases before the court, pleading for their loved ones' safe return. In response, the court not only ordered the reconvening of JITs and the Provincial Task Force but also emphasized the crucial role of modern technology in expediting the search.

This emphasis marks a significant development, highlighting the potential of technological advancements in tackling the critical issue of missing persons.

The court expects law enforcement to leverage tools like advanced tracking systems, facial recognition software, and data analysis to enhance their investigations and bring missing individuals home.



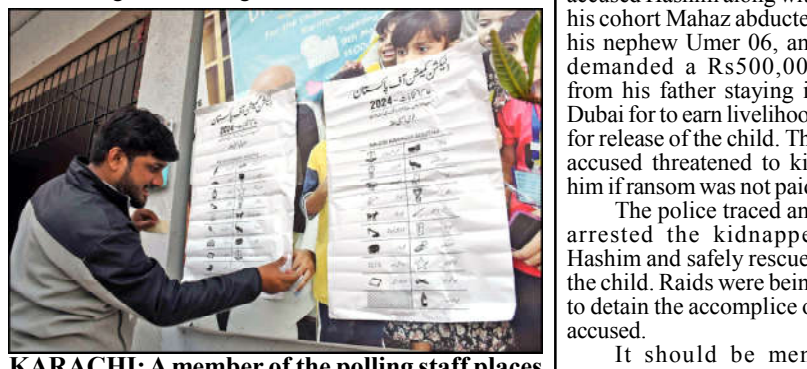
LARKANA: Polling officials on the way after receiving polling related materials for General Election -2024 at DRO office.

Commissioner visits election material dispatch centers

HYDERABAD (APP): Commissioner SBA Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider visited election material dispatch centers established at Govt Boys Degree College Nawabshah and Govt Boys Higher Secondary School Qazi Ahmed and inspected the distribution of election material among polling staff for the general election. Regional Election Commissioner Muhammad Yousuf Siddiqui, SE Education Works Shafique Ahmed Channar and, Deputy Director Information Ghulam Abbas Goraho accompanied the Commissioner. At the Govt Degree College

Nawabshah Dispatch Center the Returning Officer NA-207 Subhash Chandar and other officials briefed the Commissioner regarding the distribution of election material and attendance of polling staff along with security and transportation facilities. RO also informed that all presiding Officers were provided complete polling material under the security of police and the Pak Army. The commissioner expressed his satisfaction with the dispatch work.

Later Commissioner visited Govt Higher Secondary School Qazi Ahmed where election material was being distributed for NA-208.



KARACHI: A member of the polling staff places information posters for voters outside a polling station in a school building for general election, in the Provincial Capital.