

Independent

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Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 06. No. 24 Rajab 28, 1445 AH Friday February 09, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

General Elections 2024 PML-N, PPP & independent candidates leading electoral race in NA and PAs

Mobile service suspended partially in different areas

LAHORE (Agencies): coming after polls As per provisional / closed, the Pakistan unofficial results – Muslim League subject to verification – Nawaz, Pakistan and confirmation – Peoples Party and in-

Governor Sindh casts vote

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Thursday, cast his vote at the polling station of Neelam Colony, district South Karachi for National Assembly Constituency NA 241 and Sindh Assembly Constituency PS 110.

The governor speaking to the media after casting the vote, expressed satisfaction that polling process across the province was being conducted in a peaceful manner and people were casting their vote in a peaceful environment.

He said that the international media was also monitoring the election process in Pakistan.

The governor emphasized the citizens to exercise their right to vote and said that senior citizens, women and youth should cast their vote in favour of the most suitable candidate as next 5 years would depend on the outcome of these elections.

The governor also lauded the services of the security forces in maintaining peace and law and order on the polling day.

Kamran Khan Tessori said that government would not allow any one to disturb the peace of Karachi and stringent action would be taken against them.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori casts his vote at a polling station during General Elections 2024.

dependent candidates [mainly those affiliated with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf] are leading the electoral race in the national and provincial assemblies.

Preliminary results of the 2024 general elections have begun to emerge from various national and provincial constituencies as the vote count commenced in the evening following the conclusion of day-long polling across the country on Thursday.

Projections of first results indicate that no party could attain an outright majority, although political bigwigs Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari, Shehbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto are gradually widening the margin of victory against their contestants.

As per unverified and unconfirmed reports, the PML-N is on its way to reclaim its political stronghold of Lahore, with its election candidates attaining lead over competitors on 12 out of a total of 14 national assembly



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi casting his vote during General Election-2024.

seats. Former three-time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is leading in Lahore's NA-130.

Likewise, PML-N leaders Shehbaz Sharif is inching towards victory in NA-123, Hamza Shehbaz in NA-118 and Maryam Nawaz in NA-119.

Mobile service was suspended partially in different areas of the country including Islamabad due to security threat on the occasion of general election 2024.

Nevertheless, PML-N may face an upset in Lahore's NA-127 where its candidate Ataulah Tarar is losing to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Bilawal is also winning from Larkana's NA-194 according to preliminary unofficial results.

Similarly, former president and PPP Co-

chairman Asif Ali Zardari is set to secure a comfortable win in Shaheed Benazirabad's NA-207 constituency.

The national assembly has 265 seats and polling in one seat was postponed due to the death of a candidate.

A party needs 133 seats for a simple majority but many analysts believe the vote may not produce a clear winner.

Thousands of troops were deployed on the streets and at polling stations across the country and borders with Iran and Afghanistan were temporarily closed as security was stepped up to ensure peaceful polling.

Mobile phone services suspended for security reasons were being partially resumed, the Interior Ministry said late on Thursday.

Interim CM casts vote

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Justice @ Maqbool Baqar on Thursday went to cast his vote at Polling Station Government Boys Primary School No. 2, Block-6, PECHS for NA-237 and PS-104.

While talking to the media, the Chief Minister mentioned that the security arrangements were beefed up and the polling stations were functioning smoothly. He also added that the voter turnout would increase.

When asked about the provincial government's role in facilitating the Election Commission of Pakistan, the CM said that they have provided all the necessary facilities, including transportation of the election staff to polling stations.

He dismissed the notion that polling staff had not reached their polling stations. Regarding the suspension of mobile services, the Chief Minister clarified that it was the decision of the federal government. He believed that they must have made such a decision for a valid reason.

President casts vote; urges countrymen to use their right

KARACHI (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday cast his vote and urged the countrymen to use their voting right saying that the country needed their opinion as never before.

The president, who reached the polling station along with his family members, awaited his turn in the queue and cast his vote.

Later, he wrote on his X timeline, "The Islamic Republic of Pa-

kistan has asked for your personal advice through your vote to elect representatives to the National & Provincial Assemblies."

He said it was everyone's Islamic, constitutional and civic responsibility to vote. "We as a family reached our polling station, stood in line and have voted and urge all of you to come out and exercise your right. Pakistan needs your opinion as never before," he remarked.

Bilawal casts his vote in Nodero

LARKANA (APP): Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has cast his vote in polling station No. 157 of Government Boys Primary School No. 3 of Nodero, Municipal Committee of Rato Dero Tehsil of District Larkana.

While, PPP Sindh president, Senator and candidate PS 13 Nisar Ahmed Khuro

and his ex MPA daughter Nida Khuro cast vote in Rahmat pure, PS 12 candidate Suhail Anwar Siyal ex-MPA cast his vote in Faredabad village and PS 11 Candidate Jameel Ahmed Soomro cast his vote in divisional post office Larkana PS 10 Candidate Faryal Talpur cast her vote in Ratodero city school.



LARKANA: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari casts his vote in Shaheed Major Mujahid Mirani Government Boys Primary School Polling Station Naudero in the constituency NA-194 and PS-10 during General Elections -2024.

PM Kakar visits various polling stations of twin cities, expresses satisfaction

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday visited various polling stations in Islamabad and Rawalpindi as the voting process for General Elections 2024 is underway across the country.

The prime minister took a round of the polling stations in G-6 sector of Islamabad and Arid University of Rawalpindi

and others. He also talked to the polling staff and inspected the voting process as well as the facilities provided to the voters.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction over the security and the facilities for the voters.

He interacted with the voters, and shook hand with them, who also had photographs with him.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar visits various polling stations for the General Elections 2024 in Islamabad.

Internet, mobile services suspended across Pakistan on polling day

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Interior Ministry on Thursday suspended mobile phone and internet services across Pakistan to maintain law and order situation in election 2024.

"As a result of the recent incidents of terrorism in the country precious lives have been lost, security measures are essential to maintain the law and order situation and deal with possible threats, hence the temporary suspension of mobile services across the country," the interior ministry said in a message on X (formerly Twitter).

Following the suspension of internet and cellular services across Pakistan, the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) 8300 SMS service has been also affected. Earlier, a hand grenade blast occurred in Karachi's Gulshan-e-Iqbal area, leaving three persons dead and two injured.

of Police (SSP) Irfan Bahadur said that a grenade exploded in the hands of 17-year-old Farooq, the son of a police officer. The SSP said that Farooq came out of his residence in Haji Limu Goth of Gulshan-e-Iqbal with a hand grenade that exploded, resulting in his death.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja ordered the police chiefs and chief secretaries of all provinces to put security on high alert following terror attacks in Balochistan ahead of general elections 2024.

Pakistan, world's fifth-largest democracy, is going to polls today (Thursday) to elect its representatives for next five years.

A huge number of countrymen are expected to vote in the most expensive polling exercise since the country's inception.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar witnesses the polling process at Command and Control Center during his visit at Civic Center building in Karachi.

Security beefed up, polling stations functioning smoothly: CM Baqar

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar on Thursday said that the security arrangements were beefed up and the polling stations were functioning smoothly.

While talking to media persons after casting his vote at Polling Sta-

tion Government Boys Secondary School No. 2, Block-6, PECHS for NA-237 and PS-104, the CM Baqar said that the current government has provided all the necessary facilities, including transportation of the election staff to polling stations.

He dismissed the no-

tion that polling staff had not reached their polling stations and affirmed that the voter turnout would increase in the day.

The Chief Minister visited the Command & Control Center at Civic Center and witnessed the polling process through CCTV coverage.

The Home Minister,

Brig (retd) Haris Nawaz and IG Police Riffat Mukhar briefed him about the smooth functioning of the polling process.

Later, the Chief Minister, along with Home Minister Brig @ Haris Nawaz and IF Police Riffat Mukhtar, took an aerial view of the polling process by helicopter.

Khurshid Shah casts vote in Sukkur NA-201

SUKKUR (APP): Former Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly (NA), Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah, cast his vote at the polling station established at the Government Islamia College of the NA-201 constituency in Sukkur.

It is to be mentioned here that the polling time for the general elections has started. The polling will continue till 5 p.m. without any break.

EC 8300 SMS service affected due to suspension of mobile phone service

ISLAMABAD (Online): 8300 SMS service of Election Commission (EC) was also affected due to suspension of mobile phone service.

Million of rupees remained deprived of information about their votes due to suspension SMS 8300 service.

Interior Minister Expresses satisfaction on law & order situation during Elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Interior Dr. Gohar Ejaz Thursday expressed satisfaction on the conclusion of the process of polling for General Elections 2024.

In his statement issued here, he announced with immense satisfaction that the overall security situation across the country remained generally stable to ensure the peace-

ful conduct of free and fair elections. The minister said that he acknowledged the unwavering dedication and professionalism of the security forces, law enforcement agencies, and police personnel for holding elections in peaceful manners.

These forces were deployed extensively and in large numbers, ensuring the smooth conduct of the electoral process.

President Alvi congratulates Ilham Aliyev on his victory in Azerbaijan's presidential elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday congratulated Ilham Aliyev on his decisive victory in Azerbaijan's Presidential elections. Conveying best wishes to Azerbaijan's president, the president said his leadership continued to inspire progress and stability. "Pakistan looks forward to strengthening enduring friendship and cooperation," he added.

Cop held red handed while stamping 'arrow'

NAWABSHAH (INP): A policeman was caught red handed while stamping 'arrow' during general election polling in NA-207 on Thursday. According to details, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) nominated candidate for NA-207, Sher Muhammad Rind visited a polling station of the constituency.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Dr. Gohar Ejaz and Head of Commonwealth Observation Group Dr. Gholuck Jonathon addressing the media during General Elections -2024.

Don't mention name of coalition government: Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE (Online): PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif has said name of coalition government be not mentioned. "don't mention name of coalition government. If problems have to be resolved then full mandate should be given to one party. Party will decide about making Maryam Nawaz Chief Minister (CM) Punjab. No problem has ever remained with the army, he said this while talking to local and foreign journalists here Thursday.

He held fair and transparent elections are being held this time in the country. Fair and transparent

elections have always taken place in Pakistan except a few years before.

To a question from journalist will he forge deal with the army he said there is no need to strike any deal with the army. There has been no problem ever with army. He stated people should come out of homes and cast their votes. The culture of obstinacy and indecency will have to be eliminated from the country. To a question from a journalist Mian Sahb you will get simple majority or will form coalition government Nawaz Sharif said o brother don't mention name of coalition government.



LAHORE: Former Prime Minister and PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif talking to supporters after cast his vote at polling station during General Election-2024.

Pakistan's judicial system ensures fair trial to everyone, FO tells UN

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Foreign Office on Wednesday put to rest the United Nations concerns over electoral process in Pakistan and human rights issues.

The reply came a day after the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights voiced concerns over the violation of the law requiring political parties to award five percent tickets to women.

In a statement, FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the authorities have finalised plans for the countrywide exercise, as per relevant

laws. "Pakistan is fully committed to foster an inclusive democratic process, uphold the rule of law and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed in its laws and Constitution," the statement added. While replying to the UN body's concerns over the "harassment, arrests and prolonged detentions" of PTI leaders and supporters, she said that Pakistan's judicial system ensures "fair trial" and legal recourse is available for "any complaints in the electoral process".

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

People's voice

There is a hush today in the corridors of power. A higher force stirs. The time is at hand for the people of Pakistan to speak and for others, in nations near and far, to bear witness to their decision. This electoral cycle has been unlike any in recent memory.

At stake are not only the continuity and evolution of the country's crisis-ridden political system but also the foundations of its social contract. With the country at a crossroads, 128m voters have been handed the power to decide which path it should take forward. It is hoped that most will exercise it today in any one of the more than 92,000 polling stations nationwide.

Thousands are contesting for the 266 National Assembly seats, and thousands more for a seat in one of the provincial assemblies. By tonight, hopefully, we will know whom the voters have chosen to trust. It is important that everyone make themselves heard. Our freedoms and choices may be limited, but the only lawful means to improve our lot is by voting in sound and capable leaders who are best suited to representing us in parliament. This right should not be foregone. Exercising the vote is not merely a civic duty; it is an assertion of one's freedom, a declaration of agency, and a reaffirmation of one's belonging to this nation. We are fortunate to have this right, which has been earned through the sacrifices of generations past.

This election has been a silver lining throughout the tumult that has lately roiled Pakistan. For months, the people have been looking forward to having a say in who ought to be making executive decisions on their behalf. Despite many apprehensions, they have held on to the belief that their right to choose will make a difference. Today, as this right is exercised, the public's will must be respected by all without qualifications or limitations.

The ballot box is not merely a receptacle for pieces of paper. It is the crucible in which millions of Pakistanis place their aspirations, grievances and dreams as they renew their contract with the state. It is important that the state respects this trust and facilitates the exercise in every manner. The tragic loss of life in Balochistan yesterday has cast a pall of gloom. As indicated in the editorial below, the state must take every measure to ensure citizens' security today and guarantee that the polling exercise will be held in a safe environment. Given that they are being held after considerable delay, it is important that voters are able to participate freely in these elections, which must be concluded to the public's satisfaction. History awaits our people's verdict. The state should not falter or fail them in this defining moment.

On election day, a multi-faceted portrayal emerges from both social and traditional media, heralding the peaceful conclusion of the voting process. Despite efforts from all political parties, including state machinery, to diminish PTT's influence, they misread the pulse of Pakistani voters. The dynamics of voting were reshaped by factors such as the influx of young and women voters, increased digital literacy and penetration, and the pervasive influence of social media platforms like WhatsApp. These elements were pivotal in this election, unlike in previous ones, marking a new era of voter empowerment in Pakistani politics. While the state favored PML(N), the tactics employed by the state were thwarted by voters' resentment over the heavy-handed crackdown on PTI leadership and supporters. Through their ballots, voters triumphed over planned irregularities, intimidation tactics, and pre-election rigging, underscoring a collective rejection of state interference.

The high voter turnout exemplified heightened public engagement and a desire for change. Overall, the prevailing mood among voters was one of seeking retribution for perceived injustices and asserting their autonomy in the electoral process. Unfortunately, between the hours of 9 pm and 12 midnight, mobile and internet services were once again disrupted, causing a slowdown in the reporting of election results. This disruption occurred at a critical juncture, coinciding with the unexpected strong performance of PTI and PPP representatives, and the underwhelming showing of PML(N).

Returning offices cited server downtimes and technical difficulties as reasons for the delay, yet failed to provide clear explanations or confirm results compiled by presiding officers. The Election Commission intervened, instructing returning officers not to compile or issue results independently, but to forward them to the Commission for announcement, if deemed appropriate.

Despite widespread complaints from political parties about the prolonged delay, PML(N) remained conspicuously silent on the matter. Observers voiced their frustration and anger over the prolonged delay, labeling it a conspiracy against both the country and its people. In Sindh, PPP enjoyed significant success in rural areas, resulting in swift and apparent results. However, in Punjab and KP provinces, the results trickled in alarmingly slowly, raising suspicions of deliberate obstruction.

At midnight, despite the slowdown in reporting, notable developments emerged in various constituencies across Pakistan. Shohib Shaheen in Islamabad secured a comfortable lead in PS 27, while Taj Mohammad of PTI surged ahead against the JUI-F candidate. Palarasan of PPP emerged victorious in Khairpur, while Ali Amin secured a commanding lead over Maulana Fazal ur Rehman. However, Jehangir Tareen of IPP faced defeat in both seats. Fazal Mohammad of PTI was also in the lead, and Umer Ayub clinched victory in 18 Haripur with a significant margin against PML(N). Asad Qaiser of PTI emerged victorious over the JUI-F candidate with a substantial lead, and Mr. Zubair Khan of PTI secured a win in Battagram PK 34 against

a JUI-F candidate. Meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif appeared to be leading with a clear majority. At 12:30 am, these results prompted a sense of quiet unease in the PML(N) media center, where Nawaz Sharif was scheduled to deliver a victory speech. Journalists, who had been prepared for the event, were informed accordingly. However, a tweet from state representatives suggested optimism for PML(N) in Balochistan constituencies. Despite this, the dismal results in Punjab and KP provinces shifted discussions on TV channels toward the possibility of a PPP and PTI coalition government.

At 12:37 am in Karachi, Khalid Maqbool Siddique of MQM Haqparast confidently claimed victory in 18 to 19 out of 21 seats, breaking all previous records. He pledged to serve all citizens of Karachi, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity.

Asif Ali Zardari expressed satisfaction with the incoming results and congratulated Bilawal Bhutto on the outstanding performance, asserting that the next government would be formed by the PPP. Meanwhile, TV commentators, who had previously speculated on a strong PML(N) victory and discussed the potential oath-taking of Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister and Maryam Nawaz as Chief Minister of Punjab, shifted their focus. They now deliberated on the likelihood of a PPP and PTI coalition government at the center, advising PML(N) to gracefully accept defeat and assume the role of the opposition. Which prompted the Election Commission to completely freeze the result by 01 am as the results which were pouring

in at 10pm and earlier at 7 pm respectively. At 10 pm the PTI was maintaining the overall lead in Punjab and KP province where the PTI was sweeping. In Sindh, PPP was facing stiff competition from GDA. Mian Nawaz Sharif was trailing behind Gustasib Khan in Mansehra. Amin Gandpur was winning with a large margin against Moulana Fazal ur Rehman. Atta Tarar who was trailing behind Bilawal Bhutto started leading. PTI's Qaiser was winning by a large margin. Zartaj Gul, Aminpur Gandapur and Salman Akram Raja of PTI maintained their lead. Ms. Rehana Dar who was trailing behind Khawaja Asif in Sialkot started leading.

Hafiz Mohammad Saad Rizvi was winning in Attack. Umer Ayub in Haripur was winning by a large margin. Mr. Waqas Akram started winning. Mr. Shahbaz Sharif started trailing Sardar M. Hussain Dogar, in Kasur, considered a big setback to PML(N). The PTI candidate was close to Shahbaz Sharif in Lahore. Mian Latif, a strong candidate of PML(N) started losing against the PTI candidate. Khawaja Saad Rafique was ahead of Latif Khosa in Lahore. Usama of PTI was beating Ehsan Ranja of PML(N). The comments on all channels started shifting away from PML(N) in favor of PTI. Barrister Gohar Ali of PTI was leading by a large margin. Shaukat Basra of PTI was leading against PML(N). Mir Muqam was losing by a large margin. The mobile services which were restored, were once again terminated and elections result were slowed down, leading to rumors that since the PTI is winning in most of the seats, therefore, the state might step in to help its favorite

party.

The termination of internet and mobile services were terminated throughout the day. Which were criticized by PPP and PTI criticized it, alleging an attempt to suppress voter turnout and manipulate the outcome. This move sparked debates in traditional and social media, with some supporting the security measures for maintaining stability, while others condemned it for impeding citizens' rights and hindering transparency in the electoral process.

The Human Rights Commission has expressed concern regarding the termination of internet and mobile services in the lead-up to the elections. They have criticized the blackout, highlighting its impact on citizens' rights to access information and communicate freely. The Commission views such actions as potentially infringing upon democratic principles and impeding the transparency of the electoral process. They emphasize the importance of balancing security measures with the protection of fundamental rights, urging authorities to ensure that such disruptions are proportionate and justified.

Local and international observers have provided observations on the conduct of the elections thus far. Local observers have noted issues such as irregularities, voter intimidation, and violence in certain areas, raising concerns about transparency and fairness. Similarly, international observers have emphasized the importance of free and fair elections, calling for impartiality, transparency, and adherence to electoral laws. They stress the need for accountability and trans-

parency to ensure public confidence in the electoral process. Both local and international observers continue to monitor closely and provide assessments to uphold democratic standards.

The Election 2024 was marked by pre-poll harassment, intimidation, and threats faced by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership which prompted International observers to echo these concerns, emphasizing the need for a peaceful and transparent electoral process free from coercion and violence. A day prior to and during the polling day throughout Pakistan, the security situation though remained largely tolerable was also marred with various incidents of violence including instances of voter intimidation, raising concerns about the integrity of the process.

As the tumultuous events of the 2024 elections in Pakistan unfold, a narrative emerges of resilience and determination amidst adversity. Despite challenges ranging from disruptions in communication to incidents of violence and intimidation, the Pakistani electorate has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to democracy. The power of the vote has prevailed over attempts to manipulate and suppress it, as voters have asserted their agency and sought to shape the future of their nation. As the dust settles and the results begin to take shape, it is clear that the path forward will be marked by continued vigilance, accountability, and a steadfast dedication to upholding democratic principles. In the face of uncertainty, Pakistan stands poised to embrace its democratic destiny, guided by the collective will of its people and the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

Commerce News

Balochistan launches large scale solar project under CPEC

BEIJING (APP): The Balochistan government, with the support of Chinese government, has completed the solarization of 12 educational institutions, computer laboratories and hospitals that have been equipped with modern solar power facilities.

Pakistan's total solar installed capacity was 1.24 GW by 2022, representing a 17 percent increase over 2021. The government has proposed many initiatives to increase the share of solar energy in the country.

By now, Pakistan's Solar Energy Market is estimated to increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 49.68 percent from 1.30 gigatonnes in 2023 to 9.77 gigatonnes in 2028.

In the specific case of

Balochistan province, according to the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program, "Pakistan's total technical solar and wind potentials are 2,900 GW and 340 GW, respectively."

"Additionally, Balochistan has the potential to implement greater than 14 GW of Renewable energy within 5-10 years through least-cost pathways, including PV utility scale plants of 9,500 - 11,500 MWp. Balochistan's geography, irradiance, and location make it one of Pakistan's most high-potential provinces, with respect to renewables," China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

"Decentralized microgrids paired with solar generation could be

used to increase reliable electricity access for rural residents. While microgrids generally only provide basic electrification (high quality lighting and charging of a mobile phone), it is able to do so for multiple households at a significantly lower cost over in the long run," CEN added.

"An estimated 36 percent of Balochistan is electrified, so this pairing has immense potential for the province. In the future, the province is poised to become the country's most booming solar power growth hub."

In a remarkable turning point, International Energy Agency (IEA) recently reported, "Solar energy is set to attract more capital investment than traditional oil for the

first time ever."

"In 2023, an average of approximately USD 1 billion per day (USD 380 billion for the year) are being invested in the solar industry, exceeding investment in oil production for the first time (USD370 billion for the year)."

"Under such a background, Pakistan stands at a crucial juncture," Ali Majid, Pakistan General Manager of Global leading solar provider LONGi, underlined, "through constantly renovate clean energy technology, not only solar, we can secure a sustainable and clean energy future while reaping the economic benefits that come with the global shift towards renewable energy sources."



PESHAWAR: View of business activities seen closed while markets gives desert look during the General Elections 2024, held in Peshawar on Thursday, February 8, 2024. Voters across the country have flocked to their respective polling stations to cast ballots and elect their favorite leaders amid cold weather and the suspension of mobile phone services.



LAHORE: Fruit seller selling fruits on side of road on General Election Day.

Asian markets mixed after Wall St record, Shanghai extends rally

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian stocks were mixed Thursday following another record on Wall Street, with strong earnings, a resilient US economy and Chinese moves to boost the country's markets playing up against fading hopes for an early Federal Reserve interest rate cut. Fresh comments from US monetary policymakers pushing back against reducing borrowing costs too early were unable to

overshadow a string of forecast-beating reports from top firms this season including Amazon and Facebook parent Meta.

With traders now resigned to fewer rate cuts this year, they are also focusing on readings showing that US growth remained on track and jobs were still being created, all as inflation came down.

In the latest moves to temper bets on a dovish Fed pivot, the bank's

Richmond president Tom Barkin said he was "very supportive of being patient" on announcing the first reduction, citing the strong metrics.

And governor Adriana Kugler added that she wanted to wait until more data was available before moving. While figures continue to show the inflation battle is being won, decision-makers are reluctant to cut too early in case prices bounce back.

Meher highlights role of economy, democracy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis Thursday said economy and democracy are crucial pillars for the development and stability of the country.

Talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs led by the recipient of the best CEO award Ms Maheen, he said a strong economy fosters growth, job

opportunities, and improved living standards, said a news release here.

He said democracy ensures a representative government that upholds the rule of law, protects human rights, and encourages people participation in decision-making.

The synergy between a stable economy and a functioning democracy is vital for Pakistan's progress and sustainable development, he remarked.

PFC to take part in 3-day LAS VEGAS-USA expo

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will take part in a three-day International Las Vegas-USA Expo starting on February 13 to explore business opportunities and find new global markets.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq, talking to a delegation of

furniture manufacturers led by Muhammad Arab, said, "PFC is in touch with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan for participating in all international mega events," according to a news release here on Thursday.

He said, "This fair attracts thousands of global manufacturers from all over the world who showcase their products."

IT Exporters should be immediately excluded of internet suspension

LAHORE (INP): A leading IT exporter of Pakistan, Noman Said, has lambasted the consultation-less and blanket blockage of internet services in the country due to the elections - as the IT industry has come to an abrupt & loss making standstill. The Internet is our lifeline, our office, our communications infrastructure and IT industry can't operate without it, he added.

Noman Said maintained that IT & ITES services are already under

a lot of pressure on account of cost of doing business and experiencing non-competitive challenges in the exports of IT services due to the weak governance structure & lack of continuity in policies; and, now the political turmoil has completely stopped the IT industry's operations.

Noman Said has vociferously & categorically demanded the immediate resumption of internet services to the IT industry. He also

maintained that internet service quality in the country has already on a shrinking capacity; particularly, those of data services. He explained that no international buyer or importer will take this excuse that we need some time leverage due to unavailability of internet - and, to be precise, credibility & goodwill achieved through timely delivery is everything in the IT export markets as once a client or order is gone, it is impossible to regain them.

Consumer prices down 0.8% in China in January

ISTANBUL (AA/APP): Consumer prices in China posted a 0.8% drop year-on-year in January, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Thursday.

The bureau said the decline stemmed from the base effect related to high price increases due to a spring festival in the country last year.

Energy price cut, economic stability strong reasons to elect reps, say people of NA-55

RAWALPINDI (APP): General public in NA-55 has expressed miscellaneous reasons for electing representatives of their choice in Feb 8 General Elections.

Expressing their views to APP here on Thursday, the majority of voters at different polling stations of the

constituency said economic stability in the country was one of the main reasons for their voting choice.

Some believed that energy and fuel prices needed to be reduced, therefore, they would choose representatives who would address the issue of high energy prices.

CM Punjab monitors election arrangements

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday paid a visit to the Central Control Room established by the home department at the Civil Secretariat to review and monitor arrangements made for holding the general elections across the province. The CM went to the central control room and conducted a detailed review of the monitoring arrangements.

The home secretary gave a briefing to the CM about arrangements being undertaken to ensure holding of general elections in a peaceful environment besides the monitoring system. Mohsin Naqvi stated that a crucial phase of holding general elections

had been completed in a peaceful and nice manner. The police, administration and law enforcement institutions jointly maintained law and order environment during the general elections.

The CM acknowledged that excellent arrangements had been made for holding the general elections in every city of Punjab, including Lahore. IG Police Dr Usman Anwar, CCPO Lahore and officials concerned were also present.

Meanwhile, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the upgraded second and third floors, new lab and diagnostic center at the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC),

completed within a span of just 25 days.

The CM appreciated secretary communication and works, health & commissioner Lahore for their hard work.

The roadside lab facility would supplement PIC's quotidian revenue; he observed and ordered to provide amenities like refrigerators, chairs and TVs in private rooms during his inspection of different floors.

Expressing his satisfaction, the CM emphasized that the inauguration of the diagnostic center, accomplished in an unprecedented time frame of two to three weeks, underscores the collective determination and collaboration of all stakeholders.

Nqvi casts vote at Riwaz Garden

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi cast his vote at the Riwaz Garden polling station here on Thursday.

The CM cast his ballot in the polling station no. 42 of GPS Junior Model School Riwaz Garden. He stood in the queue and waited for his turn. The CM on his turn took ballot papers from the polling officer and by putting a stamp on the electoral symbol put the ballot papers in the box.

Polling process halted on clash between workers of PTI, PML-N

LAHORE (Online): Polling process was halted for some time as a result of clash between workers of two political parties outside polling station located in government poly technical College Railway road. The polling resumed following the interference by police. It has been told that the workers involved in clash hailed from PML-N and PTI. They chanted slogans against leadership of each other.



KARACHI: Members of polling staff start counting the votes after the polls closed for parliamentary elections, in the Provincial Capital.

CM KP inspects Election Control Room in Home Department

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (Retd) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Thursday visited the Election Control Room established at the Home Department, overseeing the latest developments in the electoral process.

Provincial Minister Aamer Abdullah, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Choudhry, Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Gandapur, and Additional Chief Secretary Home, were present during the briefing. They were briefed that polling is underway at all 15,607

polling stations throughout the province.

Adequate electoral equipment and staff have been timely deployed to every station, including those in the snow-covered. All routes in these areas are reported to be accessible at present. The election process is smoothly progressing throughout the province, with the Election Commission coordinating with administrative and security authorities. The provincial government has introduced new software for online monitoring of administrative and security matters related to the electoral process.

This software facilitates real-time information gathering from all polling stations, ensuring efficient communication even in the event of internet service disruptions. It contains comprehensive data on polling stations and election staff. To ensure continuous communication, alternative arrangements, including telephone and mobile phone access, have been made with all polling stations.

The control room will remain operational without any interruptions until the receipt of the last ballot box.

Election Commissioner visits polling stations to assess electoral process

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shamshad Khan on Thursday conducted a comprehensive visit to various polling stations in Peshawar to assess the electoral process.

Accompanied by SSP Operation Kashif Abbasi, Regional Election Commissioner Peshawar Saeed Ahmed Khan, and Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Afaq Wazir,

Shamshad Khan engaged in discussions with polling staff in Faqirabad and Gul Bahar, emphasizing their crucial

responsibilities. Shamshad Khan interacted with present polling agents, discussing electoral procedures, and commended them for their courteous involvement in the election process. He directed them to fulfil their duties with utmost responsibility.

The Election Commissioner also engaged in a positive conversation with media representatives, highlighting the importance of democratic participation at polling stations for the country's stability and progress.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali casting his vote during General Election 2024.

Journalists visit Election City

LAHORE (APP): The journalists on Thursday visited the Election City established by the Election Commission where they were briefed about the election results, received.

The journalists were briefed by Head of Political Finance Wing Masood Sherwani and DGIT Khizr Aziz. DGIT Khizr Aziz said that the results of ROs would be received here in Election City, adding our system does not depend on internet.

DGIT Khizr Aziz further said that one National Assembly and

three Provincial Assembly elections had been postponed due to the death of candidates. A media wall has also been installed in the Election City.

Project Director EMS Colonel (retd) Muhammad Saad Ali said that after the completion of data entry Form-47, it will have to be sent to ECP here, adding Form 47 will be received through e-mail, fax.

He said live results could be seen from here. All Returning Officers (Ros) are provided with DSL connections.



LAHORE: Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab Ejaz Anwar Chohan and Commissioner Lahore Muhammad Ali Randhawa inspecting the Polling during his visit to Polling Station.

Polling process in Hazara Division concludes peacefully

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The general elections process in Hazara Division on Thursday concluded peacefully without any incident. The election commenced at 8:00 AM, and polling stations across the eight districts of Hazara remained operational until 5:00 PM, ensuring a smooth electoral process.

A total of 2,862 polling stations were established throughout the division where 3,430,456 male and female voters exercised their right to vote. No untoward

incidents were reported from any polling station, indicating a peaceful atmosphere conducive to democratic participation.

To ensure transparency and oversight, foreign observers, Commissioner Hazara Division Syed Zaheer-ul-Islam, and Deputy Commissioners from all districts visited polling stations to assess the voting process. The law enforcement agencies, particularly the police department, implemented stringent security measures.

Pervez Khattak, Mian Iftikhar cast vote at Manki Sharif, Pabbi

PTI Parliamentarians, JUIF, and ANP candidates. Police and security officials were deployed at sensitive and highly sensitive polling stations in NA 34 Nowshera-I and NA 33 Nowshera II.

Staff of PRC, Rescue 1122 deployed for emergency

BAJAUR (APP): Pakistan Red Crescent and Rescue 1122 staff have been deployed as emergency response teams in District Bajaur to deal with any emergency situation.

Red Crescent response teams including first aiders, ambulance services and blood donation volunteers are available all the teams have been instructed to stay near the sensitive polling station during the polling time.

Former KP Information Minister and ANP Central General Secretary, Mian Iftikhar Hussain, who was contesting the election on PK 89 Nowshera, cast his vote in his native town, Pabbi.

International News

Saudi Arabia rules out ties unless Israel accepts two-state solution

Monitoring Desk RYADH: Saudi Arabia has told the United States it will not open diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognised on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, its foreign ministry said on Wednesday.

Riyadh reiterated its call for permanent members of the UN Security Council that have not recognised a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital to do so, a ministry statement said.

It was referring to a state the Palestinians have long sought to establish alongside Israel in territories Israel occupied in a

1967 war: the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

The statement added that "Israeli aggression" against the Gaza Strip must also stop and Israeli forces must withdraw from the territory.

The United States had led months of diplomacy to get Saudi Arabia to normalise ties with Israel and recognise the country until the Gaza crisis began in October, leading Riyadh to shelve the matter in the face of Arab anger over Israel's offensive.

This news agency reported last week that Saudi Arabia would be willing to accept a political commitment from Israel to create a

Palestinian state, rather than anything more binding, to try to get a defence pact with Washington approved before this year's US presidential election.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is touring the region, said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had "reiterated Saudi Arabia's strong interest in pursuing" normalisation when they met this week.

"But he also made clear what he had said to me before, which is that in order to do that two things are required: an end to the conflict in Gaza and a clear, credible, time-bound path to the establishment of a Palestinian state."

Ukraine claims it shot down a Russian attack helicopter

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Ukrainian forces claimed Thursday to have shot down a Russian attack helicopter in eastern Ukraine near the city of Avdiivka, where soldiers are fighting from street to street as Russia's army steps up its four-month campaign to surround Kyiv's defending troops.

Ukrainian soldiers used a portable anti-aircraft missile to take down the Ka-52 Alligator attack helicopter, one of the Russian air force's deadliest weapons, according to Oleksandr Tarnavskiy, the commander of Ukrainian units fighting on the southeastern front line.

The roughly 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) line of contact has shifted little during recent months of wintry weather.

But as the war in Ukraine nears its two-year anniversary, Avdiivka has become "a primary focus" of Moscow's forces, the U.K. Defense Ministry said in an assessment Thursday.



US Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-NY) talks to reporters as he walks to his office at the Capitol in Washington, DC.

Iraq says US strikes pushing government to end US-led coalition's mission

Monitoring Desk BAGHDAD: Repeated U.S. strikes against Iran-backed armed groups in Iraq are pushing the Baghdad government to end the mission of the U.S.-led coalition in the country, the prime minister's military spokesman said on Thursday.

The U.S. military said a strike on Wednesday killed a commander from Kataib Hezbollah, an Iran-backed armed group in Iraq that the Pentagon has

blamed for attacking its troops. Spokesperson Yahya Rasool said in a statement the U.S.-led coalition "has become a factor for instability and threatens to entangle Iraq in the cycle of conflict". Talks between the two countries began in January over the future of the coalition, but less than 24 hours later three U.S. soldiers were killed in an attack in Jordan that the United States said was carried out by Iran-backed militant groups in Syria.

UN urges Russia to end forcible transfer of Ukrainian children

Monitoring Desk GENEVA: The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on Thursday urged Russia to end the forcible transfer of children from occupied areas of Ukraine in violation of international law and return them to their families. Kyiv says 20,000 children have been taken from Ukraine to Russia without family or guardians consent, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) is seeking the arrest of Russian President Vladimir Putin for alleged illegal de-

portation, an accusation the Kremlin denies.

In a report on Russia, the UN committee said Moscow should provide information about the precise number of children taken from Ukraine and their whereabouts, so they can be identified and returned. Moscow, which launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, has rejected the accusations, saying it has merely been protecting vulnerable children from a war zone.

Xi urges 'close strategic coordination' with Putin

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping told Russian President Vladimir Putin that the two countries should pursue close strategic coordination and defend the sovereignty, security and development interests of their respective countries, state media said.

During a phone call with Putin on Thursday, Xi said both sides should resolutely oppose interference in internal affairs by external forces, state broadcaster CCTV said.

Yemen's Houthis claim new US, UK strikes

Monitoring Desk HODEIDA: The United States and Britain hit targets in Yemen's Hodeida province, the news agency of Yemen's Houthi rebels reported Wednesday (Feb 7) but there was no immediate comment from Washington or London.

The strikes targeted the Ras Issa area in Suleif, the Saba.net news agency said. An employee at a sugar factory in Suleif, who only gave his first name as Alaa, told AFP he heard two explosions.

Landslide in Philippines buries 38 people, two buses

Monitoring Desk MANILA: A landslide triggered by heavy rains in a southern Philippine province buried 38 people and two buses, disaster officials said on Wednesday.

The landslide happened on Tuesday night outside a gold mining site in the town of Macao in the province of Davao de Oro where the buses were picking up employees, mining operator Apex Mining said in a statement.

It was not immediately clear how many passengers were on board the buses.

Those injured, including one in critical condition, were taken to a hospital, Macao town's disaster agency said in a Facebook post on Wednesday.

The disaster agency also issued evacuation orders in five villages in Macao, located on the island of

Mindanao. Of the 38 people, seven were killed and 31 injured. The landslide on Tuesday night struck Masara in Davao de Oro province on Mindanao island, provincial disaster official Edward Macapili told AFP, destroying houses and engulfing three buses and a jeepney waiting for mine workers. Rescuers were digging through mud to find 48 people reported missing, including at least 20 people trapped inside the vehicles, officials said. At least 28 people were on board the vehicles when the landslide hit, but eight managed to escape unhurt through the windows before the mud engulfed them, Macapili said.

The buses and jeepney had been outside a gold mine operated by the Philippine company Apex Mining where they drop off and pick up workers.

Azerbaijan's Aliyev re-elected as President for a fifth consecutive term

Monitoring Desk BAKU: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev secured a fifth consecutive term in elections on Wednesday, official results showed, an expected outcome after his country's historic victory over Armenian separatists last year. Tallies showed that Aliyev won the election with 92 percent of the vote after nearly all electoral precincts declared results, in a ballot held during a crackdown on independent media and in the absence of any real opposition. "The Azerbaijani people have elected Ilham Aliyev as the country's president," Central Election Commission chief Mazahir Panahov told a press conference. Turnout was 67.7 percent, he added.

Aliyev was heralded at home after his troops recaptured in September the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region from Armenian separatists who had controlled it for decades. But the oil-rich

nation's main opposition parties boycotted the vote, which one opposition leader, Ali Kerimli of the Popular Front party, called an "imitation of democracy". "There are no conditions in the country for the conduct of free and fair elections," he said. The six other candidates who were running were little-known and had praised Aliyev as a great statesman and commander-in-chief since he announced the election in December, a year ahead of schedule.

Singing patriotic songs, several thousand Aliyev supporters gathered on Wednesday evening in the streets of central Baku to celebrate his re-election. Some demonstrators held signs that read "Karabakh's liberator" and "We are proud of you!" The president and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva went to cast their ballots in the region's main city of Khankendi.



TAGUM (Philippines): Soldiers transfer an injured person to a hospital after evacuation from Maco region which was hit by landslides.

Blinken ends latest Mideast mission after new Israeli snub of proposed Gaza ceasefire plan

Monitoring Desk TEL AVIV: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken left the Middle East on Thursday with public divisions between the United States and Israel at perhaps their worst level since Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza began in October.

Wrapping up a four-nation Mideast trip — his fifth to the region since the conflict erupted — Blinken was returning to Washington after getting a virtual slap in the face from

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said the war would continue until Israel is completely victorious and appeared to reject outright a response from Hamas to a proposed cease-fire plan. Relations between Israel and its main international ally, the United States, have been tense for months, but Netanyahu's public dismissal of a plan the U.S. says has merit, at least as a starting point for further negotiation, highlighted the divide.

Kashmir a 'flashpoint' between nuclear-armed India, Pakistan: Masood Khan

NEW YORK (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, has called Kashmir a "flashpoint" in tensions between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan, saying the two countries should not only discuss their decades-old dispute but also negotiate nuclear confidence-building measures.

"I think that realistically speaking, we should have talks not only on the future of Jammu and Kashmir and the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, in accordance with international law and the U.N. Security Council, but we should also have nuclear confidence-building talks, so that we establish reliable communication channels," he told NEWSWEEK, a weekly American weekly magazine.

"Kashmir is a flashpoint," Pakistani envoy said. "And India thinks that it has taken care of it. But Kashmiris don't think that, and Pakistanis don't think that."

Newsweek correspondent Tom O'Connor, who interviewed the ambassador amid the Israeli war on Gaza, wrote that the presence of weapons of mass destruction on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) adds another dimension to the conflict, and cited Masood Khan arguing that it needed to be addressed by Islamabad and New Delhi to avoid a major crisis, intended or otherwise. "India and Pakistan should have some sense of where we are, what our capabilities are, what our intentions are, as a matter of fact, and so that our entire approach to the region is not accident-prone," he added. "And as two responsible nuclear weapons states, we must resolve outstanding disputes in Kashmir as well."

With India-Pakistan ties remaining virtually frozen, Newsweek pointed out that Pakistani officials have often lamented what they view as a lack of international attention being paid to the issue of Kashmir, where New Delhi carried out a mass crackdown since Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi revoked Jammu and Kashmir's semi-autonomous status in August 2019. "We would say that attention from Kashmir is moving away because of Ukraine or the preoccupation of the Western world with China as a competitor, as a challenger to the existing order, and so on," Masood Khan said.

"Now, in addition to Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific politics, you have the Middle East." "So, Kashmir is no more on the radar screen of the international community, and yet the oppression continues there," he added.

"So, I've always said this is a blind spot, and this is very dangerous, this is very perilous for the international community because the Kashmiris' freedoms are as sacrosanct as the freedoms of any people in any part of the world."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Dr. Gohar Ejaz visiting the Control Room to review overall security situation in the Country during General Elections-2024.

Sindh home minister, IGP take maximum measures for security on polling day

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Home Minister Brigadier retired Haris Nawaz, accompanied by Inspector General of Police Riffat Mukhtar Raja, conducted a thorough inspection of the Command and Control Center at Civic Center and the polling station at DJ College and expressed satisfaction over the measures taken for holding polling process in a peaceful environment.

Their visit focused on assessing the security arrangements and monitoring the polling, during which they engaged with both voters and presiding officers to inquire about the proceedings.

Emphasizing the importance of cooperation between voters, supporters, and law enforcement agencies for ensuring peaceful polling, the Sindh Home Minister reiterated the caretaker government's commitment to prioritize a conducive electoral environment.

Highlighting the need for vigilant surveillance, particularly around the perimeters of polling stations, Haris Nawaz asked the police to promptly respond to any suspicious activities or movements. Furthermore, he underscored the significance of providing special assistance to senior citizens and women visiting polling stations today (Thursday).

IGP Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja, speaking on the occasion, lauded the readiness and alertness of all police officers and personnel, with additional reserves on standby.

He said that Sindh Police utilised all available resources and manpower to uphold security during the electoral process.

Enthusiastic turn out testament to strengthening democracy in Pakistan, says Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Thursday that enthusiastic turn out in the general elections was not only a testament to the strengthening democracy in the country but also marked a significant milestone in its history.

Congratulating the entire nation on successful completion of polling process of the general elections 2024, he said in a policy statement on elections that today the nation had witnessed another historic event in the democratic journey.

"People across Pakistan participated in the process in large numbers demonstrating their commitment to democracy, their national responsibility and belief in the power of vote", he maintained.

"The smooth conduct of the elections is attributed to the collective efforts of multiple stakeholders and it is my privilege to extend my gratitude to all those who played a pivotal role in this democratic exercise", he added.

He specially thanked the international media, observers, local media and journalists covering the electoral process.

"Your presence and coverage has been instrumental in ensuring transparency and credibility shining a light on integrity of electoral process at global stage", said the minister.



NAWABSHAH: Former President of Pakistan and President PPP Asif Ali Zardari cast his vote in a polling station during General Elections-2024.

Pak, Russia express satisfaction on similarities of views on global strategic stability, regional security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Russia have expressed satisfaction on the similarity of views on range of issues of global strategic stability, regional security including matters related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

The two sides, during the 14th meeting of the Pakistan-Russia Consultative Group on Strategic Stability held in Moscow on Wednesday expressed readiness to continue close coordination at relevant international platforms.

Moreover, the two sides also emphasized importance of regular meetings of the Consultative Group, a joint statement issued by the spokesperson of foreign office said on Thursday.

The 14th round of Pakistan-Russia Consultative Group on Strategic Stability was held under the chairmanship of Additional Foreign Secretary (Arms Control and Disarmament) Mohammad Kamran Akhtar and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs S.A. Ryabkov.

The parties had an in-depth exchange of views on international security and regional stability challenges, as well as on various aspects of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

The two sides discussed issues related to the agenda of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament, the IAEA and the OPCW.

The issues concerning biological, space and international information security, as well as new and emerging technologies, including the military use of artificial intelligence, came under discussion at length.

MQM-P will win 18 NA and 40 SA seats: Farooq Sattar

KARACHI (INP): MQM-Pakistan senior leader Dr Farooq Sattar has claimed that general elections will prove a public referendum for his party as Muttahida will take back its seats which were gifted to others in 2018.

Talking to media after casting his vote in NA-241 here on Thursday, the MQM-Pakistan leader said time will tell who benefitted from mobile and internet disruptions in general election.

He urged Election Commission of Pakistan to restore the internet and mobile services. Farooq Sattar claimed that MQM-P will win 18NA and 40 provincial Assembly's seats.

MQM-P Dr Farooq Sattar, PTI-backed Khuram Sher Zaman, PPP Dr Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, Jamaat-e-Islami's Naveed Ali Baig, TLP Muhammad Waseem, PML-N Rozina, Istehkame-Pakistan Party's (IPP) Jai Ram Das, Grand Democratic Alliance's (GDA) Shaheena, Awami National Party's (ANP) Owais Khan and others are contesting from NA 241 constituency.



SUKKUR: Former Sindh Minister and Peoples Party (PPP) Leader, Nasir Hussain Shah arrived to cast his vote at a polling station during General Election 2024, in Sukkur.

Polling delayed at various stations due to technical, logistical issues

KARACHI (INP): Multiple polling stations across the country have been unable to commence the polling process due to issues such as internet shutdowns and communication difficulties.

In Hyderabad NA-220, polling materials have not yet been distributed, and the polling staff for NA-220 has not received the necessary electoral materials.

District Returning Officer Tariq Qureshi stated that the RO holds the credentials (ID and password) for the system, and the transmission of materials can only begin after the RO logs in. Polling has been delayed at PS-2 in Thal due to incomplete preparations at the polling station. Similarly, in Ghotki, polling on NA-198 Dharki could not commence due to the absence of agents.

In Karachi's Punjab Colony, polling has not yet started at NA-232 polling stations due to the non-availability of polling boxes and the absence of polling agents. It should be noted that polling for the general elections 2024 commenced at 8 am today and will continue without interruption until 5 pm. Voters across the country can cast their votes for their preferred candidates in both national and provincial assembly constituencies.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar takes aerial view of ongoing polling process in the city, in Karachi

PTI strongly denies election boycott rumors, affirms commitment to democracy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has vehemently refuted rumors suggesting that the party plans to boycott the ongoing elections, affirming its unwavering belief in democracy and the right of citizens to vote.

The PTI spokesperson on Election Day emphasized that the party is fully engaged in the electoral process and has not endorsed any boycott. "We categorically reject any notion of boycotting the elections. PTI stands firm in its commitment to democracy and the participation of the people in the electoral process," stated the PTI spokesperson.

Dispelling speculation surrounding the alleged boycott, the spokesperson highlighted the active participation of PTI-backed candidates in the elections, emphasizing their dedication to competing vigorously. "The voting process is proceeding smoothly nationwide, and the presence of a significant number of supporters at PTI's polling stations underscores the people's steadfast support for the party."

Commissioner urges people to cooperate with administration for peaceful elections

SUKKUR (APP): Divisional Commissioner Sukkur, Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi on Thursday urged the people to cooperate with the local administration for smooth flow of the election process.

This, he said while visiting the Control Room set up for elections to review measures of ongoing process of voting in the area.

He said that all divisional commissioners have been contacted regarding voting and security measures.



KARACHI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Minority Affairs, Social Protection and President of Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi Muhammad Ahmed Shah casts his vote at polling station, Clifton during General Election-2024.

DG Rangers assesses election security, orders enhanced measures

KARACHI (APP): Director General (DG) of Pakistan Rangers Sindh Major General Azhar Waqas undertook a comprehensive tour of various locales in Karachi in connection with the general election underway across the country.

His itinerary included the Civic Center, Karsaz, Drig Road, Mazar-e-Quaid, Dawood Chowranghi, Indus Chowranghi, Korangi, Qayyumabad, Nursery, Lasbela, Golimar, Board Office, North Nazimabad, Sakhi Hasan, Nagan Chowranghi, Sohrab Goth, Gadap, Malir Halt, and surrounding areas, where he meticulously assessed the security situation.

During his visit, the area sector commanders provided a thorough briefing to the DG Rangers on the security measures implemented by the Rangers. A special focus was placed on evaluating the security status around the highly sensitive polling stations, prompting directives to enhance security arrangements.

Emphasizing preparedness, the DG Rangers affirmed the readiness of Sindh Rangers' quick response teams to address any potential challenges, working in tandem with the Pakistan Army, Police, and other relevant agencies.

He reiterated his commitment to uphold the code of conduct issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), ensuring its full implementation.

According to a Rangers spokesperson, approximately 10,000 Rangers personnel were deployed across the province for security duties during the national general election.

PPP's Aqraba Fatima becomes youngest party candidate

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) candidate from PS-102, Syed Aqraba Fatima 26, becomes the youngest candidate of the party.

Syeda Araqaba Fatima said that it was the time for the country's youth to make decisions from roundtable.

She said that the youth were future of nation therefore they should be made authoritative.

The PPP youngest candidate said that she entered in active politics with an aim to serve the masses.

Now it was upon masses, whether they give opportunity to new faces or elect old people, she maintained.

Arrest warrant for 114 government employees in Karachi for violating election

KARACHI (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has ordered the arrest of 114 government employees of East Zone in Karachi for violating the orders of the ECP and being absent from their election duties, reported Thursday.

The Returning Officer of East Zone, Ghulam Azfar Mahesar, issued the arrest warrant and informed the DIG East and SSP East to form teams and conduct raids throughout the night to arrest the absentee staff.

No major complaints received so far: EC Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Provincial Election Commissioner of Sindh Sharifullah Thursday said that the polling process in Sindh province had been continued in a peaceful manner. He said, "No major complaints has been received from anywhere so far."

Sharifullah said, "Polling process will continue without any break till 5 pm."

He urged the voters to go to the polling stations without fear and exercise their right to vote.

He said, "Voting is a national responsibility."

He further said, "Election Commission teams and other departments were in the field and action will be taken over violations."

Palijo claims polling agents expelled from some polling stations

HYDERABAD (APP): The candidate of the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) for PS-60 Ayaz Latif Palijo has complained that his polling agents have been expelled from 3 polling stations.

In a complaint to the District Returning Officer (DRO) Tariq Qureshi submitted here on Thursday, Palijo maintained that the agents were forced to leave the polling station numbers 58, 100 and 103 in PS-60.

Tareen hopes strong government to emerge after general election

MULTAN (APP): Chairman Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Jahangir Khan Tareen, urging people to reach out to polling stations to cast their votes, said he hoped that a strong elected government should take over in the wake of general election. He was talking to the media after casting his vote at a polling station in his hometown, Lodhran's Chak 12/MPR.

He said the vote casting was a national responsibility and urged voters to join decision-making process by the power of their vote. No voter should miss this opportunity in any manner, he added.

Jahangir Tareen, who is also candidate from Multan constituency, NA-149, said he was contesting elections from two constituencies and aspiring to win both seats. He expressed the optimism that IPP candidates would emerge victorious from all constituencies where they were contesting.

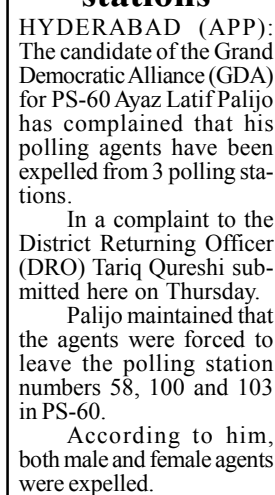
Amir Ji Karachi Hafiz Naem casts vote

KARACHI (APP): Amir Jamaat-e-Islami of Karachi Ji's candidate for National Assembly (NA) constituency NA-250 Hafiz Naem-ur Rehman exercised his right to vote in North Nazimabad on Thursday.

Amir Ji Karachi Hafiz Naem is a Ji-supported candidate for NA-250 Karachi Central-IV (formerly NA 256), against MQM Pakistan's Farhan Chishti and PPP's Khawaja Sohail, among other candidates in the contest.

Hafiz Naemur Rahman is also running for office in 2024 from Karachi West-III seat NA-246 (formerly NA 251) against MQM Pakistan leader and former federal minister Syed Aminul Haq.

Young voters showing National Identity Card in queue outside a polling station during General Elections 2024.



KARACHI: Young voters showing National Identity Card in queue outside a polling station during General Elections 2024.