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PPP secures speaker, deputy speaker slots in Sindh Assembly

Awais Qadir Shah pledges unbiased attitude irrespective of party affiliation

KARACHI (INP): Members of the Sindh Assembly through a secret ballot on Sunday elected PPP's Owais Qadir Shah and Anthony Naveed as speaker and deputy speaker, respectively.

Outgoing Sindh Assembly speaker, Agha Siraj Durrani, administered the oath to 111 PPP members and 36 from the MQM-P on Saturday. Notably absent were nine PTI-backed independent candidates, three from the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) and two from Jamaat-i-Islami, all protesting the election outcome.

Meanwhile the newly elected Speaker of the Sindh Assembly, Syed Awais Qadir Shah, pledged on Sunday to show an unbiased attitude towards MPAs, irrespective of their party affiliation.

Soon after taking the oath, he invited them to work together for the wel-

fare of the people. Awais, who polled 111 votes in the election for the post of Speaker, thanked his party leadership for nominating him as Speaker.

He also expressed his gratitude for the support of the people in electing him as MPA. The speaker said that it was a proud moment for him. He said this assembly passed a resolution for the creation of the nation, Quaid-e-

Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, sat in this assembly, adding that Liaquat Ali Khan waved the Pakistani flag here. He said that the assembly, in line with the constitution, would complete the next five years.



ISLAMABAD: 7th consignment of relief goods being dispatched for the people of Gaza from Government of Pakistan.

Aneeq visits Jamia Abi Bakar Al Islamia

Independent Report
KARACHI: The Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Mr. Aneeq Ahmed, visited Jamia Abi Bakar Al Islamia Karachi as the chief guest, delivering an insightful address on the profound teachings of Islam and Sunnah.

In his address, Minister Aneeq Ahmed underscored the pivotal role of understanding Islam and Sunnah for the prosperity of a nation. He fervently encouraged the audience to actively engage with the Quran, urging them to delve into its meaning and integrate its teachings into their daily lives.

Minister Aneeq Ahmed emphasized the correlation between good governance and the teachings of Islam, asserting that incorporating these principles is paramount for achieving effective govern-

ance. He ardently urged the audience to learn from the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) as a model for prosperity.

Addressing the rulers of the Muslim Ummah, Minister Aneeq Ahmed called for prioritizing the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and advocating for the performance of Namaz and Zakat. He firmly believed that adherence to these principles could effectively combat social evils and alleviate poverty.

This visit served as a powerful platform for fostering a deep understanding of Islam among the audience.

Minister Aneeq Ahmed's address aimed at instilling values that can contribute to the building of a just and prosperous society.



HYDERABAD: STP Chairman Dr. Qadir Magsi addressing Madre Watan Jalsa at Qasmbad.

Shab-e-Barat being celebrated today across northern Sindh

SUKKUR (APP): The holy month of Shab-e-Barat, the night of fortune, is being observed throughout northern Sindh tonight with due religious fervour and devotion. On this occasion, the administration of Allah Wali Masjid in Sukkur, different masjids have chalked out programmes including holding Waiz (religious sermons) and dua-mahfils today.

Besides, religious sermons highlighting the significance of Shab-e-Barat will be delivered at various mosques after Maghrib prayers alongside holding special munajat after Esha prayers in Sukkur, Khairpur, Shikarpur, Ghotki, Larkana, Jacobabad and other districts of northern Sindh.

Barrister Arslan Sheikh on Sunday greeted on the occasion of the holy Shab-e-Barat. In his message, he said the holy Shab-e-Barat has come into mankind with the advent of the holy month of Ramadan and good fortune.

"This holy night brings immense opportunity to obtain special grace and forgiveness from the Almighty Allah," he said. Islam is the religion of peace and welfare, the Mayor said, adding that the ideals of Islam are the means of welfare for the present life of the people and their salvation hereafter.

Mayor Arslan Sheikh said "Along with mercy and blessings of the Almighty Allah, we will pray for continued progress and welfare of the country."

Caretaker CM approves Rs5m annual grant for Special Olympics Pakistan

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar has approved a grant of Rs5 million annually for the next 5 years to support and expand the Healthy Athletes Program of Special Olympics Pakistan.

The Special Olympics Pakistan is a non-profit organization that provides year-round sports training and athletic competitions in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with an intellect that actively helps in promoting physical and mental well-being through the Healthy Athletes Program, a communique said on Sunday.

Sharmila Farooqi, Sehar Kamran becomes NA members on PPP reserved seats

KARACHI (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a notification of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) nominated female leaders on reserved seats Sharmila Farooqi and Sahar Kamran.

Both now became elected members of the National Assembly on the reserved seat from PPP.

PPP Shazia Murri and Nafisa Shah resigned from the reserved seat after winning the general elections.

The notification of the successful independent candidate Khizr Hussain Mazari from the Punjab Assembly seat PP 297 has also been issued.



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



ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi, in a group photograph, with the organizers & recipients of the awards at the 5th edition of HUM Women Leaders Awards-2024 ceremony held at the Jinnah Convention Center.

Health, education facilities critical for women empowerment: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi said the provision of health and education facilities were critical factors for achieving the goal of women's empowerment. He underscored the need for the provision of a harassment-free environment to women so that they could become part of the workforce and contribute to economic growth.

The President expressed these views while speaking at the 5th edition of the HUM Women Leaders Award 2024.

The President said, "Today we celebrate women leaders for their endeavors and men who contributed to the economic empowerment of women."

Talking about the rights of women, he cited the saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who said that a man who raised two daughters earned his place in paradise.

President Dr Arif Alvi



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed addressing the gathering at Jamia Abi Bakar Al Islamia Karachi.

MQM-P decides to field Ali Khurshedi for Sindh CM slot

KARACHI (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has decided to field its candidate for Sindh chief ministership, party source said on Sunday, citing sources.

The sources said the MQM-P has finalised the name of Ali Khurshedi for the Sindh CM slot. It is to

be noted that the MQM-P won 26 seats in the February 8 polls.

Elections for Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Assembly are being held.

This was announced by Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani during the Sindh Assembly Session in Karachi.

International PATS exercise kicks off in Pabbi

A total of 20 friendly countries including military observers are participating in the event, says ISPR

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI: The opening ceremony of 7th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Exercise-2024 was held at National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) Pabbi, today.

Director General Military Training opened the 60 hours long Patrolling Exercise which aims at enhancing military to military cooperation under complex international security environment.

A total of 20 friendly countries including military observers are participating in the event. Major participants include Pakistan, Bahrain, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Türkiye, United States of America and Uzbekistan while Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Myanmar, Germany, Indonesia, Japan and Oman will witness the exercise as military observers.



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

Shehbaz stresses joint efforts against poverty, unemployment, ignorance

LAHORE (INP): President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and prime minister-designate Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the need of joint efforts to get rid the country of poverty, unemployment and ignorance.

In a statement issued on Sunday, he said that political stability was of significance importance for economic stability in the country.

Shehbaz Sharif said that the today need of national unity for political and economic stability was greater than it was felt every before in the country's history.

He said that adopting the attitude of simplicity and frugality, we would have to spend maximum resources on welfare of the people. The PM designate said that political stability and a peaceful atmosphere

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

He extended greetings to newly elected office bearers of bar associations, including Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA), Lahore High Court Bar Association (LHCBA), High Court Bar Association Hyderabad (HCBAH), and Multan High Court Bar Association (MHCBA).

He extended his best wishes to the newly elected President of IHCBA, Riasat Ali Azad, President of LHCBA, Asad Manzoor Butt, Ayaz Tunio of HCBAH.

He stressed that cabinet participation was not obligatory to safeguard democratic principles.

He urged parties questioning the validity of PPP's electoral victory to present evidence in legal forums such as the election commission and tribunals.

Furthermore, Shah also questioned the legitimacy of the Grand Democratic Alliance's (GDA) protests, highlighting their inconsistent electoral performance in past.

Responding to queries about the party's decision to abstain from joining the cabinet, Shah emphasized the PPP's dedication to upholding democratic values.

Talking to a private news channel, he addressed speculation surrounding the chairman Senate's office, asserting that no such decision has been made regarding Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar's potential nomination for the position.

Additionally, Shah reiterated the PPP's commitment to supporting Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for the prime minister's election, emphasizing that the party's stance was based on principles rather than self-interest.

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Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Pipeline progress

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

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

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

Smoke and mirrors?

Muna Khan

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

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

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

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

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

apologise for its role after conducting a probe into the events. Unfortunately, not much has changed since.

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

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

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

Gandhi and Jinnah

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Commerce News

KTH chief says:

Pak exports have great potential in Kyrgyzstan

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

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

Meher added that in 2023, Kyrgyzstan's

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He said Nepal and Pakistan needed more economic engagements and as Ambassador of Nepal, "I want to tap the business opportunity in Pakistan that could be beneficial to both countries." During the interaction, he highly appreciated the contribution of Sialkot entrepreneurs making Sialkot a hub of sports goods, surgical items, and kitchen cutlery products in Pakistan. He informed that recently Nepal has been able to export 6 containers of Nepali tea to the Pakistani market after decades.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

PFC board for industry status to furniture sector

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

Economy another victim of war in impoverished Sudan

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

Since combat between two rival generals began on April 15, Ahmed has been at the fighters' mercy. "When the war began, I had a stock of gum arabic in a warehouse south of Khartoum that was intended for export," Ahmed told AFP, asking to use only his first name for fear of retaliation.

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

Businessmen pin great hopes from new government

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

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

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

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

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

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

"In such a scenario, consistent economic

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

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

He informed that electricity consumption in

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

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

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

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, along with provincial ministers, visited the historic Badshahi Mosque and the Mazaar-e-Iqbal here on Sunday. The CM inaugurated the new museum for placing the holy relics in the Badshahi Mosque and the upgradation project of the Mazaar-e-Iqbal. Mohsin Naqvi also inaugurated the Lahore Fort Cafe being built at the exterior wall of the Lahore Fort and appreciated high quality of the new museum being built for placing the holy relics. He inspected the new and beautiful showcase for placing the holy relics. The CM ordered early completion of the

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) chief minister office, Ali Amin Gandapur has said that he was not in favour of making verbal claims and pledges but will prove his eligibility through good governance. Interacting with a private news channel on Sunday, he said that uplifting the country's economy was among the top priorities of PTI and it would present pro-people budget. Ali Amin Gandapur said that he would spare no efforts to provide maximum relief to

the people of province, ensuring law and order, restoration of health cards and to improve the education system of KP. He said the PTI founder picked a team that won the world cup [in 1992] and he would adopt same passion to elect the provincial cabinet. The PTI's candidate for KPC's slot said that 55 percent of the newly-elected members of his party were those who won for the first time. The recent elections have exposed the turncoats and separated them from those who were loyal to the party, he added.



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

Educating new generation about importance of clean, green environment stressed

MULTAN (APP): Secretary School Education of South Punjab, Dr. Obaidullah Khokhar, said that it was the need of the hour to educate the new generation about the importance of a clean and green environment and its related issues to deal with the dangers of climate change. The aim of introducing Green Book as a curriculum in government schools by the Education Department of South Punjab was to prepare students for the changing climate. He expressed these views while talking to senior civil servants, former Secretary of School

Education, South Punjab, Ghulam Farid, and a climate change consultant associated with an international organization, Ghazanfar Ali, regarding steps to deal with the threats of environmental and climate change. On the occasion, Additional Secretary Khawaja Mazharul Haq Siddiqui, Deputy Secretary Saif-ur-Rehman Khan Balwani, and related officials were present in the meeting. Dr. Obaidullah Khokhar said that Pakistan was on the fifth list among the countries most affected by the effects of climate change.



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

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

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz leader Azma Bukhari has said that an all-out effort will be made to overcome inflation and poverty in Punjab. Taking to media outside the Punjab Assembly on Sunday she hoped that the opposition would accept the PML-N's mandate and added that her party wanted to

take along the opposition. She said, "The PML-N does not believe in politics of revenge." Azma Bukhari said that the leader of the house in the Punjab Assembly would be elected through division of the house procedure. She said that in 2018, the PML-N had accepted the then PTI government despite all reservations.

Women among nine injured in truck-bus collision

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

According to details, due to bursting of tyre, a truck hit a passenger bus in Mushtaq Chowk of Tandlianwala in district Faisalabad. Due to collision, the bus went off road and overturned resultantly nine people including 35-year-old Mohsin s/o Asghar Ali, 24-year-old Aqsa w/o Hafiz Amjad, 60-year-old Shehbaz s/o Muhammad Boota, 50-year-old Zahida Bibi w/o Noor Ahmed, 28-year-old Hafiz Amjad s/o Muhammad Aslam, 45-year-old Irshad Bibi w/o Abdul Razzad, 31-year-old Irfan s/o Abdul Rasheed, 30-year-old Parveen d/o Ahmed Umer and 32-year-old Nazeer Ahmed s/o Muhammad Sharif were injured. The injured were shifted to Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Tandlianwala for treatment.

New population policy draft complete: Salman

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Population Welfare Department Secretary Salman Ejaz has announced the completion of a draft for a new population policy, soon to be presented for cabinet approval. Presiding over a meeting here on Sunday, he highlighted the policy's transformative approach to family planning services and counselling, aiming to bring these vital services directly to the public. Through communication channels, the initiative seeks to raise awareness about family planning and its benefits. The planning welfare secretary stressed that the prospective Population Policy 2024-29 envisions a society characterized by

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

SSC student shot dead by class fellow over petty issue

FAISALABAD (INP): A matriculation student was shot dead by class fellow over petty dispute in Chak No 7 GB on Sunday, police said. According to details, a group of class fellows had gathered in a private academy to prepare for annual SSC exam where two class fellows Abdullah Irshad s/o Irshad Ali and Ali Arman exchanged hot words. Other class fellows present on the scene settled the dispute between the two but Ali Arman considering it to be his insolence opened fire Abdullah Irshad while returning home.

International News

92 killed in Gaza as Israel, Hamas seek ceasefire deal

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Dozens of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been killed in the latest Israeli strikes, the territory's health ministry said on Saturday, after Israel's spy chief joined talks in Paris seeking to unblock negotiations on a truce. The talks come after a plan for a post-war Gaza unveiled by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu drew criticism from key ally the United States, and was rejected by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. The talks also come alongside deepening fears for Gaza's civilians desperate for food. The United Nations' main aid body for Palestinians, UNRWA, said Gazans were "in extreme peril while

the world watches". Hamas said on Saturday that Israeli forces had launched more than 70 strikes on civilian homes in Gaza cities, including Deir-al-Balah, Khan Yunis and Rafah over the previous 24 hours. The health ministry said at least 92 people were killed. Israel's military said it was "intensifying the operations" in western Khan Yunis using tanks, close-range fire and aircraft. "The soldiers raided the residence of a senior military intelligence operative" in the area and destroyed a tunnel shaft, a military statement said. Hamas, the Palestinian movement that has ruled Gaza since 2007, said fighting was raging in the northern Gaza district of Zeitun. In nearby Jabalia refugee

camp, tempers are rising and on Friday dozens of people held an impromptu protest. "We didn't die from air strikes but we are dying from hunger," said a sign held by one child. In the camp, bedraggled children waited expectantly, holding plastic containers and battered cooking pots for what little food is available. Residents have taken to eating scavenged scraps of rotten corn, animal fodder unfit for human consumption and even leaves. Gaza's health ministry said a two-month-old baby identified as Mahmud Fathuh had died of "malnutrition". "The risk of famine is projected to increase as long as the government of Israel continues to impede the entry of aid into Gaza," as well as access to water.



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

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

BALAKLIA (Internews): When Russian forces withdrew from the town of Balaklia in eastern Ukraine in late 2022, pursued by Ukrainian troops and under artillery fire, they left a poorly equipped group of volunteers to guard their retreat. The force of around 50 men came from the National Army Combat Reserve - known by its Russian acronym BARS - a loose assembly of units totaling several thousand fighters that Russia's defense ministry has deployed in Ukraine to supplement its regular forces. About four hours of footage from a bodycam

worn by one of the fighters, obtained by provides a rare first-hand view of the combat operations of a BARS unit, according to three military experts who reviewed the video to provide an assessment for the news agency of the unit's military capability. The invasion of Ukraine marked the first time BARS, which was founded in 2015, deployed units in combat. The video, coupled with interviews with four platoon members, shows the BARS unit was left to defend Balaklia with no heavy weaponry or air support, malfunctioning communications, and confused coordination with the regular military.

Jets intercept high-altitude balloon over US

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A small balloon floating at a high altitude over the US state of Utah was intercepted by fighter aircraft on Friday but deemed to pose no national security or flight risk, a US-Canada military agency said, according to US media. The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said in a statement it had detected the balloon traveling at an altitude between 43,000-45,000 feet (13,100-13,700 metres), CBS News reported. "The balloon was intercepted by NORAD fighters over Utah, who determined it was not maneuverable and did not present a threat to national security."

Manipur college blast claims one life

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

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

WASHINGTON (Internews): U.S. and British forces carried out strikes against more than a dozen Houthi targets in Yemen on Saturday, officials said, the latest round of military action against the Iran-linked group that continues to attack shipping in the region. The United States has carried out near daily strikes against the Houthis, who control the most populous parts of Yemen and have said their attacks on shipping are in solidarity with Palestinians as Israel strikes Gaza. The strikes have so far failed to halt the Houthis' attacks, which have upset global trade and raised shipping rates. A joint statement from countries that either took part in the strikes or

provided support, said the military action was against 18 Houthi targets across eight locations in Yemen including underground weapons and missile storage facilities, air defense systems, radars and a helicopter. U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the strikes were meant "to further disrupt and degrade the capabilities of the Iranian-backed Houthi militia." "We will continue to make clear to the Houthis that they will bear the consequences if they do not stop their illegal attacks, which harm Middle Eastern economies, cause environmental damage and disrupt the delivery of humanitarian aid to Yemen and other countries," Austin said.

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

SYDNEY (Internews): Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese pledged on Sunday to provide whatever support was needed to assist Victoria state in a days-long wildfire emergency that has razed homes after authorities warned extreme heat could fan the blazes this week. "We will provide whatever support is requested from Victoria," Albanese told reporters in the city of Frankston, Victoria, according to a transcript. "It's a reminder of the need for us to be vigilant for us to continue to work and act on the threat that is climate change." The emergency has killed livestock, destroyed six homes and forced more than 2,000 people to leave western towns and

head to the city of Ballarat, 95 km (60 miles) west of the state capital, Melbourne. Australia is in the grips of an El Nino weather pattern, which is typically associated with extreme phenomena such as wildfires, cyclones and droughts. More than 15 bushfires were burning in Victoria on Sunday, with the most serious blaze, ranked at the second highest danger rating, near several remote towns, according to the state's emergency authority. State authorities have said there are concerns about the weather this week particularly Wednesday into Thursday when extreme heat is forecast that could further fan the fires.



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

15 killed in Chinese building blaze

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: At least 15 people have been killed and 44 injured in a fire at a residential building in eastern China's Nanjing, local authorities said on Saturday. The fire broke out early Friday morning, officials said at a press conference, with a preliminary investigation suggesting the blaze started on the building's first floor, where electric bikes had been

placed. The building is located in Yuhuatai district of Nanjing, a city of more than eight million that lies about 260 kilometres (162 miles) northwest of Shanghai. By 6am (2200 GMT Thursday), the fire had been extinguished, and a search and rescue operation ended around 2pm on Friday, the authorities said. Twenty-five fire trucks were mobilised to fight the blaze.

Murder of 5 women shakes Vienna

Monitoring Desk
VIENNA: Austrian authorities were on Saturday investigating the killings of five women in the capital Vienna within a single day, sowing panic in the city. The dead included three women found brutally stabbed to death in a brothel. The bodies of three young women were found with fatal knife wounds in a brothel in Vienna's underprivileged Brigittenau district on Friday night after a witness alerted police. A 27-year-old man still carrying a knife that was believed to be the murder weapon was arrested nearby on suspicion of committing the murders, police said on Saturday. No motive has been given for the killings with the suspect still being questioned, Austrian press agency APA reported. In a separate case, a mother and her 13-year-old daughter had been found dead in a Vienna apartment.

ANC kicks off poll season from key battleground

Monitoring Desk
DURBAN: South Africa's ruling ANC launched its election campaign on Saturday, hoping to overcome anger over high unemployment and a sluggish economy and to protect its three-decade-old majority. In power since the advent of democracy in 1994, President Cyril Ramaphosa's

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

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

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

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

be used for 'irrigation and for hydro power generation' but at the cost of cutting the flow towards Pakistan.

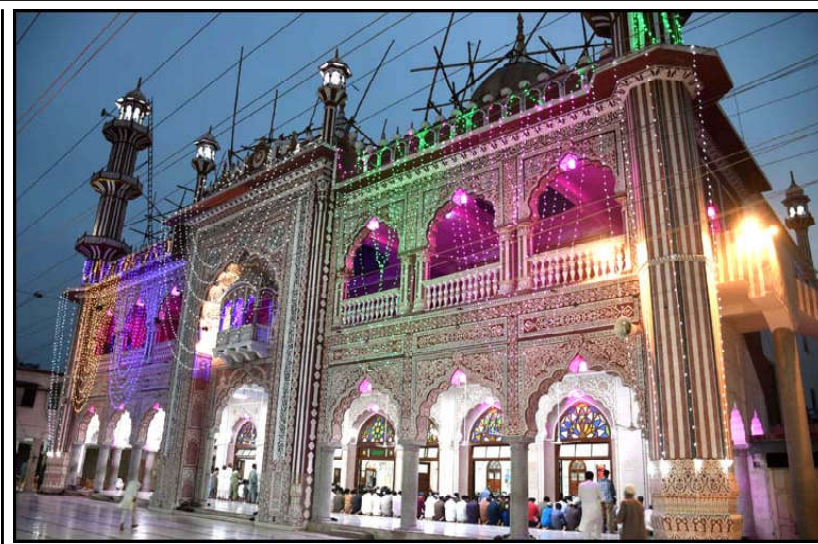
Already India so far constructed many dams like Bhakra Dam on Sutlej, Pong and Pandoh Dam on the Beas and Thein (Ranjitsagar) on the Ravi.

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

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

Indian media reported Shahpur Kandi dam completion allows India to make maximum use of the River Ravi water previously flowing towards Pakistan from the Lakanpur dam.

It is pertinent to note that former Indian Prime Minister Narsima Rao laid the foundation stone for the shahpur kandi in 1995 and remained disputed for almost over four and a half years. Earlier, addressing the UN Security Council, Pakistan Permanent Representative in the United Nations Ambassador Munir Akram said Pakistan aims to reinvigorate the Indus River basin which provides food security to over 225 million people.



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

New prime minister to take oath of office by March 1

ISLAMABAD (INP): The country's new prime minister will take oath of his office by March 1, 2024, it was learnt on Sunday.

President Arif Alvi will administer the oath at a ceremony to be held at the President's House either on February 29 (Thursday) or March 1 (Friday).

Before that either on February 28 or February 29, the newly elected members of the National Assembly (MNAs) will elect leader of the House through 'show of hands'.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, Joint Chief of

Staff Committee Chairman General Sahir Shamsah Mirza, Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar, members of his cabinet and foreign envoys will be in attendance. Similarly, high-ranking civil and military officials, judges of the Supreme Court and high courts, federal secretaries, attorney general of Pakistan, auditor general of Pakistan, chief ministers of Punjab and Sindh, provincial governors and other dignitaries will attend the event.

PML-N leaders say to contact all parties for grand dialogue

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ayaz Sadiq has said he and Khawaja Saad Rafique will go to the leadership of all political parties for initiating a grand dialogue to steer the country out of crises.

Addressing the party workers here on Sunday, he said the PML-N and its allies would make all possible efforts to tackle the gigantic challenges facing the country currently. He said he and Kh Saad Rafique wished that all political forces get united on common points of the national interest. He hoped that all other political parties would also like to join hands to overcome problems facing the common man and the country.

USC unveils generous price cuts during Ramadan

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

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

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

Noteworthy among the price adjustments is Daldal Cooking Oil, which can now be purchased at a

discounted rate of Rs 508, down from the previous Rs 523. Other branded ghee and cooking oils are also being offered at highly competitive prices compared to the general market rates, he added.

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

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



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

Election winners Shazia, Nafisa Shah relinquish reserved Assembly seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ms Shazia Marri and Nafisa Shah tendered their resignations from the reserved seats in the National Assembly from Sindh province after grabbing a berth in the assembly in the general elections.

Syedna Nafisa Shah won in the NA-202 Khairpur constituency by defeating former Sindh Chief Minister Syed Ghous Ali Shah, while Shazia Marri won in NA-209 Sanghar by defeating Muhammad Khan Junejo of the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA).

According to the notification from the Election Commission, Sharmila Sahiba Faruqi Hashaam and Muddassir Sehar Kamran, both members of the People's Party, have been declared elected on the reserved seats held by Shazia Marri and Syedna Nafisa Shah to the National Assembly.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission issued a notification announcing the independent candidate Khizer Hussain Mazari's success in securing the Punjab Assembly seat PP 297.

One stop facility center set up for incoming members of Parliament

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

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

Kumail felicitates new elected Speaker SA

SUKKUR (APP): Chairman District Council Sukkur, Syed Kumail Hyder Shah on Sunday congratulated the newly elected Speaker of the Sindh Assembly.

In his statement issued here, extended their warmest felicitations on his success. He said that the election of the Speaker in the Sindh Assembly was evidence of trust and confidence in PPP's nominated candidate for Speaker.

He said that freedom of expression was essential for strengthening democracy in the province and hoped that the newly elected Speaker, would continue to make great strides towards tolerance and the issues being faced by the Members of the Provincial Assembly would be resolved.

SIC wants to bury past; move ahead: Amir Dogar

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

Talking to media outside the Punjab Assembly, Amir Dogar claimed that Sunni Ittehad Council new candidate for CM Punjab Rana Aftab Ahmed Khan will play his positive role in the assembly.

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

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

Addressing an Ulema Convention on Sunday, Amjad asserted that the PTI's purported agenda is to dismantle the national economy, citing the recent letter to the IMF as evidence. He criticized the PTI for burdening the country with loans and then shifting the responsibility of repayment onto future generations.

Highlighting the PML-N's track record, Amjad claimed that his party has historically navigated the nation out of crises towards progress. He emphasized the role of Ulema and Mashaikh in safeguarding Pakistan's ideological boundaries and promoting social consciousness. Amjad called upon Ulema and Mashaikh to utilize their platforms to cultivate awareness among the populace, advocating for the establishment of an Islamic, prosperous society. He stressed the importance of creating a peaceful environment to alleviate public uncertainty, thereby facilitating political stability and economic revitalization.

Nomination papers of Maryam Nawaz, Rana Aftab submitted for Punjab CM

LAHORE (APP): Nomination papers of PML-N candidate Maryam Nawaz for the slot of Punjab Chief Minister have been submitted in Punjab Assembly Secretariat on Sunday while the nomination papers of Sunni Ittehad Council Candidate Rana Aftab Ahmad Khan were also submitted.

Punjab Assembly Secretary Chaudhary Amir Habib received the nomination papers of both candidates.

After completion of the scrutiny process of the nomination papers.

Govt support vital for growth of Pakistani film industry: Dr. Shah

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

Speaking to a private news channel during the screening of the movie 'Texali Gate' in Karachi, Dr. Shah emphasized the need for significant improvements in the Pakistani film industry. He highlighted the challenges faced by the film industry in the era of commercialization.

He proposed that the government should either

provide subsidies or support cinema houses to make movie tickets more affordable for the general public.

Dr. Shah underscored the untapped potential within the film industry, emphasizing that with government attention and patronage, the industry could flourish.

Ayesha Umar, the producer and leading actress of the film, expressed optimism about the success of 'Texali Gate,' describing it as a portrayal of the harsh realities and societal mindset of the Texali area.

Director Abu Aliha emphasized the authenticity of the film's setting, shot in the inner city at Texali

Hike in GST on locally manufactured automobiles matter of concern: PAAPAM

KARACHI (INP): The Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts and Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) has expressed grave concerns over the proposed hike in sales tax from 18% to 25% on automobiles having ex-factory price of Rs4 million and above.

The PAAPAM's leadership comprising of Chairman Abdul Rahman Aizaz, SVC Mumsahd Ali, and VC Taufique Sherwani in a uni-

fied stance was of the opinion that previous move to increase ST to 25% on 1400 cc cars along with other taxation measures and devaluation of Rupee have already resulted in drop of automobile sales to just 30% of 2021-22 levels. This sharp decline has not only resulted in duress to the part making sector and employment thus generated but also resulted in lesser absolute tax collection from the sector.



KARACHI: VC ISRA university Prof. Dr. Ghulam Qadir kazi giving certificate to Student during 9th Convocation of ISRA university Karachi Campus.

Tirmizi assures all possible assistance to injured Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Faisal Niaz Tirmizi on Sunday assured all possible assistance to the fellow Pakistanis who were injured in a fire eruption incident at sanitizers and perfumes related chemical products depot in Ajman.

The ambassador also expressed his best wishes and prayers for the early recovery of the injured. A sad accident of fire eruption occurred at a sanitizers and perfumes related chemical products facility in Ajman, UAE late on February 24. A total of nine Pakistanis got injured in the ill-fated incident and they were immediately rushed to different hospitals, Consulate General of Pakistan in Dubai said in a press release.

"We are ensuring all possible assistance to the injured Pakistanis. The Welfare Wing of Pakistan's Consulate Gen-

eral, Dubai visited the hospitals immediately after the unfortunate occurrence and is constantly in touch with the relevant authorities," the press release quoted Consul General Hussain Muhammad, as saying. Four of these injured were initially taken to Khalifa bin Zayed Hospital, Ajman. They included Gul Dad s/o Shah Nawaz Dahri, Nawab s/o Shah Nawaz, and Imam Bux s/o Khuda Bux Solangi all belonging to Shaheed Benazirabad District (Nawabshah), Sindh and Akram s/o Dawood Khan a resident of District Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab. Later they were shifted to Sheikh Shakhboub Medical City Abu Dhabi. While Ijaz s/o Abdul Aziz is admitted to Zayed Hospital Sharjah, Shahid s/o Mumtaz and Zahoor s/o Hayat to Kuwait Hospital Sharjah while Sikandar s/o Abdul Rahim is admitted to Al Qassimi Hospital Sharjah.



PESHAWAR: Members of Muslim Students League and Muslim Youth League are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Peshawar press club.

SHCBA Hyderabad elects Ayaz Tunio as President

HYDERABAD (APP): The Sindh High Court Bar Association (SHCBA), Hyderabad, has elected advocates Ayaz Hussain Tunio, Hameedullah Dahiri and Irfan Bughio as President, Vice President and General Secretary, respectively.

According to the election results announced late on Saturday night, Tunio bagged 930 votes against 516 and 125 which were received by other candidates, advocates Ishrat Ali Lohar and Abdul Sattar Sarki, respectively, contending on the same seat.

Likewise, Dahiri won his seat with 741 votes against 413 votes of Rehana Nazeer Gujjar and 407 of Peeral Majeedano who were also vying for the slot of Vice President.

The post of General Secretary was secured by Bughio with 854 votes while his opponent candidates Raja Jawad Ali Sahar and Jehangir Khan Pathan were given 529 and 186 votes, respectively. On the seats of the Joint Secretary, Library Secretary and Treasurer Ghulam Murtaza Shaikh Muhammad Ali Kolachi and Mumtaz Sachal Aiwan emerged successful with 711, 641 and 903 votes, respectively.

On the 7 seats of the Members Managing Committee (MMC), Abdul Ahad Sahito, Mehtab Munir Nirban, Naeem Hussain Gadehi, Muhammad Yasir Nazeer, Shazeel Ali Memon, Taimur Hussain Keerio and Osama Yousuf Paryhar have been elected.

Karachi youth shot dead over resisting robbery

KARACHI (INP): Another young man shot dead by armed robbers over resistance in Karachi's Malir Liaquat Market, police said on Sunday.

As per details, the deceased who was identified as Nabeel was a resident of Sher Shah Karachi.

The victim was in Malir to meet his relatives when robbers opened fire after he resisted giving his bike.

Earlier, a young man was gunned down by armed robbers over resistance near Karachi's Ghani Chowrangi.

The police said the incident took place when Hikmatullah, 18, was shot and killed when he refused to give them his mobile phone.

Hikmatullah – a resident of Chaman – was intercepted by armed muggers riding on a motorbike and as soon as he offered some resistance one of them shot him and rode away.

The victim's family members said that he recently came to Karachi for employment and was working in electronics market in Saddar. The body was shifted to hospital and will be handed over to family after medico-legal formalities are fulfilled.

In a separate incident, a 55-year-old man was shot dead by muggers when he tried to resist a robbery attempt in Malir.

Democrats panel wins Gymkhana elections as Agha Taj retains slot of President

HYDERABAD (APP): The Democrats Panel has emerged successful in the elections of Hyderabad Gymkhana for which the polling process concluded late on Saturday night.

According to the results, Dr Agha Taj Mohammed has been elected as President, receiving 1,471 votes while his opponents Farhat Kamal and Dr Shams Shaikh were given 854 and 351 votes, respectively.

On the seat of Honourary Secretary Engr Tariq Bajari has been elected with 1,367 votes.

Shahid Pervez Memon and Dr Hadi Bux Jatoti failed to win majority votes for the same seat, se-

curing second and third positions with 709 and 621 votes, respectively.

The Democrats Panel, however, lost the seat of Honourary Treasurer to Asad Junejo of Javed Junejo group after a tough contest.

Junejo was polled 1,085 votes while Democrats' candidate Makhdoom Mushtaq Ahmed Memon received 1,014 votes while the third candidate of Jatoti panel, Asif Ahmed was given 582 votes, respectively.

Members of the Managing Committee, Abdullah Jan Memon, Abdul Malik Yousfani, Faizan Ali Shaikh, Dr Ghulam Murtaza Memon, Dr Zulfiqar Ahmed Yousfani, Faheem Ahmed Ursani.



KARACHI: Anti encroachment operation in progress removed illegal encroachment during anti encroachment drive under the supervision of Karachi Development Authority (KDA) located on Korangi Town area in Karachi.

Maryam to prove herself best CM of Punjab: Atta Tarar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader, Atta Tarar has said that party coordinator Maryam Nawaz will prove herself to be the best Chief Minister for Punjab.

Talking to media here on Sunday, he said that Mian Aslam Iqbal should appear before court get bail as a suspect involved in kidnapping and murder could not be allowed to come to parliament.

The PML-N's newly elected MNA, Atta Tarar said that Mian Aslam Iqbal

after clarifying him of the charges can come to parliament time and again.

He said that the people of Punjab have not supported us since 2008 but have given big mandate in the recently held general elections.

Tarar said, "Maryam Nawaz is a political worker and she has proved her iron in politics. She will make efforts to serve the people."

The PML-N leader said that all speculations would die after Maryam would be elected chief minister of Punjab on Monday.