

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

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Nation eagerly awaiting for final election results

Independents strengthen lead, PML-N and PPP follow closely

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ISLAMABAD (APP): Independent candidates contesting for national and provincial assembly seats seemed maintaining their lead over mainstream political parties in the General Election 2024, as per the results issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) by 9.00 p.m.

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Istehqam-e-Pakistan Party (IPPP) two, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan 11, and Grand Democratic Alliance one seat.

Out of 270 Punjab Assembly-seat results, independent candidates bagged 130 seats, PML-N 129, PPPP 10, Tehreek e Labbaik Pakistan one, IPP one and Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) five. For the Sindh Assembly, PPPP so far secured 83 seats, independent candidates 14, MQM-P 21, GDA two, and Jamaat-e-Islami two, out of the total 122 constituencies' results announced by the time of

filing of this update. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, independent candidates so far clinched 85 provincial assembly seats, PML-N 5, PPPP three, JUI seven, JI three, Awami National Party (ANP) and PTIP one each, out of 105 seats. In Balochistan, PML-N secured eight seats, PPPP eight, JUI six, Independent candidates four, JI one, Awami National Party (ANP) and PTIP one each, out of 105 seats.

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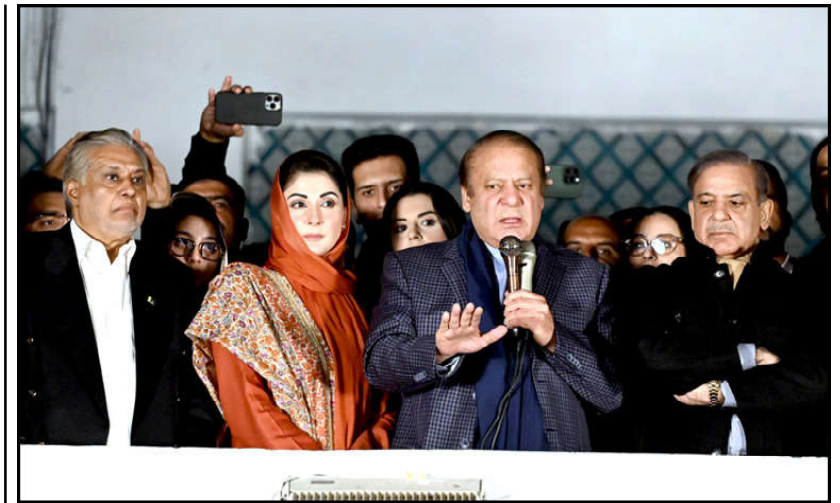
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LAHORE: Pakistan's former Prime Minister and leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), Nawaz Sharif along with his brother, Shehbaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz, speaks with supporters at Model Town.

Nawaz Sharif hints at forming coalition govt

Urges parties to join hands to steer country out of crises

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif said on Friday it was a responsibility of all political parties to steer Pakistan out of challenges, and his party had always struggled for development and prosperity of the country.

While addressing his party workers at PML-N Secretariat in Model Town, he said, "The PML-N respects the mandate of all political parties and individuals." He said all political parties should come forward in the larger interest of the country. People knew very well that how the PML-N had worked hard for development and stability of different sectors in country including defence and economy, he added. He invited all parties to come forward and sit together to play their role

for country's better future. Nawaz Sharif said the country could not afford holding elections again and again. Judiciary, armed forces and all institutions should make collective efforts in harmonised manner to overcome challenges, facing the country, he suggested.

He said that the country needed 10 years for stability, adding that it was a high time to make Pakistan strong. Had the momentum of development continued then today's country would have been much better, he maintained.

He said that he had given task to Shehbaz Sharif to meet Asif Zardari, Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman and Dr Khalid Siddiqui of the MQM so that a government could be formed to ensure development and prosperity in the country.

He said the PML-N candidates, who had won election, must serve people considering it as a worship. He said that the PML-N had emerged as a single largest party in General Election 2024 at federal level and in Punjab.

The PML-N Quaid said that his party's agenda was based on welfare of people, adding that Shehbaz Sharif had worked a lot for empowerment of youth in the country. He said more initiatives would be taken to empower youngsters and to provide free medicine. PML-N Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif, Ishaq Dar, Atta-Ullah Tarar and others were also present.

Earlier, workers warmly welcomed PML-N Quaid on his arrival at party's secretariat in model town.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

Cabinet expresses satisfaction over peaceful and transparent election

ISLAMABAD (Online): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has felicitated the nation on successful conduct of general elections.

In a post on X handle after the conclusion of polling process, he appreciated the efforts of Election Commission of Pakistan, Interim Provincial Governments, Armed Forces, Civil Armed Forces, police, law enforcement agencies, election staff, the media and all those institutions and individuals who contributed to the conduct of the free and fair elections.

The Prime Minister said this momentous occasion is not just a testament to the resilience and strength

of four democratic processes but also to the indomitable spirit of the Pakistani people. The participation and enthusiasm of people of Pakistan have been the cornerstone of this democratic exercise. He said the high voter turnout is a clear indication of public commitment to shaping the future of our country. The voices, expressed through the votes, will contribute to the fortification of our democracy, and for that, people of Pakistan deserve every bit of appreciation.

He said despite few incidents of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, the efforts of

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QUETTA: Different political party leaders, Sajid Tarin, Abdul Khaliq Hazara, Salar Kakar, Naseer Shahwani, Ghaffar Khan Kakar and others addressing a press conference, outside DC Office in Quetta.

Security forces kill mastermind of bombings in Qila Saifullah, Pishin

Independent Report RAWALPINDI: Security Forces have killed the mastermind of recent bombings in Qila Saifullah and Pishin.

According to ISPR, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Qila Saifullah District of Balochistan on reported presence of a high profile terrorist.

During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange Abdul Shakoor Nauman Abu Hamza Khurasani of Daesh was killed to hell.

The killed terrorist was the mastermind of

recent bombings in Qila Saifullah and Pishin on Wednesday and was highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies.

He also planned to conduct high profile suicide bombing attacks in Balochistan, which have been successfully averted due to timely and prompt action by security forces and the intelligence agencies.

Security Forces of Pakistan, in step with Nation, remain determined to thwart attempts of sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan.

Jan pleased over peaceful completion of electoral process

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has expressed pleasure over peaceful completion of the electoral process in the province.

In an official statement issued here on Friday, the caretaker Minister Information urged the losing candidates to accept the result of general elections.

He said that the interim government thanks all the political parties as well as the election candidates and voters from the core of heart on their cooperation for conducting elections.

Jan Achakzai said that the protests, dharnas and hurdles created on the roads cause hardships and inconvenience to the general public. This also creates hurdle in access to the ambulances and emergent services, he maintained.

He, however, warned that stern action would be taken against those creating problems and taking law in their hands. No relaxation would be given to those violating the law, adding the Minister asserted.

Saad Rafique loses against Latif Khosa

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent candidate Latif Khosa secured victory against PML-N candidate Khawaja Saad Rafique in NA-122 Lahore in general election 2024.

According to unofficial results, PTI-backed Independent Latif Khosa bagged 117,109 votes followed by PML-N's Khawaja Saad Rafique who secured 77,907 votes. Following his defeat, Saad Rafique took to X (formerly Twitter) and congratulated the PTI candidate on his victory.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Muhammad Zubair Jamali, Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem and Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafiqat reviewing last stage and arrangements of elections at Election Control Room. Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan also participated in the meeting through video link

Jamal Shah Kakar, Jamal Raisani, Adil Bazai win Quetta's NA seats

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)'s Jamal Shah Kakar as well as the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani and independent candidate Aadil Khan Bazai won three seats of National Assembly from Quetta.

According to the results shared by the respective returning officers of all the three constituencies of National Assembly, Jamal Shah Kakar, Jamal Khan

Raisani and Adil Bazai emerged victorious on the NA-262, Quetta-I, NA-263, Quetta-II and NA-264, Quetta-III respectively.

The independent candidate, Adil Bazai secured 20,273 votes while his opponent Malik Sikandar Khan of JUI-F got 12,873 votes.

Similarly, Jamal Shah Kakar of PM-N grabbed 15,680 votes while his opponent independent candidate Salar Kakar got 14,350

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi and Caretaker Interior Minister Gohar Ejaz addressing a press conference at PID Media Center.

56 terrorist incidents take place across country on election day: Gohar Ejaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Interior Dr. Gohar Ejaz said on Friday that a total of 56 terrorist incidents were taken place on February 8 Election Day to sabotage the electoral process.

Briefing media persons about the overall security situation and challenges specifically regarding election day, he said that the biggest challenge of the caretaker government was to provide security to the people of the country on

election day. Sharing details of the casualties, the minister informed that 3 military jawans, 2 levies jawans, 7 police officials, 4 civilians including 2 minors lost their lives in the incidents.

The government had made a difficult decision to shut down the mobile service across the country in a high-level meeting on February 7 after the two deadliest terrorist incidents in which 28 innocent lives were lost, he added.

PML-N, BAP, ANP secure one seat each: PPP clinches three BA seats from Quetta

Three independent candidates also remained successful on provincial assembly's constituencies from metropolis

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) clinched three seats of the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan from Quetta district as the result of election of its all nine constituencies were finalized by the concerned returning officers on Friday.

According to the unofficial results, the PPP nominated candidates including Abdul Samad Khan, Ubaidullah and Ali Madad Jatak remained successful on the provincial assembly seats i.e., PB-40, Quetta-

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Democracy & supremacy of constitution our weakness: Chairman PkMAP gives ultimatum to Election Commission to correct "rigged" results by today's noon

Mehmood Khan Achakzai alleges victory of our party candidates on six provincial and three national assembly seats converted into defeat in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chairman Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Mehmood Khan has given ultimatum to the Election Commission of Pakistan to correct the otherwise "rigged" results of the elections in favour of the party's candidates.

The Chairman PkMAP alleged that victory of party candidates on six provincial assembly and three national assembly seats were converted into defeat in the province. r. Achakzai was addressing a hurriedly called press conference at Quetta Press Club on Friday evening.

The Chairman PkMAP said that we had lot of expectations with the 12th elections of the country, but the results were changed in half of the day.

Those candidates who defeated in the elections were declared winner on

different seats of the provincial and national assemblies, adding he charged further.

He said that democracy and supremacy of constitution is our weakness as our

power of vote. He asserted that we are not against of the state's institutions, but they are not ready to accept supremacy of the democracy for last seventy years.



forefathers had struggled for the democracy in the country.

He said that we want to make Pakistan a democracy country and live here.

The Chairman PkMAP said that if we were not allowed to go into parliament, then we would lodge protest in every street.

Hoti resigns as ANP Senior Vice President

PESHAWAR (APP): Amir Haider Hoti, Senior Vice President of the Awami National Party (ANP), on Friday announced his resignation from the party post.

The decision came following the party's defeat in all constituencies of his ancestral district Mardan. The former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, in a statement, said, "If the people of my constituency and Mardan have not trusted us, then I accept the responsibility for this defeat."

Rule of law to be upheld at every cost, CS: Jamali directs to concerned high ups to resolve result related matters at earliest

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali has directed the concerned high ups to resolve the election result-related matters at the earliest.

He also directed to resolve the issues of candidates as per law saying that it is our top priority to maintain law and order situation in the province.

The caretaker Minister Home was on visit to the Election Control Room established for monitoring of general elections here on Friday.

The Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan joined the Minister through video link.

The Additional Chief Secretary Home, Zahid

Saleem briefed the Minister and Chief Secretary about the protest sit-ins being staged at four different places of the province. The Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and Deputy Inspectors of General Police also briefed about the final phase of the election process in their respective areas.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Home paid tributes to the bureaucracy and security forces on conducting of the elections in peaceful manner.

Chief Secretary on the occasion pledged that rule of law would be upheld at every cost.

He said that our challenges have not been over regarding security. He underlined the need to resolve the issues of candidates as per the law.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Election reflections

Lacklustre from the beginning, the exercise concluded with a whimper last evening. Amidst limited reporting due to the suspension of communication services, there were some reports of delays in the polling process and various violations of rules and the election code of conduct. Thankfully, though, no major incidents of violence were reported and voting seems to have concluded in most places smoothly and uneventfully. It seems that all that remains now is the counting of votes and declaration of winners. As results trickle in overnight, we will learn how many chose to exercise their right to franchise on this historic occasion.

Till a clearer picture emerges, some reflections on the exercise: These elections had been critical for Pakistan for various important reasons. The country is mired in unprecedented economic and social challenges, which cannot be solved except by a stable government that enjoys strong public support for its decisions. Given its dependence on international assistance, it is also important for it to stabilise socially so that lenders and investors can feel safe about their decisions. With so many different forces pulling the country at its seams, it was almost good luck that a general election became due last year. All that was needed was for the ECP to let candidates campaign without restrictions, prepare the grounds for a clean and non-controversial contest, assist the country's adult population in freely exercising their right to self-determination, conduct a transparent count of their ballots, and quietly and respectfully bow out.

As history will bear witness, it failed on almost all of those counts. From repeatedly delaying the elections on one pretext or the other to failing to protect the legitimacy of its last act, it betrayed its mandate by organising an exercise that will be remembered for all the wrong reasons. It is difficult not to be disappointed: given the number of times the ECP hid behind the Constitution's 'free and fair' condition to justify putting them off 'till it was ready', one would have imagined the exercise, whenever it was eventually held, would be largely irreproachable.

Of course, the blame does not lie with the ECP alone. The caretaker government and the entire machinery of the state are equally culpable in robbing it of its sanctity. Their actions worsened political polarisation, and they did not know when to stop. As a result, the exercise was doomed to controversy well before it began. It already seems clear that it will not provide any closure for the country's political crisis. Crisis and instability will likely continue to plague the nation, with dissent kept in check through the use of fear tactics. It is a shame that such a momentous opportunity has been so carelessly lost.

Collecting dust

Aman Rehan

One cannot deny the prominence artificial intelligence has gained with innovative uses in the political sphere — such as using AI to clone the voice of Imran Khan, who addressed a virtual PTI jalsa from Adiala jail. Activist Usama Khilji recognises the possible use of AI to circumvent political crackdowns but also warns of the "potential abuse" of AI technology, which could lead to misinformation and manipulation of elections. Foreign Secretary Syrus Qazi has previously stated that Pakistan recognises the "dual nature" of AI: while equitable and fair access to these new technologies is encouraged, there is concern regarding AI's unregulated military uses.

Internationally, AI commands the attention of both the public and private sectors — with almost daily updates in legislative instruments, knowledge, and content. Last Friday, 27 countries of the European Union unanimously approved the Artificial Intelligence Act. The EU AI Act is widely described as the world's first comprehensive law that regulates AI based on its capacity to cause harm. Closer to home, China is noted by some to have initiated the global movement to regulate AI when it introduced its Generative AI guidelines last year.

So where does Pakistan stand on the AI front? The Ministry of IT & Telecom introduced a draft national AI policy in May 2023. The proposed policy is part of the ministry's Digital Pakistan vision that aims to produce an "overarching developmental agenda" to promote the adoption of AI efficiently and responsibly. The draft aligns with certain global standards for AI, such as its ethical and responsible use. For instance, the 'triple-helix' partnership between the research community, industry and government is similar to Singapore's national AI policy. Singapore was one of the first countries to introduce a national AI strategy.

While the draft AI policy sets the foundation for AI transformation in Pakistan, there is room for improvement. Take, for example, the lack of emphasis on ethical and transparent AI systems. In this regard, one can turn to the 'Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework' introduced by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology. Aiming to govern AI systems and mitigate risks, the framework promotes "trustworthy" AI systems, comprised of characteristics such as explainability, resilience, and data privacy.

An effective AI policy should ideally emphasise concepts of data quality and data privacy. Unfortunately, the cart seems to be placed before the horse.

The AI policy proposes an AI directorate to be constituted under a 'National Commission for Personal Data Protection'. However, the NCPDP is to be established under the Personal Data Protection Bill which is still pending approval by the National Assembly. While the draft AI policy encourages international and bilateral cooperation for AI development, the emphasis on 'data localisation' by the PDPB could hamper cross-border data flows.

Other proposals include the establishment of a robust regulatory framework, a 'National AI Fund', and 'centres of excellence' in AI that will serve as AI innovation hubs. Naturally, these endeavours cannot be viable unless sufficient infrastructure, resources and funds are available. Rather than being a passive regulator, the government of Pakistan will have to actively enable the effective implementation of the AI policy. For example, Singapore's AI policy states that it had allocated 500 million Singaporean dollars through AI Singapore under the Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2020 and 2025 plans.

Any attempt at AI regulation needs to be more than a hurried response to a global trend and should consider the situation on the ground. The Digital Rights Foundation has stated that the draft AI policy should be human-rights centric. Additionally, the Islamabad Policy Research Institute found that there is "insufficient and controlled" availability of data, which can hamper implementation in different sectors (such as education, climate, and agriculture). The most recurring critique is the absence of any mention of diversity and inclusion.

The draft AI policy was to be finalised by December last year. However, like the PDPB, the proposed AI policy seems to be collecting dust. Contrary to international best practices, the draft AI policy was released without a period of consultation. Since then, critique from those at home and inspiration from those abroad can be used by the incoming government to regulate AI effectively.

Hopefully, in its final version, the AI policy won't just be — as journalist Muteher Khan puts it — a piece of paper to "serve samosas". -- Courtesy Dawn

Whither Karachi?

Zubeida Mustafa

As was expected, Karachi was at the centre of all speeches at the event organised by the Theosophical Society to celebrate the 134th birth anniversary of the city's first mayor Jamsheer Nusservanjee. It warmed my heart to hear about Mr Nusservanjee's services to the people of Karachi. What emerged was that we owe a lot to the non-Muslim communities for making the city what it became — a clean, elegant and livable place with the biggest concentration of educational institutes, health facilities and economic activities.

Speaker after speaker admitted that the city had lost its greatness. The current mayor, Murtaza Wahab, conceded his failure by informing the audience that he often had to cover Nusservanjee's bust in his office with a piece of cloth so that all the evils that have visited Karachi were not visible to his august predecessor.

At the event, there was a lot of talk about the need for people to have a sense of ownership and belonging to the city. Along with this, there was much mention of the compassion that Mr Nusservanjee and his ilk had shown to animals that coexisted with the men and women.

The question that needs to be asked is what caused these feelings to vanish. There is a point of view that the main factor responsible for why no one owns Karachi or has a sense of belonging to it is the composition of its population, Karachi has become primarily a city of migrants who come here to make a living and go home to be buried when they die. Karachi is like the proverbial milch cow that is valued to the extent that it serves the purpose of those who come here. Hence it is regarded as a workplace and not a home.

However, another opinion differs saying that Karachi has always been a migrants' city since it was described as such in the Gazetteer of 1941 that the British administrators wrote after studying the area under their jurisdiction. This has always been the case as is indicated by the fact that the city's population has grown by leaps and bounds and much faster than what the natural birth rate would account for. This migration has made Karachi a cosmopolitan city. That did not prevent the development of the city when the city fathers wanted it. Those of us who have lived in Karachi for decades have been witness to this jerky growth. Thus the city's population jumped from 434,887 in 1941 to 1,137,667 in 1951 after the influx of migrants from India. Again there was a massive increase in the population from 9,802,134 in 1998 to 16 million in 2017.

If anything, migration has created a diversity that has enriched the city's culture and made the people versatile and tolerant of multiculturalism. There is no doubt that these characteristics have made Karachi more interesting, more creative intellectually and technologically as well as economically productive, attracting people from near and far. No wonder Karachi is said to generate 56 per cent of the revenues the Pakistani government collects from all over the country, while 50pc of national export earnings and 96pc of the sales tax of Sindh comes from Karachi.

What then stops Karachi's rulers from making the city liveable as it was many years ago? The most plausible reason for the decline in Karachi's fortunes is no doubt the politicisation of the administration of the city, combined with mismanagement, poor planning, and corruption. This has cumulatively led to the neglect of the city. This neglect translates into confusion, irksome issues that make day-to-day living a challenge, the breakdown of law and order, and divisions among the people. Who benefits from this state of affairs? Those who do not want Karachi to emerge as a powerful political force as it was before Ayub Khan shifted the capital from Karachi to Islamabad. Thereafter, constant meddling by the powers that be and the resultant polarisation of public opinion in the city has made Karachi ungovernable, leaving no room for the planned development of the city.

In such circumstances, it is inevitable that corrupt and exploitative forces step in to fill the vacuum. The rich use their wealth to provide for their own needs, while the poor suffer as their needs go unattended. They do not receive even the compassionate that animals were shown in days of yore. This intensification of inequality and poverty has made Karachi insecure, unstable and a difficult megacity to live in. In-fighting at the national level is also reflected at the city level. After all, the present incumbent in the mayor's office did not have smooth sailing at the hustings. What yesterday's national elections have in store for Karachi, we shall soon know. It is a pity that this city had become a bone of contention because of its potential to emerge as a modern and cosmopolitan metropolis. -- Courtesy Dawn

International News

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

Monitoring Desk
RIYADH: 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.

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



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.

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.

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.

UN urges Russia to end forcible transfer of Ukrainian children

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 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 deportation, 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. The committee also said Russia should ensure that no child was deprived of their Ukrainian nationality.

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.

The landslide happened on Tuesday night outside a gold mining site in the town of Maco 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, Maco town's disaster agency said in a Facebook post on Wednesday.

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

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 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, heightened the divide.

Yet Blinken and other U.S. officials said they remained optimistic that progress could be made on their main goals of improving humanitarian conditions for Palestinians, securing the release of hostages held by Hamas, preparing for a post-conflict Gaza and preventing the war from spreading. Officials said Blinken's optimism was based on his first four post-Oct. 7 trips to the Middle East.

None of those visits resulted in immediate visible successes, but they brought limited but significant improvements in the delivery of humanitarian aid and a weeklong cease-fire in November in which scores of hostages were released.

"Clearly there are things that Hamas sent back that are absolute non-starters."



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

North Korea scraps all economic cooperation with South Korea

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly has voted to scrap all agreements with South Korea on promoting economic cooperation, the North's official KCNA news agency reported, as the two Koreas' ties continue to deteriorate.

The assembly, which takes formal steps to adopt policy decisions of the ruling Workers' Party, also voted to abolish laws governing economic ties with Seoul, including the special law on the operation of the Mount Kumgang tourism project.

The tours to the scenic mountain just north of the eastern border were a symbol of economic cooperation that began during a period of engagement between the two Koreas in early 2000s, drawing nearly 2 million South Korean visitors.

The project was suspended in 2008 after a South Korean tourist who strayed into a restricted zone was shot and killed by North Korean guards.

Ukraine claims it shot down a Russian attack helicopter in fierce street battle for Avdiivka city

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukrainian forces claimed 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 Tarnavskyi, 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.

Pakistan seeks UN intervention to save India's Islamic sites after razing of 2nd historic mosque

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has drawn United Nations' attention to last week's "brazen" demolition of the centuries-old Akhoni mosque in New Delhi, and call for the organization's intervention to protect Islamic sites in India.

"This incident marks another highly disturbing chapter in an alarming campaign targeting Islamic sites and heritage in India, which symbolizes a concerning rise in Hindu-majoritarianism," Ambassador Munir Akram said in a letter addressed to the top official of the U.N. Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), Miguel Angel

Moratinos.

The Akhoni mosque, standing for over 800 years, was abruptly demolished by Delhi Development Authority (DDA) officials in the middle of the night under a significant police presence, catching the local community, mosque-goers, and Madrasah students entirely off guard without any prior warning, the Pakistani envoy pointed out.

The letter said: "Several mosques and shrines, have already been razed under the garb of different administrative measures or judicial processes, and many more remain at a high risk of being demolished. Muslim holy sites also re-

main a target of attacks by the mobs of extremists.

"The State's support for normalizing such incidents in India poses imminent threats to the well-being of Indian Muslims across social, economic, and political spheres. The pervasive influence of the 'Hindutva' ideology, alongside alarming incidents of Islamophobia and the demolition of historic mosques, calls for immediate and unwavering international attention.

In a video surfaced online, Imam Zakir Hussain, the spiritual leader of the Akhoni mosque, conveyed deep sorrow for the loss. He emphasized its

crucial dual role as both a place of worship and a Madrasah for students, as well as housing the sacred resting place of revered figures.

"The construction and consecration of the 'Ram Temple' at the site of the demolished Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, followed by the recent incident at the Akhoni mosque, underlines the critical need for the swift implementation of the Secretary-General's Action Plan on the Protection of Religious Sites.

"We request you to accelerate efforts to address this urgent matter, ensuring the safeguarding of religious sites in India.



QUETTA: Security officials are standing high alert to avoid untoward incident during the protest demonstration different political party against rigging in General Election 2024, outside DC Office.



LAHORE: Senior leader of PPP Sherry Rehman addressing a press conference.

Shoab Shaheen asks EC to direct RO to release result of NA-47 as per form-45

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI backed candidate Shoab Shaheen from NA-47 Islamabad has filed application in Election Commission (EC) for issuance of orders to Returning Officer (RO) to release result of election in NA-47 as per form-45.

It has been said in the text of the letter that as per form-45 he has won election in NA-47. The screen

installed outside RO office was switched off all of sudden. We have noticed our results are being changed in favor of Tariq Fazal Chaudhry. He further said I have provided evidence to returning officer but he is fully denying it. I am outside RO office but I am not being allowed to enter into office. RO be issued order to release results as per form-45.

Alvi accepts resignation of justice Shahid Jamil of LHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr Arif Alvi has accepted resignation of Justice Shahid Jamil of Lahore High Court (LHC).

According to ministry of law, the resignation has been accepted from February 02.

Copy of notification regarding acceptance of the resignation has been sent to secretaries of president and prime minister.

Law ministry has issued formal notification on acceptance of resignation.

Copy has been sent to judicial commission of Pakistan, parliamentary committee and registrar LHC.

PM directs ministries to formulate strategy on development projects to attract foreign investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday directed all the ministries to formulate a strategy within five days for the establishment of the development projects with a potential to attract foreign investment. The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the progress on execution of investment

agreements in different sectors with GCC countries, directed the ministries to present their respective strategies on doable projects to the Special Investment Facilitation Council without any delay, a PM Office press release said.

In the meeting, he was apprised of the progress on the international agreements in various sectors including

energy, finance, logistics, food security, water, minerals and others.

Caretaker ministers for communications, maritime affairs and railways, law and justice, climate change, finance, energy, and food security attended the meeting besides the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission and senior officers.

AJK PM pays tributes to martyred Dr Afzal Guru

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Ul-Haq, while paying tributes to Shaheed Kashmir freedom movement activist Dr Afzal Guru, said that he was a true hero of Kashmiris who played a significant role in the liberation movement.

Terming the execution of a death sentence by India against Guru as the murder of justice, the PM said, "The Indian Supreme Court awarded a death sentence to him to satisfy the collective conscience of Indian society".

levelled against Afzal Guru were never proven in the court of law, but despite that, Afzal Guru was awarded capital punishment. He further expressed that it was unfortunate that he was buried on the premises of the notorious jail soon after his execution.

"The Indian authorities didn't hand over the mortal remains of Afzal Guru to his heirs," he said, adding that Afzal Guru's supreme sacrifices would be remembered for a long time in the annals of Kashmiri history.

Abbasi says: Leadership should admit history is never kind to selfish politicians

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former Prime Minister (PM) Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has said the leadership should admit that the history becomes never kind to selfish politicians.

He said in his statement on social website X any attempt to tamper with the public mandate will lead to create chaos.

Hustle and bustle of electoral process has come to end and now it is time to allow country to move to stability, he underlined.

Now the leadership should work together above party politics to steer the country out of challenges facing it, he underlined.

Samar Bilour sets high bar by visiting and congrats opponent

ISLAMABAD (APP): Awami National Party (ANP) leader Samar Haroon Bilour demonstrated remarkable grace on Friday by visiting and extending heartfelt congratulations to her opponent.

"I maintained the tradition set by my late husband, Haroon Bilour," she added.

Talking to a private news channel, she expressed that it's a tradition they uphold after every election campaign, regardless of victory or defeat, to visit their opponents first.

They were pleased with their workers' efforts and believed that all political workers, whether from their party or opposition, deserved commendation for their role in completing the democratic process, she added.

She acknowledged the hard work of opposition supporters in her constituency and shared the joy of their success as political leaders.

Samar concluded by sending best wishes to the newly elected representatives for their service to the nation. Independent candidates outclass parties' heavyweights in KP

Pakistan talks with IMF is important whatever election results may be: Bloomberg

NEW YORK (Online): Global Journal Bloomberg Asia Frontier Capital fund manager Rocher Desai has said that Pakistan either a majority government is formed in Pakistan or a coalition government Pakistan should stay in bail out program.

Rocher Desai said this while discussing the general elections in Pakistan.

He held that whatever the election results are, talks with the IMF is important for Pakistan.

Frontier Capital fund manager Rocher Desai says that the government of Pakistan has to make several payments in the next 6 months, Pakistan needs a large long-term debt program, the Pakistan Stock Exchange is a much cheaper market than the global financial crisis. According to Bloomberg's manager, the price-to-earnings ratio of the Pakistani market is at its lowest level.

Manager Rocher Desai has said that interest rates in Pakistan may dip in the next 9 to 12 months

Ishaq Dar says PML-N has emerged as single majority party in NA

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former finance minister and PML-N leader Ishaq Dar has made big claim about PML-N success with reference to election 2024.

Ishaq Dar who is head of PML-N Election cell has said in his tweet "we have collected all data and results in PML-N election cell. PML-N has emerged as single majority party in National Assembly (NA).

He underlined the situation of Pakistan's external debt is uncertain and unstable.

from three national assembly seats and one from a provincial assembly seat, he thanked the masses for reposing confidence in the Pakistan People Party. Gilani stated that the public have endorsed PPP's manifesto.

Acknowledging the split mandate, he asked all the stakeholders to come together for the nation's economic stability. Gilani reiterated PPP's commitment to work for the country's prosperity and vowed to tackle the menace of terrorism effectively. He said the PPP had rich experience of coalition government. He also highlighted the sacrifices of the armed forces and stressed the need to support them.

Gilani stresses unity to steer country out of economic crises

MULTAN (APP): Acknowledging the split mandate, MNA-elect Sved Yousaf Raza Gilani urged all stakeholders to come forward for country's economic stability.

The PPP leader expressed these views while talking to media persons here. The former prime minister also stressed the need for political unity to steer the country out of economic crises.

Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani hailed the effective campaigning by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Asif Ali Zardari, and Asifa Bhutto which helped the party to win many seats. Upon his and his sons Abdul Qadir, Ali Musa Gillani and Ali Haider Gillani's victory

Four martyred policemen of DI Khan attack laid to rest

DIR LOWER (APP): The funeral prayer of four policemen martyred in Dera Ismail Khan's terrorist attack was offered at their native villages here on Friday.

The Nimaz-e-Janaza of the martyred Sub-Inspector, Sultan Yousuf was offered at the ancestral village Kambatt in Lal Qilla, while, the funeral prayer of the martyred constable, Muhammad Sabir was held at Amlook Darra, Talash.

The Nimaz-e-Janaza of martyred constable Ali Muhammad was offered in Badwan and the funeral prayer of martyred constable Israr Ahmad was offered at the stral graveyard in Bandagai area of Talash.

District Police Officer, Lower Dir, Ziauddin Ahmad, DSPs Circle, DPS Headquarters, SP Elite Force, police officers, officials and a large number of the area people.

PM directs ministries to formulate strategy on development projects to attract foreign investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday directed all the ministries to formulate a strategy within five days for the establishment of the development projects with a potential to attract foreign investment. The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the progress on execution of investment

LHC stops ECP from notifying Aun Chaudhry's success from NA-128

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday stopped the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) from issuing notification for the success of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) candidate Aun Chaudhry from NA-128 constituency.

The court also stopped implementation on form-47 about the result of the NA-128 constituency.

Justice Ali Baqar Najafi announced the reserved verdict on a petition filed by Salman Akram Raja, an opposite candidate from NA-128 constituency, about the result of NA-128 constituency.

The court had reserved its verdict after hearing arguments of the parties, earlier in the day. In the course of arguments, the petitioner's counsel emphasized that the issue pertained to violation of rule, not vote counting. He stressed the necessity of candidates' presence during result compilation as per the Election Act. The counsel questioned whether results could be validated in the candidate's absence and highlighted that results of only 13 polling stations of NA-128 constituency were compiled in their presence.

However, a law officer argued that if the petitioner had any complaint then he should approach to the ECP.

All members of Sharif family win NA seats comfortably

ISLAMABAD (INP): All members of the Sharif family won National Assembly seats from Lahore defeating their opponents with a comfortable margin on Friday.

PML-N Quaid and former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif has won the election from a National Assembly seat in Lahore defeating PTI-backed candidate Dr Yasmin Rashid by a huge margin of votes.

Nawab Sharif grabbed 171,024 votes from Lahore's NA-130 while Yasmin Rashid obtained 115,043 votes. The PML-N supreme defeated her by a margin of 55,981 votes.

PML-N President Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif won the election by securing 64,953 votes in Lahore's NA-123 while his rival Afzal Azeem Pahat came second with 48,486 votes.

PML-N Senior Vice-President and Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz Sharif also won his NA-119 seat by securing 83,855 votes while independent candidate Shahzad Farooq managed only 68,376 votes.

PPP alleges rigging as Bilawal loses to Tarar in Lahore

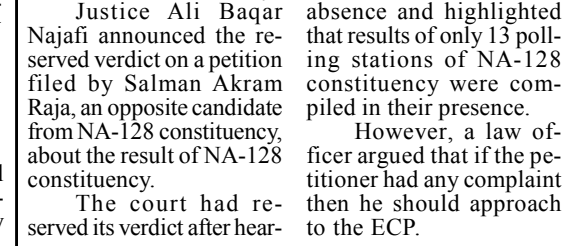
LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Sherry Rehman has claimed that election results of Lahore's constituency were manipulated, where party chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari lost polls to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Attaullah Tarar.

As per the unofficial and unconfirmed results, Tarar secured 98,210 votes against PPP's Bilawal who came third with 15,005 votes in NA-127.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore on Friday, Rehman said the results were changed abruptly while Bilawal was leading in the polls. She said the results were delayed to rig the elections.

Rehman also lamented that mobile and internet services were suspended on the polling day which created difficulties for the voters and candidates during elections. "We know very well what's the real intent behind closing mobile services," she added.

Her statement comes as election results suffered from inordinate delay with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) also raising doubts over the transparency of the elections. PTI-backed independent candidates are currently leading in the elections followed by PML-N and PPP as per the unofficial and unconfirmed results.



QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Leader, Syed Abdul Wahid Agha addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.



GILGIT: An attractive view of Naltar Valley covered by fresh snow on the mountains.

Raja Basharat vows to challenge defeat in court

RAWALPINDI (INP): Raja Basharat, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed candidate for National Assembly Constituency NA-55, has vehemently contested his electoral defeat, claiming victory by a significant margin of 50,000 votes. In a video statement shared on Twitter (X), Basharat vowed to fight for his rightful win, asserting that his opponent failed to secure victory from any polling station within NA-55.

Despite presenting Form-45 as evidence, Basharat lamented the Returning Officer's refusal to acknowledge his victory, instead issuing Form-47 to his adversary. He maintained confidence in his claim, stating that he possesses indisputable proof of his triumph and decried the alleged rigging as unprecedented.

Expressing concern over the apparent theft of the people's mandate, Basharat urged the Election Commission of Pakistan to intervene promptly. He warned against the excessive declaration of successful candidates as unsuccessful by returning officers, emphasizing the need to uphold electoral integrity.

In the broader context of post-election developments, independent candidates have emerged as the frontrunners in the National Assembly, surpassing established parties like the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

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QUETTA: Activists of Peoples Party (PPP) are holding protest demonstration against rigging in General Election 2024, outside DC Office in Quetta.