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Allegations of rigging 'contrary to ground realities'

Won't investigate alleged electoral fraud at behest of any country: PM

For me, demand of countrymen is more important than US, UK, EU combined; Level playing field enabled independent candidates to emerge as single largest group in general elections: Congratulates nation for peaceful elections despite heavy challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday reiterated that the caretaker set-up had provided a level playing field to all political parties during the currently concluded polls and being a 'free and fair' process, a large number of independent candidates backed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf emerged as the largest single group on the national and provincial assemblies seats.

He stressed that allegations of rigging were generated through social media which were based upon misconceptions and contrary to the ground realities,

and said that throughout the country's democratic history, people had always questioned the electoral process.

Such results indicated the transparency and non-interference by any quarters, he emphasised.

Addressing a presser at the PM House, the prime minister said that there might be shortcomings or other minor issues, but by and large, the elections were held in a manner in which the entire nation and the law enforcement agencies deserved kudos despite various security challenges.

"Where the PTI has public support, it got that



and they have results never dreamt of during 2018," he said, adding that the loyalists of jailed PTI leaders emerged as returned candidates in the general elections but no one was

appreciating that aspect of the neutrality of the caretaker government.

The prime minister, to a question, said that despite various threats prior to the February 8 election day and two terrorist attacks in the

Balochistan province, all the stakeholders deserved appreciation over the 'big achievement' for peaceful conduct of the polls.

He also brushed aside any threats to integrity of the country due to certain protests and agitations held by certain parties, saying "it is an absurd chronology" to relate the situation with Dhaka during 1971.

"These are the mere rhetoric. Pakistan is a very stable and responsible country. Holding of a peaceful protest is the democratic right of the people," he said, however, hastened to add that no government could

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ISLAMABAD: President Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari chairing PPP Central Executive Committee (CEC) at Zardari House in the Federal Capital.

PML-N, PPP deliberate on 'sharing PM's Office for 3, 2 years each'

Monitoring Desk
LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have deliberated on the possibility of appointing prime ministers from their parties for a three- and two-year term under a power-sharing formula.

The idea of appointing a prime minister for half the term was discussed during their first huddle on Sunday following the February 8 elections as part of their efforts to form a coalition government in the Centre and provinces, according to sources privy to the development.

The same power-sharing formula was chalked out by the PML-N and the National Party (NP) in Balochistan in 2013 when two chief ministers from

the two parties held office for half of the five-year term.

In the Sunday meeting at the Bilawal House in Lahore, the two sides agreed in principle to cooperate for the country's political stability following the general election. The meeting was attended by PPP-Parliamentarian President Asif Ali Zardari, PPP Chairman Bilawal-Bhutto Zardari and former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif from the PML-N.

According to a joint statement issued after the huddle, the meeting was held in a cordial environment, which expressed commitment to putting the nation's interest and well-being above everything.

The leaders of both parties engaged in substantive discussions regarding

the prevailing political landscape and the imperative of collaborative efforts for the betterment of the country.

The PML-N delegation included Azam Nizar Tarar, Ayaz Sadiq, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanvir, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Malik Ahmad Khan, Marriyum Aurangzeb and Sheza Fatima.

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

Both parties affirmed their dedication to steering Pakistan away from political instability and towards a path of prosperity and resilience.



LAHORE: Newly elected independent candidates meeting with President PML-N (N) Shabbaz Sharif on eve of their joining the party.

Five independent candidates join PML-N

LAHORE (APP): Five independent candidates, who emerged victorious in the general election, called on Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif, here on Monday.

Sardar Shamsher Mazari who won the election from NA-189, Imran Akram from PP-195, Sohail Khan from PP-240, Khizar Hussain Mazari from PP-297, and Sahibzada Muhammad Ghazain Abbasi from PP-249 were among those who met with the PML-N President. All five members expressed confidence in PML-N

Quaid Nawaz Sharif and announced their decision to officially join the PML-N.

Shehbaz Sharif extended a warm welcome and congratulations to the independent members for joining the party, saying that they have become part of collective efforts to enhance Pakistan's beauty and drag the country out of various challenges. He emphasized that economic stability and the well-being of the people remain the paramount priorities for his party. He expressed his resolve to serve the people of Pakistan with increased vigour and dedication.

Following poll routs Tareen exits politics, Siraj quits as JI chief

ISLAMABAD (INP): Just four days after the general election, Jahangir Tareen announced that he will step down as chairman of the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and leave politics altogether. Jamat-e-Islami Ameer Siraj-ul-Haq also announced their resignations as chief of the Jamat-e-Islami. However, Pervez Khattak denied news that he is set to step down from his party.

Tareen's announcement came through a post on X, four days after he was defeated in the general election.

"I have immense respect for the will of the people of Pakistan. Therefore, I have decided to resign from my position as Chairman IPP and step away from politics altogether," he wrote.

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QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Secretary General, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Hyderi addresses to media persons during press conference

ECP is first forum for filing application against election result: LHC

LAHORE (Online): Justice Ali Baqar Najafi of Lahore High Court (LHC) has remarked the first forum for giving application against election result is Election Commission (EC).

The petitions against success of Khawaja Asif, Maryam Nawaz, Hamza Shehbaz and others came up for hearing before LHC Monday.

Justice Baqar Ali Najafi

of LHC remarked the EC is the first forum for filing application.

We direct EC to decide the petitions of candidates as per law.

Justice Ali Baqar Najafi remarked this petition maintainable because election process has completed just now. Is the petitioner not bound to file petition with RO first. The first forum for filing petition is EC.

Two terrorists killed in Mardan: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (Online): Security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Mardan District, on reported presence of terrorists.

During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange, two terrorists were killed. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area.

Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Local populace appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to security forces in eliminating the menace of terrorism.

Nawaz Sharif makes telephonic contact with Maulana Fazal

LAHORE (Online): Former Prime Minister (PM) Nawaz Sharif has once again made telephonic contact with JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

Both the leaders exchanged views on political situation. They have agreed on an early meeting.

According to sources during the meeting between Nawaz Sharif and Maulana Fazlur Rehman, overall political situation of the country and matters related to government making were discussed in the meeting.

During the telephonic talk both agreed on early meeting for completing process of consultation for government making.

SC moved for declaring Feb 8 election null and void

ISLAMABAD (Online): Petition has been filed in Supreme Court (SC) seeking court order to declare February 8 election null and void.

Federal government and Election Commission (EC) have been made respondents in the petition.

Petition has been filed by a citizen Ali Khan.

It has been requested in the petition that election held on February 8 be nullified. The process of government making as a result of February 8 election be stopped. Order be issued for conducting election afresh under judiciary.

Sanjrani, Sanaulah Zehri, Jam Kamal, Aslam Raisani in race for Balochistan CM slot

QUETTA (INP): As the dust is settling after general elections 2024, the battle for the new chief minister of Balochistan is picking up pace with some of the top names of the province in the line on Monday.

Names of Sanaulah Zehri from the PPP, Jam Kamal Khan from the PML-N, Nawab Aslam Raisani from the JUI-F and Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani from BAP are among the prominent candidates vying for this coveted provincial post.

The question of which political party will be at the top in Balochistan awaits a definitive answer as negotiations and alliances continue to unfold.

For the role of chief minister in Balochistan, few notable figures from the respective parties have emerged as strong contenders.

PPP, PML-N, and JUI-



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior and Commerce, Dr. Gohar Ejaz addressing the media along with Saudi Ambassador to H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malki at the Faisal Mosque.

Shah Faisal mosque to be renovated: Gohar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior and Commerce Dr. Gohar Ijaz on Monday said that 40 years ago, the government of Saudi Arabia gave a gift of Shah Faisal Mosque to Pakistanis, now the mosque would be renovated to make it more beautiful.

He expressed these views on the occasion of visiting Shah Faisal Mosque along with Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf Saeed Al Malki.

Federal Interior Secretary, Aftab Akbar Durrani, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and CDA officials were also present at

the occasion.

The minister along with the Saudi Ambassador offered Zuhr prayer and latter visited the main hall and spacious courtyard of the mosque.

Talking to the media persons, the minister said that when he assumed charge of the minister, he offered Jumma prayer at the mosque and latter he met with the Saudi ambassador and informed him that the mosque needed to be renovated. "We are grateful to the Saudi Ambassador who took personal interest and decided to renovate the Shah Faisal Mosque, which will begin soon," the minister said.

ECP rejects allegations of rigging in general election

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has outrightly rejected allegations of rigging in the general election.

According to a statement, the commission managed to hold a peaceful and orderly elections on Feb 8 and is taking quick decision on the complaints despite difficulties.

The holding of the election was a grand operation which was completed suc-

cessfully, the ECP said. The commission mentioned its success of receiving first result at 2pm earlier than 4am in the next day in 2018.

The ECP accepted disruption in operation due to internet service disconnection.

The commission said the election results were completed in one and a half day except for some constituencies while it took three days in took three days in 2018.

Session to form new NA expected to be held on Feb 29

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Assembly's first session after the general elections is expected to be held on Feb 29.

According to sources, the new assembly's session must be held within 21 days after general elections are conducted under Article 19 of the Constitution.

The newly elected members of the assembly will take the oath in the inaugural session. Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf will preside over the inaugural session and newly-elected members will take the oath from him for the National Assembly.

The members will be notified within 14 days after the elections, and the 60 and 10 seats reserved for women and minorities, respectively, will be granted afterwards.

The notification is expected to be released on Feb 21 or 22 for the session. Independent candidates are obliged to join any party within three days after the release of the notification.

Six bodies recovered from hilly area in Qilla Saifullah

QUETTA (Online): 6 bodies have been recovered from hilly area in Qilla Saifullah Balochistan.

According to Levies sources 6 bodies have been recovered from hilly area near the city in Qilla Saifullah. The bodies have been sent to hospital through ambulance.

The process of recognition of the bodies has been started.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Mir Zubair Jamali meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

ECP directs re-polling in 7 polling stations of NA-253, PB-9 Kohlu on Feb 16

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has notified the conduct of re-polling in 7 polling stations in NA-253 and PB-9 Kohlu on Feb 16.

According to a notification, the polling in these constituencies was delayed due to law and order situation. The commission has instructed the chief secretary. The polling in these constituencies was postponed due to a law and order issue. The commission has instructed the chief secretary of Balochistan, the Inspector General of Balochistan, and other law

enforcement agencies to undertake essential measures to guarantee fair and impartial elections.

Following the hearing of election petitions, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has instructed Returning Officers from six National and Provincial assembly constituencies to refrain from announcing final results.

A two-member commission bench led by Nisar Durrani, along with Member Balochistan Shah Muhammad Jatoti, presided over the hearing of a petition challenging election results.

Electricity tariff likely to be scaled up for next three months

ISLAMABAD (Online): Electricity tariff is likely to be enhanced by Rs 4.40 per unit for next three months. According to media report NEPRA will hear petition on February 14. The increase in tariff will be made under head of quarterly adjustment. An additional financial burden of Rs 82 billion will be shifted to the consumers due to this increase. According to context of application of ministry of energy FESCO has sought increase of Rs 9.44 billion, PESCO Rs 11.60 billion, MEPCO Rs 15 billion, LESCO Rs 15.10 billion and QECO Rs 10 billion.



QUETTA: Security forces blocked the road due to the protest by the political parties in front of DC Office against the alleged rigging in the general elections

**Police report
Absar Alam
attacked at
behest of two
France-based
individuals**

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad police have submitted a report in the Supreme Court's suo motu case regarding the protection for journalists.

According to the report, six people were involved in the attack on senior journalist Absar Alam and have been arrested. It further says that suspect Hammad Suleman confessed to attacking Alam at the behest of individuals living in France in exchange for money.

The report quoted the suspect as saying that he received the money from two France-based individuals, Shah Nawaz and Mirza Zain Ghayas, through a bank.

It further says that an investigation report against the suspects was submitted on June 9, 2022, though they have not yet been indicted. Moreover, arrest warrants have also been issued for the suspects residing in France.

The police report also says that YouTuber Asad Toor was attacked at the behest of the same France-based individuals. Further investigations will be conducted following the arrest of these two suspects residing abroad, the report added.

**Petitioners in Peshawar
challenge election results
in 8 constituencies**

PESHAWAR (INP): The battle over alleged election result manipulations in Peshawar reached the Peshawar High Court (PHC), with eight petitioners challenging outcomes in their respective constituencies.

During the proceedings, a bench consisting of Justice Shakeel Ahmed and Justice Arshad Ali presided over the hearing. Advocates representing the petitioners contended that while Form 45 results favored them, discrepancies were evident in Form 47, suggesting potential manipulation.

Lawyers representing the petitioners, including prominent political figures like Taimur Jhagra and Mahmood Jan, argued that results initially declared in Form 45 (polling station results) were altered in the final Form 47 (constitu-

ency-level declaration). They accused the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of manipulating the final results.

However, the ECP's legal counsel objected to the admissibility of the application, citing constitutional provisions under Article 225 and Section 9 of the Election Act. Justice Arshad Ali remarked that their jurisdiction in such cases is limited, and directly ordering the electoral watchdog to recount votes falls outside their purview.

Consequently, the hearing was adjourned pending responses from the Election Commission till February 15. Notable petitioners include Taimur Jhagra, Kamran Bangash, Mahmood Jan, Arbab Jehandad, Muhammad Asim, Ali Zaman, Shahab, and Sajid Nawaz.

**PTI appreciates JJ's Hafiz
forfeiting Sindh Assembly seat**

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI in a post on X expressed its appreciation for Jamaat-i-Islami Karachi chief Hafiz Naemur Rehman for forfeiting his Sindh Assembly seat.

Earlier while addressing a press conference in Karachi, Naem had highlighted discrepancies in the vote counting. "Therefore, I give up this seat," Rehman said, adding that "independent candidate Saif Bari won in a genuine manner, whose votes were reduced to 11,000 from 31,000."

It should be mentioned that Naem had won from PS-129 (Karachi Central VIII) with 26,296 votes, according to the provisional results released by the ECP. PTI-backed independent candidate Saif Bari had gathered 11,357, according to the ECP's Form 47.



KARACHI: Women activists of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (Pakistan) hold a protest in favor of their demands outside press club in Provincial Capital.

Won't investigate alleged electoral...

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allow the situation leading to chaos or anarchy.

Responding to a query, he maintained that over 60 million voters had exercised their constitutional right to elect their favourite candidates under 'a pressure free environment'.

The prime minister said that the delay in the announcement of official results were caused by the specific procedures regarding compiling of results at 92,000 polling stations and credited the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for conducting the massive exercise in a smooth manner.

He said that the official results were announced within 36 hours while during the 2018 elections, it took almost 66 hours. There might be irregularities but the relevant forums were available to address those grievances.

In Sweden, the similar exercise almost took 10 to 11 days while in Indonesia, almost a month was consumed to furnish results, he added.

To another question, the prime minister said that mobile phone services were suspended on the polling day due to security threats as the government could not compromise on the security of people.

On the other hand, the broadband internet services were available on that day, enabling the people to get connected, he said and rebuffed the allegations that the move was aimed at managing the social media.

He said there were other occasions throughout the year, when the mobile services had been suspended to avert security threats.

Prime Minister Kakar, responding to a question regarding the statements of certain countries over the recently held elections, said that if there were any allegations, they would look into them according to the laws of the land and not on the demands of any country.

"We will do it if it is required under the country's laws," he said,

adding that the demands of his countrymen were more important to the government and advised that the statements by certain US Congressmen should not be taken as 'sacrosanct' or gospel truth as they were not speaking on part of the government.

The elections in Pakistan were held in a free and fair manner and there was no institutional mechanism to favour any group, he stressed.

Responding to a query about the prospects of forming a commission to investigate the polls allegations, he maintained that it would be up to the upcoming elected government to make assessments over such demands and decide, but he would not speculate about it.

About the security threats, he said that there were credible reports of terrorist attacks in the country prior to the election date which could not be divulged in the public domain. A leader of the banned Daesh was neutralized during an operation in Qilla Saifullah which was involved in terrorist attacks in Balochistan.

The caretaker prime minister also agreed with the President's views over the need of introduction of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and said that according to his personal view, the political parties should hold threadbare discussions in the next parliament over the issue and legislate if required so that the new electoral system could be more acceptable to all.

He expressed the optimism that after the current transitional period was over and the new government was formed, there would be a positive wave hitting the markets and businesses, adding that economic challenges would still await the next government.

The prime minister also hailed the entry of new voters and said that they would make positive contributions to the democratic process in the future.

To a question, he said

that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had no issue with the privatization process of the caretaker government.

Restructuring of the PIA (Pakistan International Airlines) had almost been done, and it was in the implementation process, however, it was up to the upcoming government to decide either way, he added.

Expressing his disapproval of the incidents of political confrontation in the recent years, he said that all the political parties and society should move beyond such negative trends leading to animosity and tiffs. "We should get rid of this vicious circle of confrontation by changing attitudes. Political differences should not lead to rifts within the society," he added.

He also wished speedy recovery to Mohsin Dawar, a candidate in North Waziristan and said that violent way of protest and agitation should not be taken to a point of anarchy and chaos.

About formation of the new government, the prime minister said that they were eager to hand over reigns of the government to the elected representatives of the people. The speaker of the National Assembly would initiate the required process and he thought that the exercise could take eight to nine days depending upon the outcome of the negotiations of the political parties.



Activists of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) are blocked road as they are holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, at Syed Hameed Crossing Bridge located on Qila Abdullah area

Twelve women clinch NA seats by defying odds

ISLAMABAD (INP): The General Elections of 2024 witnessed many ups and downs. The election brought surprises for several heavyweights while the PTI-backed candidates stunned many political observers.

Although there are seats reserved for women in the National Assembly, some strong-willed females defeated their rival males while smashing the patriarchy and became the members of the parliament.

As many as 12 powerful women won election on general seats in the Feb 8 polls and became MNAs.

The PTI-backed independent women candidates topped the list with five seats followed by PML-N whose women candidates clinched four general seats.

The PPP, who has the credit of giving Pakistan its first ever woman prime minister, could elect only two women candidates on general seat.

MQM-P elected one woman candidate on general seat from Karachi.

Shandana Gulzar Khan NA-30

The PTI-backed independent candidate Shandana Gulzar Khan became MNA from NA-30 Peshawar by securing 78,971 votes. She defeated JUI-F candidate Nasir Khan who could get only 20,950 votes.

Shandana first became MNA in 2018 on PTI's reserved seat but this time she contested on the general seat. Her father Gulzar

Khan also became MNA in 2013 on PTI ticket before retiring as a bureaucrat.

Aneeqa Mehdi Bhatti NA-67

This National Assembly constituency was clinched by PTI-backed independent candidate Aneeqa Mehdi Bhatti. She obtained 208,943 votes and defeated PML-N candidate and former federal minister Saira Afzal Tarar who secured 183,020 votes.

It was the constituency where two women were contesting against each other. Aneeqa is new entrant in the National Assembly although his family is in the politics for decades.

The male members of Mehdi Bhatti family are in the hiding and therefore Aneeqa Mehdi jumped into the political field.

Ayesha Nazir Jutt NA-156

This seat was clinched by PTI-backed independent candidate Ayesha Nazir Jutt who got 119,820 votes against PML-N candidate Ch Nazir Ahmad who could get only 90,353 votes.

Ayesha Nazir Jutt is the daughter of former MNA from Vehari Ch Nazir Jutt. She has also served as PTI's senior vice president in South Punjab.

Amber Majeed Niazi NA-181

The PTI-backed independent candidate Amber Majeed Niazi won from NA-181 Layyah by grabbing 120,499 votes. Her ri-

val Sahibzada Faiz ul Hassan of PML-N could get 95,081 votes.

Amber Majeed Niazi jumped into elections after the crackdown on PTI workers in the aftermath of May 9 violence.

Her husband, Majeed Niazi, who won from the constituency in the previous elections, has been in hiding since May 9 riots.

Zartaj Gul NA-185

Former federal minister and PTI-backed independent candidate Zartaj Gul won the election by getting 94,881 votes against another independent candidate Mehmoode Qadir Khan who could get only 32,929 votes from this constituency of DG Khan.

Nousheen Iftikhar NA-73

This National Assembly constituency of Sialkot has been clinched by PML-N candidate Nousheen Iftikhar.

She obtained 112,143 votes against PTI-backed independent candidate Ali Asjad Malhi who secured 104,067 votes.

Nousheen is the daughter of PML-N stalwart late Zahray Shah who became MNA from Daska, Sialkot several times.

Maryam Nawaz NA-119

This National Assembly constituency of Lahore has been won by PML-N chief organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif who got 83,855 votes against PTI-backed independent candidate Shahzad Ferooz who could only garner 68,376

votes.

The victory marked the official entry of Sharif's political scion in the parliamentary politics.

Tehmina Daultana NA-158

PML-N's stalwart Begum Tehmina Daultana grabbed this seat from a constituency of Vehari by getting 111,196 votes against PTI-backed independent candidate Tahir Iqbal Chaudhry who got 103,052 votes.

Tehmina had closely worked with Begum Kulsoom Nawaz, the late wife of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, during the military dictatorship of Pervez Musharraf.

Shazra Mansab NA-112

PML-N candidate Shazra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal won this seat of Nankana Sahab by getting 105,646 votes against PTI-backed independent candidate Ijaz Shah who could secure 93,316 votes.

Ijaz Shah became MNA from the constituency in 2018 on PTI ticket. He is the former DG of Intelligence Bureau.

Shazia Marri NA-209

Shazia Marri of PPP clinched this seat from Sanghar by getting 156,002 votes against GDA candidate Muhammad Khan Junejo who got 139,604 votes.

Shazia has also served as MNA from this constituency in the past and she is considered as the central leader of PPP.

Nafisa Shah NA-202

PPP's Nafisa Shah won this seat of Khairpur by getting 146,083 votes against GDA candidate Syed Ghaus Ali Shah who could get only 28,613 votes.

Ghaus Ali Shah has served as the chief minister of Sindh in the past.

Nafisa Shah has also represented her people from this constituency in the past. She is the daughter of veteran PPP leader and former CM Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah.

Asia Ishaq NA-232

Asia Ishaq Siddiqui of MQM-P won the seat from Karachi by getting 88,258 votes against PTI-backed independent candidate Adeel Ahmad who got 66,574 votes.

Women aren't the focus Earlier, only 3,235 (4.91pc) women candidates were in the race out of 65,916 total candidates in Feb 8 polls.

PML-N allotted six general seats tickets to female candidates including PML-N chief organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Saira Afzal Tarar, Nousheen Iftikhar, Shazra Mansab Ali, Tehmina Daultana and Syeda Shehrbanu Bukhari.

PPP only fielded Nafisa Shah and Shazia Marri as ticket holders in National Assembly general seats.

There were 21 PTI-backed independent women candidates in the field including Rehana Imtiaz Dar, Alia Hamza Malik, Dr Yasmin Rashid, Zartaj Gul and Mehr Bano Qureshi.

**SC accepts federation's
appeal for hearing**

ISLAMABAD (APP):

The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday accepted the intra-court appeal (ICA) of the Federation for the hearing, that pertained to the proceedings in the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against the retired judges.

A five-member larger bench, headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan, took up the ICA for the hearing.

The court decided to appoint amicus-curiae in the case and asked the Attorney General of Pakistan to suggest the names in this regard.

The further hearing of the case was then ad-

journalled till February 19.

Earlier, during the hearing, Justice Irfan Saadat Khan observed that there were some judges that might be affected directly with this appeal. "Whether they should be issued notices or not," he questioned.

Justice Saadat Khan said that if they prosecute the case, they wouldn't not only see the pending inquiries against specific judges but also delve into other concerned issues.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail remarked that this case was not against a specific judge, rather it was about a principle.

Tareen exits politics...

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He also congratulated his opponents on their win and thanked party workers for their support.

"By the Grace of Allah, I will continue to serve my country to the best of my ability in a private capacity," he wrote.

"May the next few years see Pakistan prosper IA."

Jamat-e-Islami Ameer Siraj-ul-Haq has tendered his resignation over the performance of his party in the general elections.

Siraj-ul-Haq wrote in his resignation that the

party had made energetic efforts in the election but results did not materialise.

The JI failed to win a single seat in the National Assembly in the 2024 election, where PTI-backed independent candidates emerged as the biggest group.

Haq tendered his resignation on Monday, but it was not accepted immediately. Party sources said that a meeting of the JI's majlis-e-shoora has been called in Lahore on February 17, which will consider whether to accept or reject the resignation.



QUETTA: Participated Candidates in General Election 2024, Arz Muhammad Barriach, Mir Musaluddin Mengal and others addressing a press conference, at Quetta press club.

**President greets
Stubb on election
as President
of Finland**

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi Monday congratulated Alexander Stubb on his election as President of Finland.

The president, in a post on X, said, "Congratulations to Alexander Stubb on his election as President of Finland. Look forward to working together to further advance our longstanding and friendly relations, and growing cooperation in education, green energy transition and technical & vocational training."

**England's Leach ruled out of
India tests with knee injury**

RAJKOT (INP): England spin spearhead Jack Leach will miss the rest of their five-match test series against India due to a left knee injury, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said.

The 32-year-old hurt his knee twice while fielding during England's first test victory in Hyderabad where he picked up two wickets and missed the second match in Visakhapatnam, which the hosts won on Monday to level the series at 1-1.

The ECB said it will

not call up a replacement and Leach will head home from Abu Dhabi, where the team have been staying ahead of the third match in Rajkot which starts on Thursday.

"Leach will work closely with the England and Somerset medical teams in respect of his rehabilitation," the cricket board added in a statement. England handed Shoab Bashir his test debut in place of Leach in the second test. Bashir missed the opener following a visa delay that was later fixed.

**Sri Lanka beat Afghanistan by
155 runs to secure 2-0 series win**

KANDY (INP): Sri Lanka secured a convincing 155 run win over Afghanistan in the second one-day international, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three match series. Afghanistan, set a target of 309 to level the series, were shot out for 153 inside 34 overs as leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga starred with four wickets.

"We are quite disappointed with the way we performed today," Afghanistan's skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi said. "We are a better side than this." Afghanistan were well placed at 128 for one in pursuit of their target, but once Rahmat Shah (54) and Ibrahim Zadran (63) were dismissed there was little

fight from the rest of the batters. The pair had added 97 runs for the second wicket and Asitha Fernando, playing his first ODI in 15 months, provided the breakthrough by having Ibrahim caught behind. Leg-spinner Hasaranga then produced two wickets in an over as he trapped Rahmat leg before wicket, while Shahidi was bowled. Hasaranga was backed up by seamers as Dilshan Madushanka claimed two wickets in an over and Asitha Fernando, who also ended with two wickets.

Afghanistan collapsed losing eight wickets for 10 runs, as Sri Lanka dominated under lights. "Credit to all the bowlers who

helped to pull this off", Sri Lankan skipper Kusal Mendis said. It was a back to the wall unbeaten 97 by Charith Asalanka that enabled Sri Lanka to a total of over 300 runs. The Sri Lankan vice-captain was involved in two crucial partnerships, first adding 111 runs off 98 balls with Janith Liyanage (50) for the fifth wicket. A 50 run partnership followed for the sixth wicket with Hasaranga off 32 balls. Asalanka scored 62 runs in 35 balls in the last 10 overs and finished unbeaten on 97, a score he hit off 74 balls with nine fours and two sixes. Sri Lanka got off to a poor start, losing the openers with 36 runs on the board.



QUETTA: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Leader, Sardar Dawa Khan Shahwani addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

Speakers of webinar emphasizes active role of women in science to foster economic prosperity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker at a webinar titled "Women in Science: Shaping Tomorrow's Innovations" held here Monday emphasized the active role of women in science, technology, and innovation to foster economic prosperity and sustainable development.

The webinar was arranged by the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) to commemorate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

The event, held in a hybrid format at the COMSATS Secretariat in Islamabad, brought together a diverse panel of speakers to explore the pivotal role of women in Science, Technology, Innovation, and Engineering. Participants from around the globe joined the webinar.

Executive Director of COMSATS, Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria delivered the opening remarks and stressed the importance of equal participation of women alongside men in addressing global challenges.

Dr. Zakaria reiterated COMSATS' commitment to advocating for and promoting gender equality in the realm of science, technology, and innovation worldwide.

He highlighted the significance of this day as a call to action, acknowledging women's invaluable contributions to science and the ongoing journey towards gender equality in the field.

Dr. Zakaria emphasized that women bring a unique perspective to scientific endeavors, enhancing them with diversity in thought and experience, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues.

A distinguished member of the Senate of Pakistan and recently appointed CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar expressed appreciation to COMSATS for organizing this significant event.

In her video message, Dr. Sania underscored that achieving gender equality in science, technology, and innovation is not only a matter of social justice but also essential for fostering economic prosperity and sustainable development.

She highlighted the evolving nature of innovation, which now encompasses a broader range of influences beyond traditional science and technology advancements, particularly environmental and societal challenges.

In this new paradigm, the socio-economic empowerment of women emerges as a crucial catalyst for driving innovation forward.

President of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), Prof. Dr. Quarraisha Abdoal Karim shared valuable insights into her three decades of research contributions that have significantly influenced the global HIV prevention efforts.

She highlighted that developing countries must maximize the potential of their Research and Innovation systems while promoting gender equality in scientific fields.

He said that integrating gender considerations into the Science, Technology, and Innovation landscape can provide developing countries with a significant competitive edge.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior and Commerce, Dr. Gohar Ejaz and Saudi Ambassador, H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malkiy offering Zuhr prayer at the Faisal Mosque.

AKUH launches second opinion service

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) on Monday launched its second opinion service platform patients from across Pakistan and around the world will have access to the medical opinions of AKUH doctors, without having to consult them personally.

A second opinion is medical advice taken from a doctor other than the one who made the initial diagnosis or treatment plan for a patient. Patients may seek a second opinion to confirm their diagnosis, get assurance their treatment plan is optimal, explore different treatment options, or simply for peace of mind, especially when dealing with complex diseases.

AKUH's second opinion service, hosted on the AKUH Pakistan website, provides a secure and user-friendly platform for individuals seeking medical opinions from AKUH without requiring a consultation. This technology-powered solution allows patients to access AKUH's sought-after medical expertise, regardless of their location.

AKUH is a JCI-accredited comprehensive tertiary care hospital offering all services under one roof, with some of the best and most skilled and qualified doctors in the country.

Therefore, patients can seek a second opinion on any disease or treatment plan, whether for adults or children. AKUH's Second Opinion service provides various forms of second opinions, including but not limited to general second opinions, second opinions when surgery is recommended, a review of lab or radiology reports, and much more.

Dr. Farhat Abbas, CEO of AKUH Karachi, underscores AKUH's commitment to enabling informed healthcare decisions, stating, "We are dedicated to empowering individuals worldwide, ensuring access to the exceptional skills and experience of our specialists. I am excited to see the positive impact this service will have on patients dealing with complex medical challenges."

Jordan embassy delegation visits Safe City Islamabad; meets ICCPO

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan, Dr. Maan Abdel Fattah Khurizat, visited the Central Police Office Islamabad along with a delegation and met with Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the Jordan embassy delegation discussed various matters with ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and was briefed about the measures taken by the Islamabad capital police to maintain fool-

monitoring facilities and coverage across various sectors of the city and its integration with private buildings, toll plazas, and the metro bus system was highlighted, with ongoing upgrades continuing to expand its reach.

The delegation was briefed about the important measures taken by the Islamabad Police during the recent General Elections 2024, to maintain the law and order situation in Islamabad and to ensure the protection of life and property of the citizens. Moreover, the delegation also visited the control



proof security. During the visit, the delegation was briefed on Safe City's centralized system, cutting-edge technology-equipped cameras, and

room in Safe City. The delegation was also briefed about its role in the security of the city and the prevention of crimes through Safe City Islamabad.

UNDP Representative calls on IPO-Pakistan chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): UNDP Resident Representative in Pakistan Samuel Rizk, along with Programme Analyst of South -Cooperation Ms Liu-Win called on IPO-Pakistan Chairman Ambassador @ Farukh Amil on Monday.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed various aspects of intellectual property rights (IPRs), including copyrights, patents and geographic indications (GIs), said a news release said. It was noted that intellectual property was critical in protecting inno-

vation, creative work, and unique products.

They discussed ways and means to explore collaboration between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Intellectual Property Organisation of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan).

"This can involve joint dialogue aimed at raising awareness about IPRs, fostering innovation in Pakistan and strengthening the inclusion agenda in Pakistan for the most vulnerable groups, including differently-abled persons," the news release said.

Country's upper parts to remain cold, hazy: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): The upper parts of the country are likely to experience cold weather conditions and haziness during the next 24 hours according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

According to the synoptic situation, a westerly wave was present over south/southwestern parts of Balochistan.

Mainly cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country, while very cold and cloudy in upper parts.

However, partly cloudy weather in southern

districts of Balochistan with chances of rain-wind/thunderstorm is likely in coastal areas of Makran.

Light rain-wind/thunderstorm is also expected at isolated places in Kashmir and adjoining hilly areas.

Shallow fog may likely occur at few places in plain areas of northeast Punjab during morning hours.

During the last 24 hours, cold and dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country while, very cold in northern parts. However, rain occurred at isolated places in south Balochistan.



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of board "Welcome to Islamabad" displayed at Srinagar Highway in Federal Capital.

Pakistani expert installs research equipment at University in Mauritania

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a remarkable achievement, Pakistani expert, Engr. Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi has installed research equipment at the Nawakchott University in Mauritania. Engr. Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi is visiting Mauritania under COMSTECH- Mauritania Science and Technology Cooperation Program.

The installation of this equipment is a new initiative of the Agence Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique et de l'Innovation (ANRSI). It is aimed at promoting and supporting scientific research, logistics, and technical support with the resources needed to achieve the maximum benefit from laboratories. Where the ANRSI seeks to provide valuable, versatile, research equipment to the researchers of all disciplines.

Engr. Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi, had previously visited Nawakchott, in the

same context last year.

His competence and experience in evaluating and maintaining research equipment in a number of countries such as Yemen, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Saudi Arabia, is well known.

His work has been recognized with awards by Bruker AXS Germany and outstanding technical support shield by KRL, Islamabad. COMSTECH signed a memorandum of understanding with ANRSI last year, since then it is supporting visits of experts to Mauritania to develop institutional capacities.

The visiting experts install and repair the scientific instruments, and impart training to Mauritanian manpower on the use and maintenance of the equipment. ANRSI is the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation of Mauritania. It aims to make scientific research a lever for overall economic and social development.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party candidate National Assembly Sardar Salim Haider Khan, Haji Malik Riasat addressing a press conference at NPC.

Expert stresses awareness, family counseling of parents having autistic children

ISLAMABAD (APP): The health expert on Monday stressed the need for awareness to cope with the autism disease, as early detection and therapy are the keys for the management of children with autism.

While talking to PTV News, a Psychiatrist Dr Uzma Masroor explained that autism is a spectrum disorder that refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with speech, nonverbal communication, social skills, and repetitive behavior. "Children with autism are capable of learning like any other children," she said, adding that there is a

stigma that people are usually judgmental towards such kids and pass unwanted advice to the caretakers.

She said that consistent media campaigns are raising awareness which is opening doors of opportunities for the children challenged with autism. She said that autism rehabilitation services are helping in providing support and training to the families for managing their kids with patience.

Dr Uzama underlined that biomedical therapy helps a child in healing gradually from autism.

she said that most of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) cases are detected in the developing years of children, and early intervention plays an extremely significant role in improving a child's verbal and social development.

"It is the need of the hour to recognize and dispel the misconceptions to promote greater identification, understanding, and creating acceptance of those living with the condition," she added.

She advised that there is a need to create more awareness among the public about autism to address this debilitating illness.



ISLAMABAD: A gypsy boy searching valuable items from garbage in the Federal Capital.

APHC praises IIOJK people for strongly responding to call for shutdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): Illegally detained Chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Masarrat Aalam Butt and senior leaders Shabbir Ahmad Shah and Nayeem Ahmad Khan have commended the resilient people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) for steadfastly engaging in a robust political struggle against India, both domestically and internationally.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the leaders in their messages from New Delhi's Tihar jail highlighted the political maturity, wisdom, and practical approach demonstrated by the people of IIOJK, particularly in their observance of the shutdown on February 11 to honor the martyrdom anniversary of the revered liberation leader, Muhammad Maqbool Butt.

It is worth noting that Muhammad Maqbool Butt was executed in New Delhi's Tihar Jail on February 11, 1984. Another Kashmiri leader

Muhammad Afzal Guru met a similar fate on February 9, 2013.

Both the leaders were executed without fair trials for their pivotal roles in the ongoing freedom movement of Kashmiris.

The APHC leaders reiterated their unwavering commitment to the cause of freedom, stressing that heroes like Maqbool Butt and Afzal Guru, unjustly executed, remain integral to the resistance movement's spirit. In condemning the recent surge in arbitrary arrests across the occupied territory, the leaders said that such oppressive tactics cannot deter the Kashmiri populace from their pursuit of freedom from Indian subjugation.

Furthermore, Masarrat Aalam Butt, Shabbir Ahmad Shah and Nayeem Ahmad Khan called upon the United Nations to take decisive action to compel India to halt its atrocities, including genocide, extrajudicial killings and gross human rights violations perpetrated by its troops in IIOJK.

PTI leaders' bail extended in vandalism case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra on Tuesday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders Amir Masood Mughal and Malik Muhammad Rafique in the protest and vandalism case.

Accused Amir Masood Mughal and Malik Muhammad Rafiq appeared before the court along with their lawyers. The case was adjourned till February 14. Three cases were registered against Muhammad Rafique, and four against Amir Masood in different police stations, including Sangjani, Karachi Company, Noon, and Golra.

World Radio Day to be observed today

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Radio Day will be observed on Tuesday, February 13 across the globe including Pakistan to highlight the importance of Radio as a key medium of imparting education, provision of information, and entertainment to people. This year's theme of World Radio Day is, Radio: A Century Informing, Entertaining and Educating. To mark the Day, Radio Pakistan will broadcast special messages from the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Secretary of Information, and Director General Radio Pakistan along with special live programs to highlight the importance of Radio.

Fresh crackdown on JI activists in IIOJK sparks outcry from APHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indian authorities have launched a fresh spree of raids, crackdowns and arrests targeting members of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) across Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

According to Kashmir Media Service, India's dreaded National Investigation Agency (NIA) and paramilitary forces are conducting extensive operations, seizing documents and apprehending individuals associated with JI's social and welfare activities, including education, healthcare and support for the disadvantaged.

The organization expressed serious concern over the victimization of ordinary Kashmiris during these operations, emphasizing that such brutalities will not deter the Kashmiri people from their struggle for freedom.

JUI-F's CEC meeting on Tuesday to discuss polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): An important meeting of the central executive committee of Jamaat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) has been summoned on Tuesday in Islamabad to discuss matters concerning the general elections. According to the spokesman of JUI-F, chaired by JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the party's provincial leadership will present their report regarding the elections in their respective areas.

The future decisions will also be taken after considering the current situation. The party has serious reservations about the results, said the spokesman.



ISLAMABAD: CDA staffers busy in removing election banners in Federal Capital.

CDA to develop housing scheme with participation of private firms

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to develop a housing scheme with the participation of a private firm.

The housing scheme, to be named 'Kurri Enclave Housing Scheme', would be developed over an area of 10,000 kanals in Kurri village.

According to sources, the land is owned by the CDA but the project costing billions of rupees would be developed as a joint venture with some leading real estate developer or with a consortium of more than one firm.

The board of CDA had already approved to launch and develop housing schemes with the participation of the private sector. The civic body had also invited Expression of Interests (EOIs) for the selection of reputed firms to execute the project. The selected real estate firm would invest while developing and planning the project.

IHC to hear Bushra Bibi's plea today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) will take up the petition of Bushra Bibi on Tuesday for hearing against declaring the Banigala House as sub-jail. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb will hear the case as per the cause list issued by the Registrar Office.

The petitioner has prayed the court to set aside the January 31 notification of Chief Commissioner Islamabad declaring the Banigala House as sub-jail.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy in carpeting at a road in the Federal Capital.

Renowned film actor Aslam Parvez remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned film actor Aslam Parvez was remembered on the occasion of his birth anniversary here on Monday.

Aslam Parvez was born into an educated and well-known family in Lahore on February 12, 1932. His real name was Aslam Parvez Tahir.

He entered the film industry in the year 1955 and started his film career in Anwar Kamal Pasha's film Qatil (1955) as a side hero. Thereafter, he played the leading role in the film 'Patay Khan' alongside Noor Jehan.

In his film career, he performed different roles as a hero, villain, and various other characters in many super-hit films. He also played the role of villain in the movies like Saheli, Insaan aur Admi, Tehzeeb and Baharo Phool Barsao.

While coming from a shooting of a film, he was injured in a car accident and died on November 21, 1984. His last movie 'Khuddar' was released after his death, in 1985.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Tuesday February 13, 2024

Glaring irregularities

Frantic negotiations have started behind closed doors over the possible configurations of power, and some quarters will be eager to see the election chapter closed, with results accepted as fait accompli.

However, the citizenry — of which many braved a long campaign of intimidation and navigated several hurdles to exercise their vote — seems in no mood to meekly move on. It has good reason not to.

There were significant irregularities in this election that voters must be given answers for, and it is important that their concerns are promptly addressed by the ECP. The most pressing issue is what seems to be the outright theft of the public mandate in some parts of the country, as evidenced by the large discrepancies between various reported results.

There are growing voices of concern, including in the international community, over why some of the ECP's announced results differ so widely from the personal tallies kept by the candidates as well as the unofficial, parallel counts maintained by TV channels through their independent sources.

Observers' suspicions have been further strengthened by some obvious anomalies in the Form 47s released by ROs for certain constituencies, as well as the inordinately long time it has taken to 'finalise' results.

It is strange that, for most parts of the country, the results reported by the channels seem to closely match the results announced by the ECP much later; however, in many major urban constituencies, where media presence and resources are, in fact, the strongest, the divergence is extremely large. Clearly, something went awry during the results tabulation process in these constituencies, which needs to be promptly investigated and addressed. Though investigations will get tricky in places where candidates were never given Form 45 — a serious irregularity that has been highlighted by several poll observers — there seem to be quite a few candidates who are in a position to mount a strong challenge.

These include, among others, several PTI-backed independents in Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Islamabad, some of whom saw comfortable victories turn into overnight defeats. At least one, Salman Akram Raja in Lahore, has already contested his RO's result in court, and others will likely follow suit.

Before things get messier, the ECP should take action. The present CEC had taken strict and principled action over the February 2021 rigging of the Daska by-poll, starting with withholding its result. Similar action is needed right now, especially in constituencies where losing candidates have evidence to make a strong claim.

Moreover, wherever the rules call for it, the ECP must allow a recount. It should also release any information that can help auditors cross-check its results. This is an opportunity for the institution to restore its credibility. With international pressure growing, it must act quickly.

Abdul Moiz Jaferi

There is certainty in the land; a peaceful resignation surrounds the fact that elections have taken place.

When he let the ECP take the PTI's bat away, the chief justice said there was no proof of elections within the party — just as there wasn't any proof of the lack of a level playing field for Feb 8 and just as journalists complaining about FIA harassment hadn't put anything on record — so the court couldn't do anything.

Spell out something clearly, else you won't be taken seriously. But then, you can't really spell out anything unless you have your own private intelligence agency collecting proof for you.

In the Harry Potter series, the wizard Dumbledore had a phoenix — a creature of great power, who would bind itself to a person who had demonstrated extraordinary courage. A fictionist writer expanded upon this concept in an online publication, Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality.

He posited that when someone works towards doing something incredibly courageous, somewhere in the universe their phoenix is born. Sensing this overload, it heads towards the would-be hero to lend them strength. But there is a catch. A phoenix comes but once. Decide against being courageous, and it will go away and never return. You may accomplish much in your lifetime, you may again have cause to exhibit great courage, but squander an opportunity with the phoenix present and it will never entertain you again.

On Saturday, Jan 13, a phoenix appeared briefly on Constitution Avenue with an offer: to lend assistance in doing something incredibly courageous, despite it being against the grain of what you yourself want and believe. Because that takes absolute courage. Yet the phoenix watched for nine hours before it finally winked out. And you must remember that the

phoenix comes but once. Never will it believe in your cause again.

Hate is a powerful feeling, but it is not courage. It has the power to consume both oneself and one's surroundings. It may come about through immediate triggers, such as something a road-rager deliberately ramming his vehicle into another experience in the heat of the moment. Or it can be a product of densely layered dislike and discomfort. But hate is not justice. And it doesn't take a phoenix to recognise the difference.

What allows for all of this to happen again and again? Some blame can be apportioned to our politicians and their inability to reach out to their opponents during cycles of favour and their unwillingness to bury the hatchet or memories of their difficult days. Because this endless cycle of unprovable influence can only be broken if there is a compact among the representatives of the people.

Instead, our politi-

cians prefer to repeat the lives of Sonic the Hedgehog, as if the game was being played by a four-year-old. They collect credibility over a long and arduous journey in opposition, like Sonic collected rings. They then lose it all during their first brush with friction, like Sonic lost his accumulated rings on the first spike he fell on or the first mistake you made. Except Sonic was bound to his fate and the player's skill. Sonic would even gesture to the screen with arms held to his sides as he was losing his rings, as if asking the player why they would do such a thing.

With politicians, however hard, it's always their choice. The public and their voters are the ones asking why they would do such a thing. Hit a spike like Sonic and you're left more vulnerable. The next spike and it's your life. Sonic gets a redo once you turn the console off and then on again. Politicians don't. Yet they keep doing it. Again and again with accumulation and loss.

prolonging the wait for official outcomes. This sudden delay fueled suspicions among the populace, raising concerns of potential electoral rigging or manipulation.

Saving the electoral process

As election day approached, the nation brimmed with anticipation, with citizens eagerly preparing to cast their votes and participate in the democratic process. It was a testament to the enduring commitment of the Pakistani people to democracy and their unwavering belief in the power of their voices to shape the course of their nation. Regrettably, events preceding the elections and unfolding during the results announcement have cast a shadow of doubt on the legitimacy of the entire electoral process.

In the lead-up to the elections, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), one of the nation's prominent political parties, faced significant challenges, including the denial of its iconic bat symbol by the Election Commission (ECP), a decision that was upheld by the Supreme Court upon appeal. This decision, occurring in a country with an estimated 62 per cent illiteracy rate, raised suspicions of attempts to sow confusion among voters and potentially hinder the PTI's electoral success.

Furthermore, PTI members were compelled to contest the elections independently, albeit with PTI support but without official party affiliation. This arrangement implies that even if these members secure votes, they could switch allegiance to other parties without facing significant consequences. In a political landscape prevalent with corruption, this scenario raises concerns about the possibility of independent members forming alliances with rival parties, potentially preventing PTI's path to power despite electoral support.

The obstacles faced by the PTI extended beyond the denial of its electoral symbol and the requirement for members to contest elections independently. Senior PTI figures, including party founder Imran Khan, were arrested, with Khan himself barred from participating in the elections. Furthermore, key PTI members, such as Dr Yasmin Rashid, had to engage in the electoral process while incarcerated.

These actions collectively raise serious doubts regarding the legitimacy of the electoral process, fueling perceptions of premeditated outcomes. The orchestrated series of impediments faced by the PTI not only undermines the principles of democracy but also calls

Again and again letting other people hijack the system in the hope of fixing it by turning it off and on again or by striking the controller.

Who strikes the controller? The 'establishment' is a term used in our country to describe the forces within a country's power elite who band together because of a common interest to endorse and entrench the status quo. We don't have such a creature. What we have is almost its opposite. Powerful individuals who change every few years, upending all the regular status quo forces. We hide our embarrassment of this rule of musical chairs by calling it something which sounds less arbitrary: an establishment.

A supposedly status quo entity is one which becomes a yo-yo at the whim of a single person. When one such person is religious, the country pretends to be pious. When the next such gentleman thinks himself enlightened, the

country's elite bring out the drinks. We also get someone who thinks himself a thinker and then someone who believes he is worthy of thanks and everyone begins to put up banners saying 'thank you'.

Finally, in broader terms, every playground has a bully; but in some places, bullies seem to have a playground. Half of the playground is barren and used to hone their art. The other half has a few swings still left, a patch of grass here and there. Like all things in life, there must be balance here too. But they must be able to rule the playground.

Yet, children also want to go to the playground to play but would not be able to do so. What is a playground without children? What is an election with missing politicians? It is perhaps the same as peace without justice. And as newspaper editor, William Allen White once said: peace without justice is tyranny. -- Courtesy Dawn

Muhammad Mustafa Arif

The election process, which represents the people's collective voice and will, is the cornerstone of democracy. It stands for the essential idea that every person has the right to influence how their community is governed.

Elections that are free, fair, and transparent allow voters to voice their opinions, choose representatives, and hold those in authority responsible.

In anticipation of the new year in 2024, Pakistan stood at the threshold of a significant milestone: the opportunity to shape its governance through democratic elections. After a period of anticipation, the Supreme Court of Pakistan set the date for the elections as the 8th of February, a moment eagerly awaited by the nation. The elections symbolized more than just a routine political event; this was an opportunity to chart the course of the nation's future. Among the myriad of choices, the call for "haqqeqi azadi" resonated deeply with many Pakistanis, finding expression through the support of Imran Khan and his vision.

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support but without official party affiliation. This arrangement implies that even if these members secure votes, they could switch allegiance to other parties without facing significant consequences. In a political landscape prevalent with corruption, this scenario raises concerns about the possibility of independent members forming alliances with rival parties, potentially preventing PTI's path to power despite electoral support.

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Indigenous wisdom

Muhammad Hassan Dajana

As the world struggles with the increasingly severe effects of climate change and experiences rapid disruptions, we must prioritise the issue. The planet and our survival depend on it. It is no longer a matter of whether we should act, but rather how we should respond with all-encompassing, inclusive solutions to minimise and adapt to the effects of climate change, which have dramatically increased in frequency and scale.

There is a rich source of wisdom that is frequently disregarded. This is indigenous knowledge, which refers to the collective knowledge, ideologies, customs, ways of life, and values that have been developed and handed down through the generations through rituals, storytelling, and personal experiences, ensuring their preservation and continuity.

Indigenous communities have long been closely tied to their lands and environments. Their traditional knowledge of local ecosystems, resource management, and sustainable practices enables them to detect subtle variations in weather, seasons, ecological balance, and the behaviour of plants and animals. Collaboration with indigenous communities is essential for re-orienting human-nature interactions and fostering resilience to protect around 80 per cent of the world's remaining biodiversity.

Some successful examples of indigenous wisdom and practices being harnessed for effective climate action and conservation are given here.

In Chitral, groups indigenous to the area have established seed banks to

preserve traditional seed types well-suited to local conditions. In addition to collecting, storing, and distributing indigenous seeds, these seed banks also act as important archives for indigenous knowledge, providing people access to resilient crop varieties that can resist climate shocks, improve their access to food, and ensure their preservation and availability for future generations.

The Burusho people, one of the indigenous groups in the Hunza Valley, use strategies including terracing, tree planting, and organic farming to prevent soil erosion, increase biodiversity, ensure food security, and advance sustainable agriculture. To save endangered species and advance biodiversity preservation, they have also developed community-managed conservation areas. This has resulted in increased water availability, soil fertility, and forest cover while promoting the community's well-being.

In northwest India, indigenous tribes have created intricate knowledge systems to respond to climate change. They have successfully dealt with water-related difficulties by building and safeguarding water-collection systems such as ponds, johads, and nadis that not only collect rainfall but also refill water tables and enhance water balance. The homes in this area are built to survive the harsh climate, facing east to take advantage of the cool morning sunshine and employing cooling building materials. The cultivation of crops like khejri and preference for camel, goat, and sheep rearing over buffalo are examples of agricultural and animal-rearing practices.

In Africa, smallholder farmers have traditionally used indigenous signals to forecast the weather and guide farming decisions. Their decisions regarding agricultural procedures, such as planting time and crop selection, include animal and plant behaviour, weather cues, and human ailments. Indigenous conservation techniques, including intercropping, cover crops, crop rotation, and agroforestry, are successful in boosting agricultural yield, preserving water, minimising erosion, and improving soil health.

Community-managed natural forests (or village common woods) in Bangladesh support regional biodiversity preservation and improve essential community services. The Hawaiian native community's restoration of a sustainable loko ia, or fishpond system, has the possibility of annually producing thousands of pounds of sustainable protein, while reducing coral bleaching, beach erosion, overfishing, and other imbalances in the marine ecosystem.

Finally, it is crucial to acknowledge that indigenous communities are usually marginalised in climate conversations. Due to the uneven distribution of resources and unsustainable land practices, indigenous knowledge is not only lost but the community's adaptive capacity is also diminished.

Peaceful cohabitation with local ecosystems is a sign of the valuable insights they hold. They also provide wise advice, creative solutions, and an extensive viewpoint based on interconnection.

For a sustainable and equitable future, it is crucial to involve indigenous experts in meaningful discussions, incorporate their expertise into policies and action plans, and promote collaboration. - - Courtesy Dawn

into question the fairness and transparency of the electoral landscape in Pakistan.

The return of Nawaz Sharif, who had previously been sentenced to 10 years in prison and disqualified for life from holding public office, coupled with the Supreme Court's decision to lift the lifetime ban on him, added another layer of scepticism. This development raised concerns about a tilt in favour of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to facilitate their return to power. Such actions contribute to a perception of unfairness and undermine public trust in the electoral system.

Despite the challenges and controversies surrounding the electoral process, the people of Pakistan demonstrated remarkable civic engagement by turning out in large numbers to cast their votes, fueled by the hope that their mandates would be respected, and their desired outcomes achieved.

Initial indications suggested a surge in support for independent candidates, with unofficial results reflecting their sweeping victories across the polls. However, as midnight approached, an abrupt halt in the release of results arose,

Marital rape

Sahar Bandial

A recent judgement passed by an additional district and sessions judge in Karachi is being celebrated as recognition of marital rape as a criminal offence under Pakistani law. The court found the accused husband guilty of Section 377 (unnatural offences) of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) for forcefully subjecting his wife to sodomy, and sentenced him to imprisonment for three years and a fine of Rs30,000.

Although the judgement does not strictly qualify as a separate offence defined in Section 375 of the PPC — it is significant in possibly being a first judicial pronouncement in our jurisdiction on the criminal consequence of forced sexual relations between spouses in a marriage. The United Nations Population Fund has reported that around 40 per cent of women in Pakistan are victims of spousal violence. Details on the incidence of marital rape and sexual violence within marriages are, however, little known. Complaints of marital rape are rare; convictions for marital rape — non-existent. This is so, despite the fact that the law provides space for criminal prosecution of marital rape.

Section 375 of the PPC (as amended recently in 2021) defines rape as the penetration of a bodily orifice of a person (who may be a man, woman or transgender) by an object, body part or mouth of another person, in the absence of meaningful consent. The expanded definition of rape now includes sodomy within its ambit.

Prior to 2006, when the offence of rape (zina-bil-jabr) was governed

by the Hudood Ordinances, a husband was exempted from criminal liability for non-consensual sexual intercourse with his wife. The exemption was removed when the offence of rape was re-legislated into the PPC through a criminal law amendment in 2006.

In the case before the judge, the husband could, in principle, have been convicted for rape under Section 375 for his forced act of sodomy with his wife (depending of course on under what section(s) of the PPC the FIR was registered). A conviction under Section 375 would invite graver penalties/punishments; rape is punishable by a maximum sentence of imprisonment for the remainder of a convict's natural life. A conviction under Section 375 would be significant in another aspect as well: criminal culpability would be based on the forceful and non-consensual nature of the sexual encounter between the husband and wife, as opposed to arising out of the act of sodomy (be it consensual or non-consensual), which is per se culpable under Section 377 of the PPC.

It is interesting to note that the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has maintained the marital rape exception in the definition of rape. Exception 2 to the Section 375 of the IPC reads: "Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under 15 years of age, is not rape."

This exception is based on the understanding that a woman upon marriage irrevocably consents to sexual relations with her husband.

The question of constitutionality of the marital rape exception in the IPC is pending before India's supreme court, after having been deter-

mined by the high courts of two states. The exception is being challenged on the ground that it violates women's right to equality by depriving them of the equal protection of the law, amounts to discrimination on the basis of marital status, and in denying women bodily agency and autonomy violates their right to life and liberty. The decision of the Indian supreme court is awaited.

The marital rape exception was also undue in English law through judicial intervention. In 1991, the House of Lords (predecessor of the UK supreme court) held that the marital rape exemption was not a statutory provision but an anachronistic and offensive common law fiction, for which no room exists in modern times where marriage is a partnership of equals.

Many Muslim countries recognise marital rape as a criminal offence, though the exact nomenclature adopted in their laws may be different. For instance, Indonesia's sexual violence law classifies "forcing sexual intercourse... on people who live within the scope of the household" as "sexual violence". Similarly, the definition of "sexual assault" in Article 102 of the Turkish Penal Code for all purposes criminalises rape within a marriage.

Whilst the law recognises and makes provision for marital rape, cultural norms and pressure may in fact be the primary hurdle to aggrieved women seeking protection of the law. Public conversation and awareness-raising on the subject, therefore, are critical, as are legal education and judicial training on the scope of the law governing rape. -- Courtesy Dawn

Punjab Governor says: Supremacy of merit vital to stability of institutions and good governance in country

Independent Report
LAHORE: Chairman Punjab Public Service Commission Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Malik Zafar Iqbal paid a farewell call on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. Secretary Punjab Public Service Commission Afzal Chaudhry was also with him. Governor Punjab congratulated Lieutenant General (ret'd) Malik Zafar Iqbal on completing three years of tenure successfully and appreciated his performance as Chairman Punjab Public Service Commission. During the meeting, Chairman PPSC presented

the annual report of Punjab Punjab Service Commission 2023 to the Punjab Governor. Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that supremacy of merit is vital to the stability of institutions and good governance in the country. He said that the Punjab Public Service Commission is an esteemed institution that is playing a key role in selecting qualified and competent candidates on merit for government jobs. Governor Punjab further said that there is a need to take steps to increase the efficiency and bring improvements in the

institution. He underlined the need to promote information technology in the institution. Chairman Punjab Public Service Commission Lieutenant General (Ret'd) Malik Zafar Iqbal informed the Punjab Governor about the reforms made to improve the institution. He said that for the first time in the history of PPSC, grade four employees have been recruited on merit through written examination and interview. He said that the procedure of a computerized testing system has been devised in the Punjab Public Service Commission, and its trial will be started soon.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi offering Dua after inaugurating Extension & upgradation Project of State of the Art Medicine Warehouse at Gulberg.

Naqvi inaugurates medicine warehouse up-gradation project

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the expansion and up-gradation project of the state-of-the-art Medicine Warehouse at Gurumangal Road, Gulberg here on Monday. During his visit, he inspected the facility and reviewed the process of storing medicines. He expressed his satisfaction over the meticulous attention to international standards in medication storage. Secretary Health provided a comprehensive briefing on the project's expansion and up-gradation, emphasizing the importance of maintaining international standards in medicine storage for safe and timely distribution. The CM commended the performance of Health Secretary and his team, affirming the optimal

utilization of resources for enhancing the healthcare sector. He highlighted the significant results achieved through government initiatives aimed at improving the health sector. Addressing the media, Mohsin Naqvi emphasized a zero-tolerance policy towards incidents akin to May 9, stating preparedness to swiftly address any such occurrences. He encouraged individuals with complaints regarding the Election Commission's procedures to exercise their legal rights and seek redressal through proper channels. The chief minister stressed the importance of maintaining stability for Pakistan's development and the welfare of its citizens, expressing hope for ongoing progress and prosperity under the incoming administration.

Mohsin Naqvi underscored the importance of bureaucratic efficiency, acknowledging the collective effort of his team in achieving success. He highlighted the substantial cost savings anticipated through the establishment of new warehouse, emphasizing the need for robust storage facilities to mitigate risks such as fire incidents witnessed in various hospitals. With the new warehouse boasting 1.740m square feet of space, the province is poised to effectively manage its annual procurement of medicines valued at Rs 40 billion, he added. Provincial Ministers- Dr. Jamal Nasir, Amir Mir, Secretary Health, Secretary Communication and Works, Commissioner Lahore Division, and other officials concerned were also present.



KOTLI: Minister Higher Education Zafar Iqbal Malik is presiding over the meeting held regarding power outages and electricity issues. Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry Haq Nawaz is also present.

PFA launches crackdown on sale of unsafe food

Independent Report
LAHORE: On the directions of Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid, efforts have been stepped up to curb the sale and purchase of unsafe food in Punjab including Lahore. PFA DG Muhammad Asim Javaid said that PFA's enforcement teams inspected 16 breakfast points and 44 milk carrier vehicles in Data Ganj Bakhsh Town and Sargiya, respectively and penalized seven food business operators (FBOs) with a total fine of Rs105,000 and served warning notices to nine eateries for improvement. He said the authority took action against FBOs

for preparing breakfast in rusty vessels, failing to present the necessary records of oil change to the raiding teams and unhygienic working environment. Apart from that, workers of the food points did not have medical certificates, he added. He further said the food safety teams issued notices to nine FBOs for making improvements. Moreover, he said that dairy safety teams examined 44 milk carrier vehicles loaded with more than 44,000 litres of milk. The director general made it clear that compromising the quality of food items won't be tolerated at all, while food points were being closely monitored by the PFA.



KARACHI: Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Chief, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference, at Idara-e-Noor-ul-Haq in Karachi.

Kundi condemns firing on PPP rally

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Central Information Secretary and former deputy speaker of National Assembly Faisal Karim Kundi strongly condemning the incident of firing on the PPP rally have called for the arrest of the attackers at the earliest. In a statement, he said that the tragic incident of firing on the PPP rally in Dera Ismail Khan is deeply regrettable and vowed that the perpetrators of this cowardly act would be brought to justice soon. He said the People's Party would be forced to protest if suspects were not arrested. However, Faisal Karim Kundi said that both

the IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Regional Police Officer (RPO) had assured the immediate arrest of the suspects. He said that opponents were perturbed by the progress of the People's Party and a peaceful rally in the Bhud area of Dera Ismail Khan was targeted when supporters were on their way to congratulate and celebrate the electoral victory of his brother Ahmad Kundi on winning provincial assembly seat during the general elections on Feb 8. During the tragic incident, three friends had been martyred and five wounded in the firing, he said.

Advocate Jalaldeen Soomro shot dead

By Abdul Sami Bhutto
SHIKARPUR: The former General Secretary of District Bar Association Shikarpur and Senior Advocate Jalaldeen Soomro was shot dead in the jurisdiction of New Faujdari Police Station here on Monday. According to initial reports reached here that Senior Advocate Jalaldeen Soomro was gunned down by his brother Athar Ali Soomro, Police added. SSP Shikarpur Dr Muhammad Imran Khan while receiving the

information about the incident directed the ASP City Muhammad Usman Khan to respond the incident immediately and arrest the involved murderer at earliest. Later the big police party led by ASP City Muhammad Usman Khan reached at the spot and collected the evidence and started search of murderer to arrest. Police cordoned the nearby area and started search operations at various places to arrest the involved murderer.

LHC moved for removal of name of Imran Riaz from ECL

LAHORE (Online): Petition seeking removal of name of senior anchor and journalist Imran Riaz from ECL has been filed in Lahore High Court (LHC). Imran Riaz Khan has filed petition through advocate Azhar Siddique in LHC. The petitioner has taken plea in the petition that information is there name of Imran Riaz Khan has been removed from PNIL list. Now his name is being put in ECL or PCL. No FIR is registered against Imran Riaz. Imran Riaz Khan further said putting name in ECL or PCL is violation of constitution. The said act runs contrary to article 15 and 16 of constitution. The petitioner has further requested in the petition if name has been removed from PNIL then court should stop inclusion of the name in other lists.

Two women elected in KP elections

PESHAWAR (APP): Two independent female candidates have emerged victorious in the recent elections, securing general seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Suraya Bibi, contesting on PK-1 provincial assembly seat, clinched victory with an impressive margin, securing 18,914 votes. Her closest competitor, a candidate from JUI-F, trailed behind with 10,533 votes. Similarly, Shandana Gulzar Khan made waves by securing a landslide victory on the National Assembly seat NA-30, garnering a remarkable 78,971 votes. Her nearest rival, representing JUI-F, managed to secure only 20,950 votes.

Man killed, two women injured in bike crash

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Bike rider was killed with two women were injured by hitting with truck coming behind at Mian Wali road near pathan hotel. The rescuer said the motorbike got crashed with the truck was hit with the car first of all which was ahead of it. M. Shakeel, 45, son of Bashir Ahmad, succumbed to head injuries on the spot. His both of legs got multiple fracture as well. The injured including Naseem Akhtar, 42, w/o Shakeel Ahmad, and Shaista, 50, w/o Munawar wounded at knee joint of the left leg and both of legs fractured respectively. The victims were removed to Nishtar Hospital Multan after giving them emergency treatment on the location.



MULTAN: An artisan giving final touch to painting on a stall during last day of the Blue Fair organized by the Women Chamber of Commerce.

Shazia Mari vows to surpass past development records in Sanghar

HYDERABAD (APP): The Pakistan Peoples Party's Central Secretary Information, former Federal minister and successful candidate from Aational Assembly Constituency NA-209 Sanghar I, Shazia Mari has expressed gratitude to the people of her constituency for making her victorious. In a statement issued here on Monday, she said that despite many challenges, people proved their commitment to democracy by supporting the Pakistan Peoples Party on February 8th. She also thanked her

leadership for entrusting her with the ticket for the national assembly. She said this is a big constituency, and her party will continue to serve the people of this constituency. Shazia Mari highlighted the developmental projects undertaken by the Pakistan Peoples Party in the Sanghar district over the past decade and vowed to surpass previous records in terms of developmental work. She said despite various challenges, party workers and the public supported peace and democracy during the General Election 2024.

Nurses plays important role in care, treatment of patients: MS

HYDERABAD (APP): Medical Superintendent of Hyderabad Deputy Commissioner Tariq Qureshi to perform duties at various polling stations during the General Elections 2024 and the staff nurses have performed other duties including polling officers and presiding officers. It is a matter of great pleasure that no complaint of irresponsibility or dereliction of duty has been received from anywhere, which is commendable, he added. Dr. Muneer Ahmed Shaikh appreciated the spirit of patriotism of staff nurses in the recent general election. He said that if the staff of the hospital is ever needed for the sake of the country and for the execution of any national affairs.



HYDERABAD: Inundated road by overflowing sewerage water, creating problems for residents and commuters, showing negligence of concerned authorities, at Latifabad No.05 in Hyderabad.

PML-N to announce PM candidate after consensus with allies: Attaullah Tarar

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Deputy Secretary General Attaullah Tarar said that his party's candidate for the prime minister slot will be announced after a complete consensus with allied parties. Addressing a press conference at the party secretariat in Model Town on Monday, he said that the party was in a position to form a government in Punjab as it had attained a simple majority in the province. The PML-N leader said that discussions were underway with the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement - Pakistan (MQM-P) for the Centre. Efforts are underway to induct

more newly elected members in the party, he mentioned. Attaullah Tarar said that a candidate for premiership would be announced after a proper consensus of all political allies. He said that PML-N was going to form a government in Punjab and he congratulated all PML-N workers, elected members and leaders. About election results, he emphasized that certain elements had prematurely celebrated their triumph based on the initial announcement of a 25 percent result. However, when the comprehensive results were revealed, these elements began alleging electoral malpractice and raised concerns about rigging, he added.



LAHORE: Chairman Punjab Public Service Commission Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Malik Zafar Iqbal presenting Annual Report 2023 to Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

GIKI hosts conference on climate change, emerging trends

PESHAWAR (APP): The 1st International Conference on Climate Change and Emerging Trends in Civil Engineering (CCETC-2024) began in Ghulam Ishaq Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology on Monday. The conference marked an important gathering where experts from around the world participated to talk about climate change in the context of Civil Engineering. The event brought together scholars, researchers, industry leaders, and policymakers to discuss the challenges posed by climate change in civil engineering. The Executive Director of the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Sciences and Technology in Pakistan (SOPREST) Shakil Durrani was the chief guest of the conference whereas Vice Chancellor of Mehran University of Engineering

and Technology, Jamshoro Prof. Dr. Tauha Hussain Ali and Vice Chancellor, Karakoram International University Prof. Dr. Atta Ullah Shah were the guests of honor. The inaugural day featured keynote speeches, panel discussions, workshops, and setting the stage for important knowledge-sharing sessions. The speakers talked about the urgency of civil engineering to respond the climate change challenges and stressed the need for new and innovative solutions to protect the environment for sustainable development. Shakil Durrani emphasized the harmony to make engineering solutions more climate-friendly. The Rector of GIK Prof. Dr. Faisal Ahmad Khalid highlighted the significance of the conference in addressing climate change challenges.



PESHAWAR: Supporters of Pakistani former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party, the PTI, block the Peshawar-Islamabad motorway as part of their protest against the results of the general election, in Peshawar.

Woman dies, three injured in separate accidents in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): A woman lost her life while a man and his daughter injured in two separate road accidents in Hala Naka and Qasimabad areas here on Monday. According to the Hatri police station, a truck hit a motorbike in Hala Naka and ran over the woman, who was riding on the pillion seat. The deceased identified as 40 years old Nusrat Sajjad Kaloi, a resident of GOR Colony. The police impounded the vehicle but the driver managed to escape. In another incident, in the limits of GOR police station a car struck a motorbike on Sindh Museum road, leaving a man and his daughter wounded. Muhammad Imran Lakhani and his daughter Noor were heading towards their residence after returning from the school when they met the accident.

AJK police to be modernized with latest technology

MIRPUR-AJK (APP): The Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) police force is undergoing a major modernization drive, with the introduction of the latest technology and equipment, on Monday. According to AJK Police Spokesperson, This move is aimed at improving the police force's performance and ensuring the safety and security of the people of AJK. In a recent development, the AJK police have established a Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) to combat terrorism and other threats to security. The CTD will be responsible for gathering intelligence, investigating terrorist incidents, and apprehending

suspects. The AJK police are also in the process of establishing a special protection unit to provide security to foreign engineers working on hydel power projects in the region. In addition to these measures, the AJK police are also upgrading its infrastructure and training facilities. The force is building a new, state-of-the-art police station in Mirpur, and is also upgrading its investigative center in Arja. The AJK police chief, Dr. Sohaib Tajik, has said that the reforms being introduced are aimed at making the police force more responsive to the needs of the people.

Asian markets mixed ahead of US inflation data

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Markets were mixed in Asia on Monday in holiday-thinned trade as investors look ahead to the release of crucial US inflation data due this week.

Another record close for the S&P 500 in New York did little to inspire buying on a day when most of the region is closed for the Lunar New Year break. Wall Street welcomed revised data showing the US consumer price index (CPI) came down on-month in December.

That added to optimism that the Federal Reserve is on course to get inflation under control, though observers were sceptical as to whether officials will cut interest rates as early as markets expect.

Comments from Fed officials in recent weeks have pushed back against market bets on a series of cuts this year starting in March, with commentators now tipping a first move in May.

Still, sentiment was helped by the belief that while rates remain elevated, the world's top economy is still strong, with most experts hopeful it will not drop into recession, as had been feared last year.

Eyes are now on the release of January CPI figures, which are forecast to show another slowdown.

"High inflation rarely has been tamed without precipitating a recession," said Ed Yardeni of Yardeni Research Inc.

"The Fed has steered

inflation down toward its two percent target, while allowing the US economy to fly, avoiding a hard landing."

The S&P 500 finished above 5,000 points for the first time, marking its 10th all-time high this year, boosted by surges in tech titans including Amazon, Apple and Microsoft.

But Asian investors were a little less enthusiastic, with Sydney, Bangkok, Mumbai and Wellington falling while Jakarta and Manila edged up.

Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Taipei, Seoul, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur were all closed for holidays. Oil prices dipped after Friday's gains fuelled by geopolitical worries linked to the Middle East crisis.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Muhammad Sohail Rajput, Board of Investment, meeting with Mr. K. K. Ahsan Wagan Ambassador Designate to Turkmenistan at Prime Minister's office, Board of Investment.

SECP all set to launch "eZfile", a new corporate registry

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) is all set to launch a new corporate registry, "eZfile," a more sophisticated, advanced, and user-friendly online portal for company registration and post-incorporation filings.

The new corporate registry is envisioned in SECP's digital transformation program, namely LEAP—Leading Efficiency through Automation Process, launched to position SECP as a role-model regulator through end-to-end

automation of its business processes.

"eZfile," a modern corporate registry with a user-friendly interface and several advanced features, is ready to replace the SECP's existing online filing system, "eServices". The "eZfile" portal offers comprehensive ease to its users while doing incorporation, filing statutory returns through built-in checks, and pop-up guidance messages.

The SECP has considerably simplified the regulatory framework by reviewing existing regulations and merging

multiple forms, reducing the number of filling forms from 75 to 28, eliminating duplication, and ensuring clarity.

The consolidated single set "Companies Regulations 2024" is issued, covering the regulations for company incorporation, post-incorporation compliance and reporting, issuance of license under Section 42 of the Companies Act, 2017, further issue of share capital, group registration, easy exit of companies, buyback of shares, registration of intermediaries, etc.

Pak, Iraq explore avenues to increase cooperation in agriculture sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iraq on Monday discussed ways and means to enhance bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture, with a special focus on research and development.

The discussion came during a meeting between Pakistan's Ambassador to Iraq Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed and Iraq's Minister for Agriculture Abbas Al Maliki, Pakistan's

Embassy in Iraq posted on X.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Ali Najafi son of Grand Ayatullah Bashir Hussain Najafi called on Ambassador Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed.

During the meeting, they discussed issues pertaining to Pakistanis residing in Najaf and Karbala, as well as ways and means of facilitating Pakistani Zaireen.

Domestic gold rates remain unchanged

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold remained unchanged at Rs.214,300 in the local market on Monday, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat and 10 gram 22 karat gold remained stagnant at Rs.183,728 and Rs.168,416 respectively whereas per tola and ten gram silver was trade at existing rates of Rs.2,600 and 2,229.08 respectively.



KARACHI: Stockbrokers monitor the share prices during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi.

UAF inks MoU with HBL Zarai Service Limited

FAISALABAD (APP): HBL Zarai Services Limited and the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) have signed an agreement to enter a strategic collaboration to bridge the gap between industry and academia.

The MoU signing ceremony was attended by UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan, President & CEO - HBL Muhammad Aurangzeb and CEO - HBL Zarai Services Amer Aziz along with other senior members from UAF, HBL and HBL Zarai Services.

UAF spokesman said here on Monday that under the agreement, HBL Zarai Services will develop Farm Research & Excellence Centers across the Punjab

in collaboration with the University of Agriculture Faisalabad by integrating the concept of HBL Zarai Dera to promote sustainable agriculture. This strategic collaboration aims to establish "Farm Research & Excellence Centers" and integrate these centers.

The joint efforts will involve cutting-edge research, sustainable farming methods, increasing farm productivity to bring yields to global benchmarks, market development, and infrastructure support for farming communities.

Additionally, the collaboration aims to bridge the academia-industry gap.

Rupee sheds 04 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Monday weakened by 04 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.32 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.28.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 280 and Rs 282, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 78 paise to close at Rs301.64 against the last day's closing of Rs300.86, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen gained 01 paise to close at Rs1.87, whereas an increase of 86 paise.



MULTAN: A visitor taking keen interest in displayed stuff on a stall during the last day of the Blue Fair organized by the Women Chamber of Commerce.

FPCCI congratulates Mirza Ikhtiar on winning his NA seat of NA-241

Independent Report

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has congratulated Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig on winning his national assembly seat of NA-241; and, pinned his hopes in his leadership skills to facilitate business, industry and trade community of Pakistan through advocating for enabling, conducive business and economic policies from the august platform of National Assembly of Pakistan.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh added that Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig is not only a highly-respected former Senior Vice President of FPCCI; but, also a seasoned and accomplished governance leader as he has previously served as Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Textiles. Furthermore, he has been active in social, philanthropic, economic and political circles for the past many decades.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh proposed that the new government should

capitalize on his expertise and network in export markets and diplomatic circles. It is a testimony of his diplomatic credentials that he is an Honorary Consul General of Yemen in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has also conferred upon him the prestigious civil awards of Sitara-e-Imtiaz & Tamgha-e-Imtiaz.

Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, maintained that it is encouraging to have a true representative of trade & industry in the legislative, policymaking and diplomatic circles. He knows the issues affecting the business community inside-out; and, will be a strong and effective voice in the National Assembly of Pakistan.

Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon highlighted that the election of Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig will facilitate the representation of trade and industry in the government setup at this crucial juncture in Pakistan's economic history.



LAHORE: FPCCI and Lahore Chamber's Standing Committee for Machinery Manufacturers and importers signed an important memorandum of understanding with the world-renowned company MEF Machine to ensure the exchange of modern technology, cooperation on mutual and commercial issues.

RCCI hopes new government to bring economic stability

RAWALPINDI (INP): President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Saqib Rafiq, on Monday expressed hope that the newly elected government would work for the improvement of the economy.

In a statement issued here, he said that a coalition or national government would be formed through consensus, which will restore the confidence of investors.

He said that Pakistan was facing many challenges including the IMF program while 40 percent of the population lived below the poverty line and inflation had skyrocketed to more than 30 percent.

Saqib Rafiq demanded that the new government should consult with the stakeholders to formulate a medium and long-term

economic plan and continuity of policies.

He said "We hope that the new government will take immediate steps to solve the problems of the business community; the country has to facilitate business to move on the path of development and prosperity."

The scope of business facilitation centers (BFC) should be spread across the country, he added.

Saqib said that the cost of doing business had increased manifold which needed to be addressed and the prices of electricity, gas and petroleum products have to be reduced.

Regional trade should be promoted, and non-traditional sectors such as IT, gems and jewelry, marble, poultry, tourism and service sectors should be given preferential treatment, he urged.



GILGIT: People busy in selecting and purchasing second hand jackets from the roadside vendor.

Services' exports earn \$3.76b for Pakistan in 1st half

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned \$3,765.97 million by exporting various services during the first half of the current fiscal year (2023-24), Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The export of services during the same period of last year was recorded at \$3,870.32 million, showing a decline of 2.70 percent during the first six months of the current fiscal year.

The services' imports into the country increased by 25.50 percent by going up from \$4,140.42 million last year to \$5,196.02 million during the first six months of current fiscal year.

Based on the figures, the services' trade deficit widened by 429.45 percent during the period under review by going up from \$270.10 million last year to \$1,430.06 million this year.

on year (YoY) basis, the services' exports from the country decreased by 6.93 percent by going down from \$781.09 million in December 2022 to \$726.94 million during December 2023.

The imports went up by 20.14 percent by growing from \$734.12 million to \$881.93 million, according to PBS data.

On month on month (MoM) basis, the services exports increased by 15.20 percent in December 2023 when compared to exports of \$631.03 million in November 2023.

The imports on MoM basis also increased by 2.90 percent during the month under review when compared to imports of \$857.04 million in November 2023.

It is pertinent to mention here that the merchandise exports from the country.



LAHORE: President LCCI Kashif Anwar presenting shield to Director Pakistan Stock Exchange Ahmed Chenai during awareness campaign.

ICCI, NAVTTC join hands to produce skilled manpower for the industry

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairperson, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) Ms Gulmina Bilal along with her team on Monday visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and discussed collaboration with the Chamber to produce skilled manpower for the local industry.

She agreed with the proposal of Acting President ICCI for formation of an Advisory Council giving representation to major stakeholders and said that its modalities will be further discussed with ICCI, said a news release.

NAVTTC is ready to open its Facilitation Desk in ICCI to know about the demand of industry for skilled manpower and provide training accordingly, she added.

She said that ICCI should cooperate in the placement of 20-23 trained people as interns in the industry. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Acting President, ICCI said that the role of NAVTTC is important for improving

the industrial growth. He said that NAVTTC should form an Advisory Board representing all major industries to meet the skilled manpower needs of various industries.

He said that all training programs should be developed in consultation with the stakeholders to achieve win-win results. He assured that ICCI would cooperate in promoting linkages between NAVTTC and local industry to produce needed manpower for the industrial sector.

Both sides also discussed potential areas of cooperation for the betterment of local industry. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan stressed for the skilled development of women for various industries including pharmaceuticals for their economic empowerment.

Mian Akram Farid, former President ICCI said that ICCI has already worked with NAVTTC on various projects and it would like to further collaborate with it to produce skilled manpower.



MULTAN: Traders displaying tomatoes bags for selling to vendors at Vegetable Market.

KU, ABM inks MoU to institutionalize Biorisk management practices

KARACHI (APP): The University of Karachi and the Association for Biorisk Management-Pakistan signed the memorandum of understanding to launch a collaborative effort for implementing the Pakistan Biorisk Management (PBMP) Program to control zoonotic pathogens by introducing and strengthening biosafety and biosecurity practices in the biological laboratories of the University of Karachi.

KU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi and the Executive Director of ABM-Pakistan Dr Asghar Ali inked the MoU documents during a ceremony at the conference room of the KU Dr A. Q. Khan Institute of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (KIBGE), said a spokesperson of the KU on Monday. The Program Director and Health Security Partners Dr Javed Khan, the President of Pakistan Biological Safety Association Professor Dr

Saeed Khan, KIBGE faculty and chairpersons of several departments of the University of Karachi were also in attendance. As per the MoU, the KU and the ABM—a non-governmental organizations stationed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa—agreed to institutionalize Biorisk management practices in priority labs across the country.

The program aims to control zoonotic pathogens by introducing and strengthening biosafety and biosecurity practices in existing laboratories in AZK, KPK, Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan. Under this program, the ABM will work with laboratories within veterinary hospitals and medical facilities as well as research centers and universities that deal with pathogens and toxins.

According to the MoU, the ABM will provide regular technical support to the laboratory regarding biosafety and biosecurity.

Workers' remittances record \$2.4 bn inflow in January

ISLAMABAD (APP): The overseas workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2.4 billion during January 2024, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday said.

In terms of growth, during the month under review, remittances increased by 0.6 per cent on month-on-month basis and 26.2 per cent on year-on-year basis.

Workers' remittances inflow of US\$15.8 billion has been recorded during the first seven months of the fiscal year 2023-24.

Remittances inflows during January 2024 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$587.3 million), United Arab Emirates (\$407.6 million), United Kingdom (\$362.1 million) and United States of America (\$283.4 million).

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity reported at Port Qasim where three ships namely, MSC Nora-III, Lady Dimine and Al-Yamamah carrying container, wheat and gas oil, berthed at container terminal. Multi purpose terminal and oil terminal respectively on 11th February, 2024.

Meanwhile two more ships, MSC Spring-III and Haj Mohammad scheduled to load/offload containers and cement, are also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today 12th February 2024.

A total of eleven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, MSC Nor-III, Maersk Boston and Young Sheng Guoji are left the port on today morning and six more ships, Bilbao Knutsen, Flaminia, PGC Patreas, Mirela, Arpeggio and Al-Yamamah are expected to sail on same day. Cargo volume of 129,280 tonnes, comprising 71,497 tonnes imports cargo and 57,783 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,871 containers (167 TEUs Imports and 2,704 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

SBP revokes exchange companies' licenses

ISLAMABAD (APP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday revoked the authorization/license of M/s. PBS Exchange Company (Pvt.) Limited on account of contraventions of the relevant laws and regulations.

According to SBP news statement, the aforesaid exchange company, including its head office and outlets can no longer undertake any kind of foreign exchange related business activity.

Israel frees two hostages, Gaza officials say 67 killed in assault

Monitoring Desk

DOHA: Israel freed two Israeli-Argentine hostages held by Hamas in Rafah on Monday in a ferocious rescue operation which killed 67 Palestinians in the southern Gaza city where about one million civilians have sought refuge from months of bombardments. The mission by the Israeli military, the Shin Bet security service and a special police unit, freed Fernando Simon Marman, 60, and Louis Hare, 70, the military said. They were among 250 people seized during the Oct. 7 raid by Hamas militants that triggered Israel's war on Gaza. More than four

months on, much of the densely-populated strip of land on the Mediterranean is in ruins, with 28,340 Palestinians dead and 67,984 wounded, according to Gaza health officials, with many others believed to be buried under rubble. The Israeli military says 31 hostages have died in that time, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday's rescue showed that military pressure should continue and he brushed aside international alarm at its plans for a ground assault on Rafah. "Fernando and Louis, welcome home," he said, saluting the Israeli forces who rescued them. "Only

continued military pressure, until total victory, will bring about the release of all of our hostages." The Gaza health ministry said 67 Palestinians had been killed overnight and the number could rise as rescue operations were under way. A Reuters journalist at the scene saw a vast area of rubble where buildings, including a mosque, had been destroyed. Israel says many of those killed are militants; the Gaza ministry says 70% are civilians. "I've been collecting my family's body parts since the morning," said Ibrahim Hassouna, as a woman knelt over the body of a young child nearby.



Palestinians gather at the site of an Israeli strike on a house, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

US defence chief Lloyd Austin 'admitted to critical care unit': Pentagon

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin has been admitted to the critical care unit as he undergoes treatment for a bladder issue, the Pentagon said late on Sunday, in a statement citing his doctors. "Tonight, after a series of tests and evaluations, the secretary was admitted into the critical care unit at Walter Reed National Military Medical Centre for supportive care and close monitoring," the statement read. Austin's hospitalisation comes weeks after it emerged that the 70-year-old had kept previous hospital stays secret and had not immediately informed US President Joe Biden of a cancer diagnosis, sparking criticism as the United States faces crises in the Middle East and Ukraine. Austin effectively vanished from the public

eye for treatment for prostate cancer in December and again in January after suffering complications from the procedure. This time, the public was alerted around two hours after he was sent to the hospital on Sunday afternoon, and Deputy Secretary of Defence Kathleen Hicks "assumed the functions and duties" of defence chief just before 5pm (2200 GMT), according to Pentagon spokesperson Pat Ryder. "At this time, it is not clear how long Secretary Austin will remain hospitalised," added the latest statement, attributed to Dr John Maddox and Dr Gregory Chesnut of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Centre in Maryland. "The current bladder issue is not expected to change his anticipated full recovery. His cancer prognosis remains excellent," it said.

Russia slaps sanctions on British officials

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia on Monday imposed sanctions on 18 British citizens including several top academics and Russia experts for what Moscow said was an attempt to demonise Russia and fan the war in Ukraine. "We are forced to state that Russophobic charged British representatives do not shy away from trying to discredit the constitutional system and socio-political processes in our country," Russia's foreign ministry said. "The so-called brain trusts operating based on the largest British and Western educational institutions make a significant contribution to the subversive work of London in the Russian direction." Personal sanctions were announced against British Deputy Defence Minister James Cartledge, Deputy National Security Adviser Sarah MacIntosh and Director of Submarines Simon Asquith. Others targeted included Stuart Peach, the British prime minister's special envoy to the Western Balkans.

Finland should stay calm amid Trump NATO rhetoric

Monitoring Desk

HELSINKI: Finland's president-elect Alexander Stubb said on Monday his country should remain calm and focus on its NATO membership despite former US President Donald Trump's recent critical comments on the military alliance. Trump, the front-runner to become the Republican candidate in November's US presidential election, said last week he would not want to protect NATO members from a future attack by Russia if those countries' contributions to NATO were lagging. "US election campaigns are very different from Finnish elections, and the rhetoric used is quite a lot stronger... I think at this stage it is best to remain calm and focus on building our NATO membership," Stubb told a press conference. Finland, which won admission to NATO in April last year in response to neighbour Russia's invasion

of Ukraine, spends more on defence than the target of 2% of gross domestic product agreed by NATO member states, Stubb added. Kaja Kallias, the prime minister of Finland's neighbouring NATO ally Estonia, said on Monday that Trump's comments should be a wake-up call for allies to spend more on defence. Stubb said he wanted to ensure Finland will have a decisive role in NATO. "We want to be in the core of decision-making, sit around the tables where decisions are made," he said. In a historic security policy U-turn after decades of military non-alignment, Finland last year became NATO's 31st member, seeking better protection against any Russian threat. Stubb, who will take office on March 1, is pro-European and a strong supporter of Ukraine who has taken a tough stance towards Russia, with which Finland shares a long border.

Poland to make quality checks on all grain shipments from Ukraine, minister says

Monitoring Desk

WARSAW: Poland plans to start quality checks on all grain shipments from Ukraine, Deputy Agriculture Minister Michal Kolodziejczak said on Monday as Polish farmers continued nationwide protests against EU policies, including allowing cheap grain imports from Ukraine. Farmers started blocking roads and border crossings with Ukraine on Friday, kicking off a month-long general strike to protest against EU policies and a lack of government action to protect their livelihoods. Representatives of Poland's new pro-European government have said they understand the challenges farmers are facing and that help for Ukraine in its fight against Russia's invasion could not come at the expense of Polish farmers.



French President Emmanuel Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk deliver a statement to the media as part of their meeting at Elysee Palace, Paris, France.

Iran calls for expulsion of Israel from UN

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iran marked 45 years since its Islamic Revolution with a ceremony on Sunday in which President Ebrahim Raisi condemned arch foe Israel over the Gaza attack and demanded it be expelled from the United Nations. Since Iran's 1979 revolution that overthrew the US-backed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the region's main power has had deeply hostile relations with Israel, the United States and Britain. Tensions have spiralled further since the bloodiest ever Gaza unrest erupted on Oct 7. Support for the Palestinian cause and harsh criticism of the United States — often dubbed the "Great Satan" in Iran — and Israel dominated ceremonies marking the anniversary. In Tehran, Raisi accused the "Zionist entity", Iran's term for Israel, of committing "genocide" in Gaza with the support of the United States and other Western countries. Supporters chanted "Down with the United States", "Down with Israel" and "Down with the United Kingdom" at the square, where Iranian-made missiles and other military hardware were on display.

Philippines landslide toll jumps to 54

Monitoring Desk

MANILA: The death toll from a massive Philippine landslide near a gold mine abruptly rose to 54, with the recovery of 19 more bodies from beneath the rubble in the southern mountain village of Masara on Sunday, local officials said. Sixty-three other miners and residents still missing, said the municipality of Maco, and provincial disaster official Randy Loy. The landslide buried a bus terminal for employees of a gold mining firm and 55 nearby houses on Tuesday night, leaving 35 people dead and 32 others injured.

Four Emirati soldiers, Bahraini officer killed in Somalia attack

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Four Emirati soldiers and a Bahraini officer were killed following an attack in Somalia, where they were training the Somali national army, the United Arab Emirates announced. The soldiers were "exposed to a terrorist act" while "performing their work duties in training and qualifying the Somali Armed Forces", the UAE's defence ministry said in a statement on Saturday, adding that three Emirati soldiers and a Bahraini officer were killed. A fourth Emirati soldier, who was among two injured in the attack, "passed away upon arrival" in the UAE on Sunday, the official WAM news agency said, raising the overall death toll. The corpses arrived in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi on board a military aircraft, according to WAM, which carried footage of three coffins draped in Emirati flags being carried on a red carpet across the tarmac during a military ceremony. The UAE "continues to coordinate and cooperate with the Somali government in investigating the sinful terrorist act", the defence ministry statement said.

Body of Gaza girl trapped under Israeli fire found after 12 days

Monitoring Desk

GAZA (INP): Relatives found the body of a six-year-old Palestinian girl who had begged Gaza rescuers to send help after being trapped by Israeli military fire, along with the bodies of five of her family members and two ambulance workers who had gone to save her. The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) accused Israel of deliberately targeting the ambulance it sent to rescue Hind Rajab after she had spent hours on the phone to dispatchers begging for help with the sound of shooting echoing around.



ABU DHABI: UAE military personnel carry three coffins of military personnel killed in Somalia, as they march on a red carpet laid out on an airfield.

Three-way race: Indonesia's presidential candidates

Monitoring Desk

JAKARTA: Indonesia's presidential election will be held on Feb 14, with three candidates battling to lead Southeast Asia's biggest economy and the third-largest democracy in the world. The relocation of the archipelago's capital from Jakarta to Nusantara on Borneo island and the fight against corruption are two key issues to succeed President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo after a decade in power. Here are the candidates: Subianto, 72, of the Advanced Indonesia Coalition is the frontrunner in the contest with polls projecting he will win a majority. He currently serves as defence minister after losing to Widodo in the 2014 and 2019 elections. Schooled internationally, the defence chief is a retired military general who was fired in 1998 for allegedly ordering the kidnapping of tens of pro-democracy activists in unrest following the fall of dictator Suharto. Together with President Widodo's 36-year-old son Gibran Rakabuming Raka as his vice presidential candidate, Subianto has been outspoken about carrying on the incumbent leader's policies.

Kremlin denies its troops use Elon Musk's Starlink

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Monday that Elon Musk's Starlink satellite internet system was neither certified for use in, nor officially supplied to, Russia, and therefore could not be used. Ukraine, which has used Starlink for military communications throughout its conflict with Russia, said on Sunday that Russian troops were using Starlink in parts of Ukraine they control. In a call with reporters, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "This is not a certified system with us; accordingly, it cannot be officially supplied here and is not officially supplied."

Qatar frees eight Indians months after dropping death sentences

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI (INP): Qatar has released eight Indian ex-naval officers after dropping their death sentences, India's foreign ministry said on Monday, crediting the Qatari emir for the decision more than 18 months after their arrest challenged diplomatic ties. The men were charged with spying for Israel, according to sources, though India and Qatar did not confirm the charges. Their death sentences, handed down in October, were dropped in December. India said seven of these officers have returned back to the country. New Delhi engaged in talks for months with Qatar after the men were arrested in August 2022 and the case challenged ties with Doha, a crucial natural gas supplier to India, one of the world's top energy importers. "We appreciate the decision by the Amir of the State of Qatar to enable the release and homecoming of these nationals," the ministry said.

Second protest death deepens Senegal crisis

Monitoring Desk

DAKAR: Senegal's political crisis deepened as a second person died on Saturday in increasingly violent protests against President Macky Sall's decision to postpone upcoming presidential elections. A 23-year-old man died after being shot during clashes in the capital Dakar, while a 22-year-old student died on Friday in the northern town of Saint-Louis in still uncertain circumstances.

Rafah incursion will affect prisoner swap talks, Hamas warns

Monitoring Desk

GAZA STRIP: The threat of an Israeli incursion into Gaza's southernmost town of Rafah persisted on Sunday, but Hamas warned Tel Aviv that such an offensive into the city, crowded with displaced Palestinians, would threaten talks about the release of prisoners. Though Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised "safe passage" to civilians displaced in Rafah, a leader in the Palestinian group told AFP, "Any attack by the occupation army on the city of Rafah would undermine the exchange negotiations". In an interview, Mr Netanyahu reiterated his intention to extend Israel's military operation against Hamas into Rafah. Despite international alarm over the potential for carnage in a place crammed with more than half of the Gaza Strip's 2.4 million people, he told ABC News: "We're going to do it." "We're going to do it while providing safe passage for the civilian population so they can leave," he said. Mr Netanyahu's announcement set off a chorus of concern from world leaders. "The people in Gaza cannot disappear into thin air," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock wrote on social media platform X, adding that an Israeli offensive on Rafah would be a "humanitarian catastrophe in the making." Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry warned on Saturday of "very serious repercussions of storming and targeting" Rafah and called for an urgent UN Security Council meeting, while UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron said he is "deeply concerned" about the prospective offensive.

US Senate forges ahead on Ukraine, Israel aid as 'Putin is watching'

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The US Senate on Monday will attempt to steer a \$95.34 billion package containing aid for Ukraine and Israel to passage this week following months of delays, even as it lacked any guarantee that the House of Representatives will support the measure. On Sunday, the bill got a boost when the Senate voted 67-27 to move it past an important procedural hurdle. Also over the weekend, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer set a course for passage by Wednesday. On Monday, the Senate is expected to cast a procedural vote that, if successful, would keep the bill moving forward. Having kept senators working during rare back-to-back Saturday and Sunday sessions, Schumer wrapped up for the night saying, "Our friends abroad are watching closely how we vote in the upcoming days. Ukrainian fighters are watching and you can be sure (Russian President) Vladimir Putin is watching the Senate, too." Since last August, Democratic President Joe Biden has been urging Congress to hurry new aid to Ukraine. Following Hamas' Oct 7 attack on Israel he also requested funds for the US ally along with humanitarian aid for Palestinians in Gaza. Congress' haltingly slow response to Biden's call comes as Ukrainian officials have warned of weapons shortages at a time when Russia is pressing ahead with renewed attacks. "There's no good reason to delay the security and humanitarian assistance... any longer," Senate Foreign Committee member Brian Schatz, a Democrat, said during Sunday's debate of the bill. "Ukraine is running dangerously low on munitions on the eve of the second anniversary of Putin's invasion," added Schatz.

Yemen's Houthis target cargo ship in Red Sea

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis said on Monday they had targeted a cargo ship in the Red Sea, the latest such strike since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. The Houthi identified the vessel as the Star Iris. The group's military spokesman, Yahya Saree, said in a televised statement the ship was American but maritime-shipping trackers said the Marshall Islands-flagged ship was Greek-owned. The British maritime security firm Ambrey and the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said earlier on Monday that a Marshall Islands-flagged, Greece-owned bulk carrier had been targeted by missiles in two incidents while passing through the Bab al-Mandab Strait. The bulk carrier was reportedly hit and suffered damage to its starboard side, Ambrey said. Houthi militants in Yemen control the country's most populous regions, and have repeatedly launched drones and missiles against international commercial shipping since mid-November. They say the attacks are a response to Israel's military actions in Gaza and that they are carried out in sympathy with the Palestinian group Hamas. The attacks have prompted several companies to halt Red Sea journeys and opt for a longer and more expensive route around Africa. Ambrey reported that the carrier had sighted a projectile near the vessel 23 nautical miles (43km) northeast of Djibouti's Khor Angar and 40 nautical miles southwest of Yemen's Red Sea port city of Mokha. Ambrey said the bulk carrier was reportedly headed to Bandar Imam Khomeini, a city in Iran. "The group owner and operator regularly trade bulk cargo with Iran, so this was assessed to be the likely destination," the firm added.

Indian farmers ready for mass protests over crop prices

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Indian police on Monday blocked roads to halt farmers who were marching to New Delhi to press for the better crop prices promised to them in 2021 when thousands of growers camped out on major highways leading to the country's capital. Some government ministers are expected to meet farm union leaders on Monday to avoid a repeat of the year-long protest, which was aimed at forcing the government to repeal farm laws designed to deregulate vast agricultural markets. The march comes just months before national elections in India, in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi is widely expected to win a third term. India's millions of farmers form an influential voting bloc and ruling parties try to keep growers on their side. Television footage showed farmers in tractors driving towards Delhi from the northern Indian breadbasket states of Punjab and Haryana, and barriers including barbed wire fencing and cement blocks put up on the edges of the city to stop them. Police also issued orders prohibiting public gatherings in Delhi. The farmers have come out after a call by union leaders to demand higher support or guaranteed prices for their produce and press the government to meet its promise to double farmers' income. "We will move peacefully and our objective is that the government listen to our demands," Sarvan Singh Pandher, general secretary of Punjab Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, told news agency ANI. The government announces support prices for more than 20 crops each year to set a benchmark, but state agencies buy only rice and wheat at the support level, which benefits only about 6 per cent of farmers who raise those two crops.



TEHRAN: Iranians attend the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

Munir Akram says: Pakistan makes 'significant progress' towards polio elimination by 2026

UNITED NATIONS (APP): A senior Pakistani diplomat has told UNICEF's Executive Board that Pakistan has made "significant progress" towards complete eradication of polio, despite challenges.

"We remain committed to the complete eradication of polio within the set timeline for its elimination by 2026," Ambassador Munir Akram said during the Board's special session on Polio eradication.

The Executive Board reviews UNICEF activities and approves its policies, country programmes and budgets. It comprises 36 members, representing the five regional groups of member states at the United Nations. Its work is coordinated by the Bureau, comprising the President and four Vice-Presidents, each officer representing one of the five regional groups.

In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy pointed out that the unprecedented 2022 floods in Pakistan had adversely affected its polio vaccination drives. Despite that, he added, due to the concerted efforts by the government and our global partners, only 6 cases of polio were detected last year. This year, Ambassador Akram said the Pakistani government has set a target to immunize 45 million children, and the caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, had already kick-started this campaign.

The Pakistani envoy said dedicated efforts will be made to achieve that target. To do so, he said, Pakistan will require technical and financial cooperation from all its relevant global partners, adding that \$ 205 million was required for polio programmes in 2024, but noted there was a shortfall of \$95 million.

Ambassador Akram urged all donors and partners to contribute generously to the polio eradication efforts and ensure that children were vaccinated.

"We have entered the final stages in the fight against polio," he told delegates. "Urgent and bold actions are needed to eradicate polio by 2026. After smallpox, polio can be the second disease to be eradicated."

Opening the discussion, UNICEF's Executive Director, Catherine Russel, declared that Polio eradication in the world was "finally within reach."

"Today," they said, "the wild poliovirus is confined to a few districts in Afghanistan and Pakistan", marking the most significant progress against the disease since the inception of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988.

"We have come this far thanks to the heroic efforts of community health workers reaching children with vaccines ... government leadership.



A delegation of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, comprising Mr. Raouf Hassan and Mr. Umair Niazi, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

Aneeq Ahmed says: Hajj pilgrims would be provided exemplary facilities this year

HYDERABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious affairs and interfaith harmony Aneeq Ahmed has said that this year Hajj expense had been reduced from 1175000 Rs. to 1075000 Rs. to facilitate the intending Haj pilgrims.

He expressed these views while addressing the First Hajj training programme organized by the Directorate of Haj Karachi here on Monday.

Federal Minister said that this Hajj was taking place in our interim setup so we will try to ensure provision of best facilities to Hajj pilgrims which were not provided in the past.

He said that year aspirant pilgrims who were embarking for performing Hajj were fortunate and guests of Almighty Allah.

He said that the Ministry of Religious affairs and interfaith harmony every year organize such Hajj training programmes in major cities like Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and this programme arranged in Hyderabad would also be helpful to educate Hajj pilgrims.

He said that during Hajj women pilgrims hailing from various Muslim countries like Indonesia and Malaysia used to wear Abaya representing their country which was a good gesture, however we also desire to provide Abaya to Pakistani women Hajj pilgrims free of cost mentioning the name of our country on its back to representing the civilized religious norms as Pakistani women are ambassadors of their country.

Minister said that with the start of mobile app all facilities would be provided to pilgrims during performing all Hajj rituals which would be exemplary in the history of Pakistan.

Every pilgrim would be provided a 30 kg suitcase to carry out their precious luggage and neither luggage nor any Hajj pilgrims would disappear during travelling.

PTI candidate secured more votes than me, JI's Naem withdraws from PS-129 seat

KARACHI (INP): In a significant development, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi Hafiz Naemur Rehman on Monday abdicated his provincial assembly seat PS-129 (Karachi) saying PTI-backed independent candidate had secured more votes than him.

JI's Naemur Rehman returned successful on PS-129 (Karachi Central-VIII) by bagging 26,296 votes. Out of the seven provincial assembly seats of Korangi district three were won by independent candidates, two by MQM-P and one each by the PPP and the JI. Addressing media persons, he said they were giving me the seat in charity. He said worst rigging was made in recent elections.

Naem said his party had reservations over the results. He said seats were doled out in Karachi. He further alleged that MQM leaders including Mustafa Kamal faced defeat in elections but they were declared winners.

The JI emir said his opponents were hell bent destroying Karachi. The JI leader said he had the moral courage to accept the defeat. He urged the ECP to declare the real winners as returned candidates.

He said he had written to the chief justice of Pakistan to take notice of the rigging in election. He demanded the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to release results as per Form-45. The JI leader said his party did not want to take people towards violence and extremism. He alleged that MQM candidate secured 6000 votes but these were enhanced to 20,000. We don't want a seat in charity. We want our right," said Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi chief Hafiz Naemur Rehman at a press conference in Karachi where he forfeited his Sindh Assembly seat. He said he knew that the heart of Karachi "beat with the JI". Acknowledging that some may not consider his decision to be the right one, he said, "Even if they have erased us, they can't erase us from people's hearts. We will fight for the people, democratically, hold peaceful demonstrations." He further said that the nation destroying Karachi. The JI leader said he had the moral courage to accept the defeat. He urged the ECP to declare



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori, Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddom, and others cutting the cake during National Day of Iran ceremony at a local hotel, in the Federal Capital.

Fissures in PPP over forming coalition govt with PML-N

ISLAMABAD (INP): Differences have developed within the PPP on Monday over the terms and conditions the party should set for the formation of governments both at the Center and Punjab. According to reports, some of the party members are of the view that the PPP can only get along with the PML-N if the latter agrees on making Bilawal Bhutto the country's prime minister, and that there can be no alliance with the PML-N unless this condition is met.

On the other hand, some senior PPP members have advised that the party should never form governments with the PML-N and it should better sit on the opposition benches, because any partnership with the PML-N will not go down well with the PPP voters. However, the final decision will be taken at the party's central executive committee meeting scheduled to be held at Zardari House in Islamabad.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has reportedly offered a 'lucrative package' to the PPP in a bid to secure its support for the formation of governments at the Center and Punjab. The PML-N offered the PPP - Presidency, National Assembly (NA) speakership and Senate chairmanship at a meeting held between the delegations of both the parties in Lahore yesterday.

The PML-N is interested in getting the premiership and the seat of Punjab chief minister.

According to the leadership of both the parties, the situation is not easy for both of them as according to the final results issued by the ECP, no party has been able to secure a simple majority and the PTI-backed independent candidates are ahead of them with 93 seats.

Fawad presented in AC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry has been presented in Accountability Court (AC).

He was presented in the court of district and sessions judge Ali Nawaz.

The hearing of the case was adjourned till February 22 being the judge on leave.

Fawad Chaudhry was charged with committing corruption of millions of rupees in a private housing society.

Fawad Chaudhry will be presented in the court on February 22 again.

In an informal chat with the journalists on the occasion of his appearance in the court he said now national government and not coalition government should be made.

Mohsin Dawar recovering from injury: Dr Farid

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Member National Assembly from North Waziristan, Mohsin Dawar who was injured during a protest was fast recovering and his condition was out of danger, said Surgeon Dr Farid Ullah.

The doctor said Mohsin Dawar was on track to recovery however due to the deep wound, he was suffering from fever adding his condition would soon be normalized.



LAHORE: Newly elected members of Punjab Assembly met with Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

BBISE installed ultra fast track software for provision of DMC to students: Ijaz

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Board Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) Chairman Mir Ijaz Azeem Baloch on Monday said that the BBISE has installed an automatic digital Ultra Fast Track Software Cell in the areas saying that students could receive their DMC through the software from 2016 to 2024.

He said that sub-branches of the province, Turbat, Loralai, Zhob, Khuzdar, Kharan, Sibi, and Dera Morad Jamali have been permitted so that students could give DMC on time and would be freed within 30 minutes.

The Chairman Board further said that under the Digital Attendance and Monitoring System "DAMS" real-time attendance of the monitoring staff including the examination's staff and students participating in the examinations would be taken online.

He gave a message to children that they should also acquire quality knowledge with enthusiasm because going forward these children have to take care of the future of the country saying that we endeavored to equip the future generations with the jewel of modern education.

He said that the present era was about quality, and technical education, ignorance could be ended through knowledge. He said that it was a top priority of the BBISC to end copy culture from the minds of the students for which special monitoring teams have been formed to visit examination centers.

He also urged teachers they play their role in eradicating the cheating system from examinations. In response to the question, he said that he had sent letters to the directors of education including the Director of Schools regarding preparation of the examination under the syllabus.

Some elements planning to repeat May 9: Naqvi

LAHORE (INP): Some people are planning to repeat the May 9 events, warned Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday, as he said that the intelligence agencies had the evidence of the attempts.

Talking to reporters in Lahore, Naqvi said the intelligence agencies had recorded the discussions held among such elements on the subject and made it clear that there would be a strong reaction if anyone tried to replicate the May 9 violence.

He said anyone having objections over the Feb 8 polls results should approach the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and added that the government would not allow repeating the May 9.

No one would be stopped from staging peaceful political protest which was a democratic right, Naqvi said, but stated that the violent actions were unacceptable and the government could not allow creating further divisions among the nation.

It was the PTI which had carried out attacks on the military and other government installations after the arrest of their party chief and the party is now busy in levelling rigging allegations despite having a massive win in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and sizeable seats in Punjab.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan meets with US Ambassador in Pakistan.

No accused can be arrested from courts' premises: IHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday said that no accused could be arrested from the premises of high court and lower courts, and barred the authorities from this act.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard the case pertaining to the arrest of a woman by the capital's police from the court's premises. SSP Investigation Rukhsar Mehdi appeared before the court. The court asked the police official to prepare an SOP after a meeting with the Inspector General of Police regarding the arrests of accused.

It said that no accused could be arrested from the premises of the high court, session courts or civil courts. The SSP tendered the apology to the court and said that the sb-inspector (ASI) involved in the arrest of a woman.

PTI plans 'loyal to Imran' oath for election winners

ISLAMABAD (INP): Alarmed at the flight of some of its newly elected lawmakers to other political parties soon after the general elections, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Monday chalked out a strategy to prevent any further defections.

Sources said that the party had decided to take oath from its winning candidates that they would remain loyal to the former prime minister and ex-PTI chairman Imran Khan.

The affidavit given to PTI's Shahid Khattak, who had been elected as MNA from NA-38, Karak, read that he would not join any party, including the PML-N and the PPP, sources disclosed. After no party managed to get a simple majority either in the National Assembly or the Punjab Assembly.



QUETTA: Former Provincial Minister, Metha Khan Kakar addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

PTI delegation calls on President

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, comprising Rauf Hassan and Umair Niazi, called on President Dr Arif Alvi at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

In the meeting, the PTI delegation discussed with the president the matters related to the recently held general elections, a President House press release said.

Former MPA killed in Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Chaudhary Muhammad Adnan on Monday was killed by unknown assailant in Rawalpindi.

According to a private news channel, police reached the spot after receiving the information and cordoned off the area.

Rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the injured Adnan to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Police have initiated a further investigation after registering a case to probe the motive of the incident.

ECP establishes four counters for guidance of complainants

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has established four counters for the guidance of complainants coming to Election Commission Secretariat for the registration of complaints regarding electoral objections.

A separate counter has been designated for each province. All these counters have been set up in front of the Commission's building.

JI challenges result of 4 SA seats

KARACHI (Online): JI has challenged result of four constituencies of Sindh Assembly (SA) in Sindh High Court (SHC).

JI Junaid Mekati has challenged election result of PS-104 as Muhammad Dainiyal of MQM had won this seat.

JI has challenged success of Abdul Basit of MQM from PS-124.

Muhammad Akbar of JI has challenged success of Abdul Wasim of MQM from PS-123.

NA-71: ECP asks RO to give report till Feb 14

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has barred the result of NA-71 and asked the report from Returning officer (RO) to present it till February 14.



HYDERABAD: Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed addressing the intending pilgrims during 1st training program

Info Minister reiterates resolve to strengthen Pakistan-Iran ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi, has reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to strengthen bilateral relations with Iran.

He was addressing a ceremony marking the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran organized by the Iranian Embassy in Islamabad today.

While felicitating the government and the people of Iran on the occasion, the Minister said Pakistan and Iran share historic brotherly relations.

He said the governments and people of Pakistan and Iran are well aware of the importance and benefits of friendly relations between the two countries.

Murtaza Solangi said Iran achieved numerous goals in its struggle, and is rapidly heading towards development and prosperity.

GDA rejects poll results, announces vacating Sindh Assembly seats

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Functional (PML-F) chief Pir Sibghatullah Shah, popularly known as Pir Pagara, announced on Monday the forfeiture of the two Sindh



Assembly seats won by the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) - a coalition of political parties in Sindh - in the 2024 general elections, alleging electoral rigging.

Describing the elections as "unfair", Pagara, during a press conference, called for a peaceful protest against the rigging and announced plans for a sit-in on Feb 16 near the Hyderabad Bypass Road.

Pagara recalled an incident a few months ago when he was approached by an individual, whom he referred to as "a friend", to disband his party and offered two to three national and provincial constituencies.

"When I refused the offer, citing my loyalty to my party members, I was warned of potential losses in the elections."

PML-N undermining democracy to seize power, says Salman Akram

ISLAMABAD (INP): Slamming the PML-N led by Nawaz Sharif, Salman Akram Raja, a PTI-backed independent candidate from Lahore's NA-128 constituency, on Monday asserted that those who once advocated for the integrity of the vote were now aiming to seize power by undermining the very essence of democracy.

The senior lawyer, while speaking to media outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) office, alleged that the election was rigged, stating that he was winning by a wide margin according to the Form 45, but his victory was turned into defeat the following day.

Raja called this (rigging) an insult to the millions of people who used their franchise right on the polling day, recalling that he had been forcibly removed from the office of the RO (returning officer) so that the results could be manipulated.

"What kind of magic turned a lead of 0.1 million into 12,000," the electoral candidate questioned, asserting that the election was rigged and "we know how it was done".

According to Salman Akram Raja, he won the election with a lead of at least 90,000 votes against Isteqdam-e-Pakistan Party candidate Awn Saqlain Chaudhry.