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Chief Justice of Pakistan says

Zulfikar Bhutto reference an opportunity for judiciary, army to restore reputation

Decision to impose martial law rests with individuals, not army as institution

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has wondered whether the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto reference is an opportunity for the Supreme Court and armed forces to rectify their past mistakes and restore their reputation.

"Isn't this an opportunity for both institutions to get rid of the accusations hurled against them," the top judge remarked on Tuesday during a hearing of a presidential reference related to the death sentence awarded to the former PM Bhutto in 1979.

The apex court larger bench — led by CJP Isa and comprising Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice

Yahya Afridi, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Musarrat Hilali — heard the presidential reference seeking to revisit the "controversial" death sentence awarded to former PM Bhutto in 1979.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and amicus curiae with expertise on the criminal and constitutional sides attended today's hearing.

CJP Isa also said that imposing martial law is a decision of an individual and not of an institution of the army.

"Isn't the verdict in the Bhutto reference draw a line for the judiciary and the

army," he added. The Supreme Court also decided to hear the heirs of the late PPP founder and complainant Ahmad Raza Kasuri in the presidential reference.

CJP Isa directed all respondents to keep their arguments short and said that the top court wanted to conclude the hearing of the case before the retirement of a judge part of the larger bench. Amicus Curiae Makhdoom Ali Khan told the bench that the interviews of former judges Naseem Hassan Shah, Dorab Patel, and Aslam Riaz were on record to prove the biases of the judges who awarded capi-

Continued on page 2

Formation of govt: Shehbaz meets Nawaz, Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif held separate meetings on Tuesday with three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari.

Sources divulged that Shehbaz called on Nawaz Sharif in Murree to discuss the matters in line with the formation of government in the centre and Punjab.

Prominent among those who attended the meeting were Ishaq Dar and members of the coordination committee.

The PML-N's committee had briefed the bigwigs about the talks with the PPP.

Meanwhile, Shehbaz had also held a meeting with Bhutto-Zardari on his return to Islamabad.

Both leaders had held talks over moving forward on the talks in line with the formation of a government. According to the sources, Shehbaz and Bhutto-Zardari were of the view that both parties should have to show flexibility in terms of opinions to pave the way for reaching the final agreement.

Wali Noorzai & Abdul Khaliq Achakzai join PML-Nawaz

Independent Report QUETTA: Two independent candidates who were elected from Quetta and Chaman including Muhammad Wali Noorzai and Abdul Khaliq Achakzai announced to join the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

They made announcement about joining PML-N during their meeting with the central president of party, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif in Lahore on Tuesday.

Also present in the meeting were the provincial President of PML-N, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhel and other provincial leaders including Jamal Shah Kakar, besides the party's senior leaders.

Senators demand probe for fair elections, respect of public mandate

Ji's Mushtaq Ahmed demands CEC's resignation, demands a legal proceeding should be carried out against the CEC under Article 6 of the constitution

ISLAMABAD (APP): The members of the Upper House of the Parliament on Tuesday demanded the forum to hold a probe of the general elections results to ensure free and fair polls and establish respect for public mandate.

The Senators while addressing the adjournment motion moved by Senators Muhammad Tahir Bizinjio, Sardar Muhammad Shahiq Tareen, Mushtaq Ahmed, Syed Ali Zafar and others regarding the situation arising out of the results of



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar witnesses the signing ceremony between Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation and Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc. (USA) for joint venture agreement for the value addition and export of pink salt.

Solid stance of interim Balochistan Govt. accepted: OGDCL hints at paying billions of rupees to Balochistan on account of royalty

Outstanding amount of royalty to be paid by OGDCL to provincial Government on monthly basis: caretaker CM Domki says amount to be spent on well being of general public

Independent Report

QUETTA: In a major development on an economic front, the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has finally hinted at paying the billions of rupees to Balochistan province, which otherwise payable against it on account of royalty for around three years, thanks to the solid stance adopted by the interim provincial government.

According to the senior high ups of the Chief Minister's secretariat on Tuesday, the OGDCL and provincial government has agreed upon the formula of payment of the outstanding amount of royalty.

It may be mentioned here that the OGDCL had stopped payment of the royalty to Balochistan since September 2021 mainly because of the extraordinary increase in the circular debt of the power purchasing companies.

However, the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki took up the matter of dues of the royalty at the national forum.

Then, OGDCL expressed its willingness on payment of the Rs. 12.5 billion to the province while accepting the stance of interim provincial government.

The official sources of CM secretariat informed that the payment of arrears of royalty would be made to the provincial govern-

ment on monthly basis. Meanwhile, on the important development, caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki said that Alhamdulillah, we remained successful in getting the province's stance accepted from OGDCL, which was otherwise pending for last three years.

He said that the royalty is right of people of Balochistan and as such the amount to be received from OGDCL on account of arrears of royalty would be spent on the public welfare.

The caretaker Chief Minister also said that the companies working in the province are bound to make payment of the royalty in accordance with the rules and regulations.

Another independent lawmaker from Balochistan joins PPP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Another independent newly-elected lawmaker from Balochistan, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, joined the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Tuesday.

The development came after Kakar called on PPP co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari. Prominent among those who attended the meeting were Sarfaraz Bugti, Sadiq Umrani, Malik Shah, Jamal Raisani, Aijaz Jakhtrani, and Ali Madad Jattak.

PTI demands CEC Raja to step down over rigging in Feb 8 polls

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has demanded 'immediate resignation' of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja for 'failing' to hold general elections 2024 in a free, fair and transparent manner.

"Incumbent CEC [Sikandar Sultan Raja] has now become a controversial personality as he failed to stop rigging in elections; PTI demands CEC Raja to resign immediately," Barrister Gohar Ali Khan told journalists after meeting party's founder Imran Khan in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail.

He further said that all the inquiries into election discrepancies should be impartial and without any interference. "We want the election results to be in accordance with the mandate of the public," Gohar added.

He also demanded that the polling authorities issue election results in line with Form 45 after several political parties alleged discrepancies in the results based on Form 47. Gohar Ali Khan pointed out that former Rawalpindi Commissioner's revelations affirmed the PTI's stance regarding rigging in the elections, saying that "non-transparent" elections could also hamper International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme with Pakistan.

"The victor of the polls after the probe should be announced at the floor of the Senate and the PTI will accept that party's mandate who soever and I make this commitment on behalf of my party," he said.

Senator Taj Haider of Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian (PPPP) said the country was at the crossroads of history with two clear pathways one leading to violence and chaos and the other to unity

Continued on page 2

Utilisation of human, mineral resources will lead to a stable, rising Pakistan: PM

PMDC, American firm sign agreement to increase value of Himalayan Pink Salt

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday reasserting the government's all-out support to the investors, said the effective utilisation of human as well as mineral resources would lead to a stable, prosperous and rising Pakistan.

"Our human resource is more important than our mineral resource. The human resource coupled with the mineral resource will lead to stable, prosperous and rising Pakistan," he said addressing the signing ceremony of a joint venture agreement between Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) and the US-based Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc for establishing a dedicated facility for crushing and packaging of pink salt for the

export purposes. Managing Director of the PMDC Asad Ahmed and President of Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc Ahmed Nadeem Khan signed the agreement that was witnessed by the Prime Minister Kakar, Energy Minister Muhammad Ali and relevant senior authorities.

The prime minister said the practice of exporting raw materials should come to an end as the export of the products after value addition was directly needed.

"This is the path for Pakistan. This is the right step. We will be exporting the quality product in the coming days. Pakistan will get rightful branding for its product. This will pave the way for further opportunity for further opportunity

Continued on page 2



LAHORE: Independent candidate from Balochistan Haji Wali Khan Noorzai and Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai announcing to join PML(N) during a meeting with Shehbaz Sharif.

If martial law is imposed then there will be damadam mast qalandar: Bilawal Bhutto

Calls for political parties to come together to steer country out of difficulties

LAHORE (Online): PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said if martial law is imposed in the country then there will be "damadam mast Qalandar."

"People of Pakistan has not given mandate to any political party. Those who claim to be of largest party they have not to talk to it. Later we decided to talk to PML-N. The only way to steer out of prevailing situation is that we should sit together. Historical case is pending with Supreme Court (SC). The justice will be delivered to the grand son if not to daughter. We want history is set right, he said this while talking to

media men outside SC here Tuesday. He went on to say today once again the hearing of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has been held. I think it is an historical case. Dictatorship ruled during the 50 percent of history of the country. Powers of parliament and power are linked to it. This judiciary will administer justice to founder of constitution.

Judicial murder of Bhutto took place in dictatorship regime. We hope judiciary will give us justice and wash the taint. We hope this presidential reference will help set right history so that we could draw a line that wrong was done in the past.

Quetta-Chaman highway restored: Shutter down strike observed against arrest of dharna participants in Chaman

Independent Report CHAMAN: The shutter down strike was observed against arrest of participants of dharna including its spokesman Sadiq Achakzai in Chaman on Tuesday.

According to reports, the police arrested organizers of dharna continued at Pak-Afghan border road in Chaman when they blocked the passport office as a mark of protest against enforcement of passport at the Chaman border.

However, the local administration and Frontier Corps raided the protest camp and arrested Sadiq Achakzai and some other protesters.

On this situation, convenor of dharna Maulana Abdul Manan and other leaders given call for shutter down in Chaman.

Following the call, shutter down strike was observed and the Chaman-Quetta highway was blocked for all kinds of traffic.

Meanwhile, dharna was also staged in front of office of district police officer in Chaman. Stones were also pelted on the fort of FC by the protesters.

Meanwhile, the Chaman-Quetta highway was reopened following negotiations between the government high ups and dharna committee.



QUETTA: Activates of four Political Party Ittihad hold sit-in in front of RO office for recent General Election.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presenting appreciation certificate to Adil Naseer Ghilzai, XEN Communication and Works Department Kharan on his best performance

'Mother of all rigging' has made Pakistan laughing stock globally, says Imran

Monitoring Desk RAWALPINDI: PTI's founder Imran Khan has said that the "mother of all rigging" must end now because Pakistan has become a laughing stock globally, as per his sister Aleema Khan.

What exactly does he mean by "mother of all rigging"? It was dismantling the PTI, snatching its iconic election symbol of bat, not allowing the party's candidates to submit nomination papers, coercing candidates into withdrawing from elections and denying the party the right to canvass.

While speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail, where Imran is incarcerated, Aleema Khan said that her brother wants the culture of

impunity to end and the mandate of the people must be respected to salvage the country's reputation internationally.

Imran also ridiculed his arch nemesis, the PML-N, which willingly bartered away its narrative to grab power.

"Instead of honouring the vote, the 'selected ones' have honoured the boot," Aleema quoted Imran. "The selection was so blatant and blind that corruption cases were dropped by the selectors against the 'selected ones,'" she further stated quoting her brother.

"Instead the PTI chairman was sentenced to 32 years in jail after marathon trials on trumped up charges."



QUETTA: Senior Program Coordinator of UNIOM Ms. Mio Sato meeting with Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan

Situation in Chaman under control of administration: Protestors arrested on taking law in hand and blocking NADRA office in Chaman: Jan

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that at least 10 protestors have been arrested in Chaman on taking law in hand and blocking the NADRA office.

In an official statement issued here on Tuesday, Jan Achakzai said that the protestors were apprehended by the police along with other law enforcement agencies in Chaman.

He mentioned that the protestors had been allowed to lodge peaceful protest for last few months. However, the local police was forced to interfere after the provocative action of blocking the Passport office in Chaman, he added.

The caretaker Minister Information asserted that

the condition of enforcement of passport and legal documents for across the border movement is the decision of state and as such no hurdle would be tolerated in this regard.

He also warned that stern action would be taken against those taking law in their hands.

Meanwhile, in another official statement issued the same afternoon, the caretaker Minister said that the situation in Chaman is under control of the local administration, which would not allow anyone to challenge writ of the government.

He said that the protestors are being dispersed by the local administration after removing hurdles created for blockage of the NADRA office in Chaman.

Sunni Ittehad Council approaches ECP for allocation of reserved seats

ISLAMABAD (INP): After inclusion of PTI-backed Independents, the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) has approached the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for allocation of reserved seats.

An application has been submitted in the ECP for this purpose by the SIC. The SIC has taken the stance that at least 50 PTI-backed Independents had joined the SIC. These Independents should now be considered as SIC lawmakers.

The SIC pleaded to the ECP that seats reserved for women and minorities should be allotted to the SIC. It may be recalled that on Monday PTI-backed Independents had announced to join the SIC.

Earlier, addressing a news conference along with leaders of the SIC and the Majlis-e-Waddatul Muslimeen (MWM) PTI leader Barrister Gohar claimed his party had secured victory on 180 National Assembly seats. He said PTI-backed Independents declared returned from National Assembly, Punjab and KP assemblies would join the SIC. He said this alliance had been created for

the best interest of the country.

Earlier on Monday, PTI leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said PTI-backed independents, who claimed victory from the National Assembly, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies in the general elections, would join the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) as a party. PTI's announcement followed a formal agreement with the SIC. "Our successful candidates have submitted affidavits with us and today we are announcing that PTI-backed candidates are joining the Sunni Ittehad Council," Gohar stated during a press conference.

He mentioned that the reserved seats in the federal legislature and provincial legislatures were allotted according to the strength of political parties in the houses. "Therefore, to secure our reserved seats and shield our members, we have made a formal agreement under which our candidates will join the SIC," Gohar said, adding, "The PTI will submit the same documentation to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) today."



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed chairs a National Price Monitoring Committee meeting to review prices of essential commodities.



QUETTA: A delegation of Gulistan led by Muhammad Hussain meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Hafeez criticizes Lahore Qalandars' player development program

Lahore (INP): Former Test cricketer Muhammad Hafeez has voiced criticism against Lahore Qalandars' Player Development Program (PDP), stating that only Haris Rauf has emerged as an international-level product from the system.

In an interview with a private news channel, Hafeez expressed disappointment with the PDP's track record over the nine years of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), claiming that it failed to produce significant talent for the national team. He alleged that the program was primarily utilized for marketing purposes rather than nurturing genuine talent.

Hafeez's remarks follow Lahore Qalandars' consecutive defeats in the initial matches of PSL 9. He questioned the effectiveness of the program, contrasting its outcomes with the established talents like Shaheen Shah Afridi and Fakhar Zaman, who were already part of the PCB system before joining Lahore Qalandars.

Utilisation of human...

Continued from page 1

agreement was the beginning of a long journey that would boost the investors' confidence.

He said Pakistan had tremendous potential in the mineral sector and the government was committed, focused and had prioritized the sector to exploit the potential through more investment in the pink salt sector.

PMDC Chairman Shamsuddin lauded the SIFC's role which led to surge in PMDC's profit by three to four times comparing last year.

He said the PMDC's geologists were actively moving around for exploration purposes and hoped that the number of mining leases would continue to grow.

Shamsuddin called for further empowerment of the SIFC, strengthening of the Geological Survey of Pakistan besides providing security to miners, and amending the rules to streamline the processes.

Managing Director of PMDC Engineer Asad Ahmed said the agreement represented the culmination of excessive collaboration between the partners and thanked the petroleum ministry and SIFC for effective coordination.

Chief Communications Officer of the Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc Mubarak Khan called the agreement the beginning of a great journey and a great opportunity for Pakistan as the pink salt would act as an ambassador at millions of homes internationally.

Executive VP and Chief Financial Officer Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc said the project would lead to global monetisation of Pakistan's mineral resources which was one of the richest countries with huge mineral resources.

Earlier, Energy Minister Muhammad Ali said the

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Solangi presents SBP Governor's annual report in Senate

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday presented in the Senate the State Bank of Pakistan Governor's Annual Report for the financial year 2022-23.

This report covers the achievement of the Bank's objectives, the conduct of monetary policy, the state of Pakistan's economy, and the financial system, under section 9A(2) of the State Bank of Pakistan Act, 1956.

Zulfikar Bhutto reference an...

Continued from page 1

tal punishment to the PPP founder.

He said former judge Qaiser Rashid Khan had said that "even a cat cannot be awarded death penalty based on the evidence" present in the ZA Bhutto case.

Khan also said that the court can announce the verdict in the ZA Bhutto case under Article 187.

During the hearing, Justice Shah remarked that the court could not examine the merit of the case since the verdict had already been announced. However, the court can look into how the former PM was sentenced to death. "If the court has to ascertain whether the judges announced the verdict under duress then what would be the evidence [to back the claim]," he remarked.

The hearing of the case has been adjourned till February 26. In its written order of today's proceedings, the Supreme Court said amicus curiae Khalid Javed Khan has submitted his response to the court, while the PPP chief's counsel Farooq H Naek, Raza Rabbani and Zahid Ibrahim will present their arguments after amicus curiae.

Bhutto was hanged to death on April 4, 1979, in the Rawalpindi district jail in a murder case. His party, however, termed the capital punishment to Bhutto as "judicial murder".

Former president Asif Ali Zardari, on April 2, 2011, approached the apex court through a presidential reference under Article 186 of the Constitution to seek its opinion on revisiting the trial of the PPP founder.

FIA extortion sparks Quetta traders' outcry

By M. Ilyas

ISLAMABAD- Traders and shopkeepers at Kandahari Bazaar in Quetta stood up against alleged extortion and illegal demands imposed by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Their protest escalated as they thwarted an attempt by FIA officials to apprehend the owner of a medicine store and resisted extortion efforts by the law enforcement personnel.

On Tuesday the bustling streets of Kandahari Bazaar witnessed an unprecedented demonstration of defiance as traders and shopkeepers united to oppose what they described as relentless extortion and unlawful demands by FIA authorities in Quetta.

The unrest erupted when FIA officials, purportedly led by Inspector Idrees, the SHO of FIA Anti-Corruption Circle, Quetta, attempted to coerce the owner of Aj Sharjah Medicine Store into paying a significant sum as security money. According to eyewitnesses, when the shop owner resisted the demand for bribery, FIA personnel resorted to forceful measures, attempting to apprehend him from his premises. Outraged by the brazen attempt, fellow businessmen intervened and prevented the alleged kidnapping, further aggra-

Another massive hike in electricity tariff likely

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) is expected to increase the electricity prices in Pakistan on account of fuel cost adjustment, says in media reports.

The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) has filed a plea with NEPRA seeking an increase of Rs7.13 per unit in the electricity prices from next month. If the demand is approved by NEPRA, the increase would put an additional burden of Rs66.77 billion on inflation-bitten consumers.

CPPA in its petition said 7.93 billion units were distributed to power distribution companies in January 2024. Nepra will take up the petition on Feb 23. The revised prices will not be applicable to lifeline KE consumers.

It is pertinent to mention here that on January 31, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) increased the electricity tariff by Rs5.63 per unit on account of monthly fuel adjustment (MFA). The decision was announced after the NEPRA completed a hearing on the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) petition seeking a hike in electricity tariff by Rs5.63 per unit under fuel monthly adjustment for December 2023.

Kashmir stands Millions of Light Years away from Delhi

MIRPUR (APP): Kashmir is not merely a piece of land or a numerical figure, but rather a sentiment, an emotion, a fire that rages in the hearts of 13 million people across both sides of the Line of Control (LOC), all striving to secure their internationally recognized right to self-determination as per the spirit of the pertinent United Nations resolutions on the Kashmir issue.

Sultan Shams ud Din Shakhmiri, the second Sultan of Kashmir and the dynasty's founder in 1339, hailed from Swat in Dardistan. He actively worked to propagate Islam in Kashmir and patronized indigenous clans such as Chuks and Magrays.

The Kashmiri Era commenced with Rinchin Shah's conversion to Islam in 720 AD, remaining in use until the Mughal Conquest of Kashmir in 1586. Sultan Shakhmir passed away in 1942, succeeded by Sultan Janshed Shakhmir.

In 1347, Sultan Janshed was defeated by his brother Sultan Alauddin, leading to the ascension of Sultan Shahab Uddin and Sultan Qutubuddin to the throne. Sultan Shahabuddin's reign saw territorial expansions and the consolidation of Islamic influence in the region. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have long regarded the occupation of a significant portion of the internationally acknowledged disputed territory as illegitimate. The coerced cohabitation of Kashmiri civilians with heavily armed Indian occupying forces has proven untenable over the past 76 years.

Regrettably, the government of India seems fixated on the year 1332, attempting to rewrite history. A fallacious narrative about Kashmir is being propagated through Kalhana's Raj Tarangini. Upon studying Raj Tarangini, it becomes apparent that it is a work of poetry rather than a historical chronicle, repre-

sented the imaginative realm of Kalhana.

Kashmir's ties to Central Asian countries trace back over 2000 years. Notably, the reign of Kota Rani was marked by clashes with the Mongol King Dalucha. The Shakhmiri Dynasty, which ruled Kashmir from 1339 to 1561, played a significant role in shaping Kashmir's history.

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Kashmir's ties to Central Asian countries trace back over 2000 years. Notably, the reign of Kota Rani was marked by clashes with the Mongol King Dalucha. The Shakhmiri Dynasty, which ruled Kashmir from 1339 to 1561, played a significant role in shaping Kashmir's history.

Sultan Shams ud Din Shakhmiri, the second Sultan of Kashmir and the dynasty's founder in 1339, hailed from Swat in Dardistan. He actively worked to propagate Islam in Kashmir and patronized indigenous clans such as Chuks and Magrays.

The Kashmiri Era commenced with Rinchin Shah's conversion to Islam in 720 AD, remaining in use until the Mughal Conquest of Kashmir in 1586. Sultan Shakhmir passed away in 1942, succeeded by Sultan Janshed Shakhmir.

In 1347, Sultan Janshed was defeated by his brother Sultan Alauddin, leading to the ascension of Sultan Shahab Uddin and Sultan Qutubuddin to the throne. Sultan Shahabuddin's reign saw territorial expansions and the consolidation of Islamic influence in the region. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have long regarded the occupation of a significant portion of the internationally acknowledged disputed territory as illegitimate. The coerced cohabitation of Kashmiri civilians with heavily armed Indian occupying forces has proven untenable over the past 76 years.

Regrettably, the government of India seems fixated on the year 1332, attempting to rewrite history. A fallacious narrative about Kashmir is being propagated through Kalhana's Raj Tarangini. Upon studying Raj Tarangini, it becomes apparent that it is a work of poetry rather than a historical chronicle, repre-

sented the imaginative realm of Kalhana.



QUETTA: Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) Administrator, Jabbar Baloch presides over a meeting at his office in Quetta.

Senators demand probe for fair...

Continued from page 1

Baloch and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), inclusion of all into the political process and formulation of a national government to safeguard democracy and the political system to circumvent any crisis-like situations.

Senator Haider added that the PPPP had submitted over 60 complaints in writing to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and all with proofs including video evidences claiming polling of fake votes.

"We request the other political parties to abstain from violence and take legal course of action for redressal of their grievances," he added.

Senator Aon Abbas of PTI wished all the best to the retiring senior senators.

He thanked the senators from the treasury benches for supporting PTI on the motion that sought production orders of detained PTI Senator Ejaz Ahmed Chaudhry.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, independent, said the Elections held on February 8th were historic yet contentious as it had transformed the political scenario and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), PPP and PTI has emerged as the largest political parties of the country and they should now unite for the country.

He proposed a three-point way forward citing general amnesty for all political prisoners including missing persons of

shut down on services.

"Why were internet and mobile services shut down on Feb 8 polls? Why is X being restricted for three days?"

He said that the shutdown of X was causing educational harm and was an attack on people's digital rights.

He called for the restoration of all social media platforms.

In addition, Senators Muhammad Tahir Bizinjio, Ali Zafar, Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen and Mohammad Humayun Mohmand, Hidayatullah Khan, Behramand Khan Tungi, Muhammad Akram, Zeeshan Khanzada, Umer Farooq, Prof Dr Mehr Taj Roghani, Molvi Faiz Muhammad, and Fawzia Arshad have also raised serious questions about the fairness and transparency of the general elections, calling for an investigation to assess their legitimacy.

However, Caretaker Minister for Human Rights, Khalil George was not allowed by the members of the House for winding up the discussion after Senator Sadia Abbasi of PML-N and Senator Saif Ullah Abro opposed his take and challenged his mandate to present his performance before the House. Senator Abbasi pointed out the quorum which resulted into the adjournment of the session till Friday till 10:30 am, whereas the motion was disposed of.

He further asked about the whereabouts of the Form-45, noting that the chief election commissioner had directed to release all results till 2am on election night.

Jamaat-i-Islami's Senator Mushtaq Ahmed said that mobile and internet services were shut down. "At that moment, it was evident that polls were not free, fair or transparent," he said.

He said that X formerly Twitter had been



MULTAN: Multan Sultans team players celebrating after taking the wicket of Islamabad United batsman Colin Munro during the PSL Twenty20 cricket match between Multan Sultans and Islamabad United at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232402378423 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Conservator of Forests, ZhoB Civil Division invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates Tender Fee Rs.2000/- Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	Improvement of existing Tunnels & shades	3,077,296

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 2,154,107 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years, showing financial capacity of the firm. **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee/Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 2,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 07 March, 2024 during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 07 March, 2024 till 12:30 PM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the undersigned at 01:30 PM Address: Kakar Colony Satellite Town Quetta. Phone no: 0333781654 Fax no: Email: kakarfarooq7@gmail.com

CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS ZHOB

PRQ No.1460/20-02-2024

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TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232402378393 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Conservator of Forests, ZhoB Civil Division invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates Tender Fee Rs.2000/- Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	Construction of Main Gate Area of Nursery	3,080,725

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 2,156,507 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years, showing financial capacity of the firm. **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee/Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 2,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 07 March, 2024 during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 07 March, 2024 till 11:00 AM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the undersigned at 12:00 PM Address: Kakar Colony Satellite Town Quetta. Phone no: 0333781654 Fax no: Email: kakarfarooq7@gmail.com

CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS ZHOB

PRQ No.1458/20-02-2024

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FDE, NH&MP organize road safety awareness lecture

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) in cooperation with the National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) on Tuesday organized a comprehensive road safety awareness lecture here at the Islamabad Model College for Girls PG Margalla College in F7/4.

The event was headed by Senior Patrol Officer Younus, Senior Patrol Officer Nabeela, and Patrol Officer Asifa. The collaborative effort aimed to enlighten students on crucial road safety measures by utilizing informative videos and slides. The session, conducted by the esteemed officers, proved to be highly informative and engaging. The team provided students with valuable insights into road safety, equipped with visual aids and relevant presentations, enlightening the audience about the dos and don'ts of road safety. The interactive nature of the lecture allowed the students to grasp essential information efficiently. The officers highlighted the significance of adhering to traffic laws, using pedestrian crossings, and the hazards of reckless driving, ultimately emphasizing the importance of responsible behavior on the road.

The initiative also in-

cluded a lively question and answer session, providing students with an opportunity to seek clarifications on road safety issues. This dynamic approach fostered an environment for active participation and allowed students to engage directly with the knowledgeable officers. Upon the culmination of the session, the students were conferred with tokens of appreciation as the police officers distributed gifts, serving as a tangible reinforcement of the lessons imparted during the lecture.

The event transpired within a productive and impactful atmosphere, as the authorities successfully captivated the attention of the attendees and effectively disseminated critical road safety information.

This endeavor by the National Highway and Motorway Police in collaboration with the Federal Directorate of Education underscores the commitment to instill a culture of road safety awareness and responsible driving practices among the youth. The lecture stood as a testament to the unified effort to ensure the safety and well-being of motorists and pedestrians alike, contributing to the broader goal of minimizing road accidents and promoting safer commutes within the community.



Senator Irfan-ul-Haque Siddiqui, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education & Professional Training and members of the committee in a group photo with Officials of the Ministry during a meeting of the Committee at Parliament House Islamabad.

IHC issues non-bailable arrest warrant against DC ICT

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday issued non-bailable arrest warrant against Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Irfan Nawaz Memon on non-appearance in contempt of court case in a matter pertaining to the MPO orders for PTI's leader Shehryar Khan Afridi. The court directed the secretary of interior and DG Passport to place the name of exit control list (ECL), so he couldn't flee abroad. The court said that the deputy commissioner has apparently committed contempt of court as he didn't appear even after the dismissal of his request.

Seven reports of Standing committee presented in Senate

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as seven reports of various Standing Committees on Tuesday were presented in the Senate.

Senator Irfan Siddique presented the report of the Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training on several bills. These include the report on The Al-Ala University Bill, 2023, which aims to establish Al-Ala University, the report on The Islamabad Capital Territory Students Unions Bill, 2023, concerning the establishment and regulation of Students Unions in Educational Institutions of the Islamabad Capital Territory, the report on The

Imam Bukhari International Islamic Institute Bill, 2023, which seeks to establish the Imam Bukhari International Islamic Institute in Sialkot, and the report on The Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Technology Bill, 2023, introduced by Senator Syed Muhammad Sabir Shah on July 24, 2023, aimed at establishing the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Technology.

Senator Mohammad Humayun Mohmand presented the report of the Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination on two bills. These include the report on The Injured Persons (Medical

Aid) (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which seeks to further amend the Injured Persons (Medical Aid) Act, 2004, and the report on The Pakistan Emergency Treatment Coverage Programme Bill, 2023, which aims to establish the Pakistan Emergency Treatment Coverage Programme.

Additionally, Senator Mohammad Humayun Mohmand laid the report of the Senate Standing Committee on Commerce on The Imports and Exports (Control) (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which proposes further amendments to the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, 1950.

APHC denounces deprivation of social rights in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has denounced the deprivation of social rights in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

According to Kashmir Media Service, the APHC in a statement issued on the "World Day of Social Justice," in Srinagar said, the people of the territory, along with minorities including Muslims in India, have been denied social justice.

Kashmir, particularly in the wake of the BJP government's actions since August 2019. Despite claims by the Indian government of normalcy in IIOJK, the reality, as expressed by Kashmiri youth to the media, is far from it. They emphasized the ongoing military and police siege and the loss of basic rights.

The APHC called upon UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to urgently intervene for a just settlement of the Kashmir dispute to prevent a potential catastrophe in the South Asian region, given the involvement of three nuclear states in the neighborhood.

These concerns reflect the ongoing struggle for social justice and political resolution in the region, with Kashmiri voices advocating for their rights and the attention of the international community.

The APHC emphasized that Kashmiri people have been struggling for their rights for the past seven decades. The statement reiterated its peaceful pursuit of justice and highlighted the desire for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions passed in 1949.

The statement underscored the longstanding injustice faced by the people of occupied Jammu and



ISLAMABAD: IESCO Workers Busy In Repairing Power Cables at Srinagar Highway in the Federal Capital.

NCRC, ILO on 'World day of Social Justice' calls for collective effort to empower

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member of the National Commission on the Rights of Children (NCRC), Khalid Naem Tuesday on World Day of Social Justice called society to take practical steps to break down the barriers of inequality by doing more to empower individuals through decent job opportunities and to provide adequate social protection.

It is also a day to recommit to the collective efforts needed to build a more just and inclusive world, he said.

This year's theme chosen for the World Day of Social Justice 2024, "Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances," which highlights the importance of collaboration and partnership in tackling global challenges.

Talking to PTV news channel, he explained that the World Day of Social Justice is observed annually on 20 February, adding, that this day is dedicated to promoting social justice and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The World Day of Social Justice is an opportunity to reflect on the progress made in the fight for social justice and to identify the challenges that re-

Meanwhile, Country Director International Labour Organization (ILO), Geir Thomas Tonstøl also explained that more than 4 billion people around the world remain entirely unprotected where we must recognize that effective and comprehensive social protection which is not just essential for social justice and decent work but for creating a sustainable and resilient future for younger.

World Day of Social Justice observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Like other parts of the world, Pakistan celebrated the "World Day of Social Justice" here on Tuesday aiming to bring equality and to create the best employment opportunities.

decades but India has been keeping them deprived of their UN-mandated rights under international law.

The theme of this year is "Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances." Whereas, on the World Day of Social Justice, India has deprived people of its Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and minorities in the country especially Muslims of social justice and basic rights. In a statement in Srinagar, spokesman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference said Kashmiris have been struggling for their rights for the past seven

Meanwhile, Muslim, Christian, Dalit, and Sikh communities have expressed profound fear and insecurity stemming from systemic oppression and discriminatory policies of India. The theme of the International Day in 2023 focused on the urgency of combating racism and racial discrimination, 75 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The UDHR stated that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms, without distinction of any kind, such as race and color.

ICT-15 application introduced for IOS users; to ensure safety of citizens

ISLAMABAD: Under the special directions of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police ICT-15 mobile application has been introduced for IOS users, to ensure the safety of citizens.

After installation, they need to enter their name, address, and mobile number. In case of an emergency, they can send an alert message along with audio or images. Upon receiving the message, a representative of Islamabad Capital Police will immediately contact the affected individual to gather further details. After registering the complaint, the concerned person's information will be forwarded to the relevant police station and Dolphin (Emergency Response Unit). A police team will be dispatched promptly to provide assistance.

An ICP public relations officer said on Tuesday that the purpose of this mobile app is to enable citizens to inform the police without any hassle or time delay and ensure immediate police assistance. Through this mobile app, citizens can promptly notify the police of any incidents or emergencies by sending audio messages or images.

Moreover, to utilize this service the citizens should first download the "ICT 15" mobile applica-

tion from the App Store. After installation, they need to enter their name, address, and mobile number. In case of an emergency, they can send an alert message along with audio or images. Upon receiving the message, a representative of Islamabad Capital Police will immediately contact the affected individual to gather further details. After registering the complaint, the concerned person's information will be forwarded to the relevant police station and Dolphin (Emergency Response Unit). A police team will be dispatched promptly to provide assistance.



ISLAMABAD: Candidate of District Loralai PB-5 Shamsuddin and others addressing press conference at National Press Club.

DC leads crackdown against alms seekers; nabs 11

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, Assistant Commissioners (ACs) on Tuesday conducted operations against professional beggars and apprehended 11 beggars from different areas of the Capital.

According to Spokesman, Dr. Abdullah Tabassum, Assistant Commissioner of Industrial Area, spearheaded an operation resulting in the apprehension of 11 beggars from Faisal Mosque and its vicinity. These individuals were promptly handed over to Margalla police station for further legal action.

He said that in a concerted effort to address the issue comprehensively, professional beggars were

targeted to make the federal capital a liveable place for the citizens. Meanwhile, the underage beggars were also compassionately handed over to the Edhi Center for appropriate care and support, he added.

It is pertinent to mention here that these operations are conducted daily under the vigilant oversight of Assistant Commissioners, signaling a sustained commitment to curb begging activities within their jurisdictions.

This ongoing initiative reflects the commitment of district administration to maintain order and address societal challenges. With daily supervision, these efforts signify a proactive approach toward creating a safer and more organized environment for the residents of Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Worker busy paint on the pedestrian bridge at Srinagar Highway in the Federal Capital.

AIOU to establish training and development center

ISLAMABAD (APP): A "Training and Development Center" is being set up at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) for the professional development of academic, administrative and servicing department employees.

The Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has taken this initiative, a press release on Tuesday said.

As a pilot project, an 8-week training workshop was started yesterday to train hostel staff, sanitation workers, gardeners, and naib qasids.

Dean, Faculty of Education, Prof. Dr. Fazal ur Rahman said that the professional development of staff is crucial at present.

He emphasized that the establishment of this training and development

centre would mark a new beginning for the university. Director, Adult Literacy Center, Dr. Muhammad Ajmal Chaudhry explained the specifics of the training workshop.

In the first phase, the hostel staff will be trained about the basics of hospitality, in the second phase, the sanitary workers and gardeners will be exposed to the best and modern methods of cleaning and beautifying the campus, while in the last phase, naib qasids, security guards and other employees will be trained about public dealing.

Manager, Islamabad Club, Abid Agha, Dr. Muhammad Ajmal Chaudhry, Dr. Zaheer, Dr. Rahmatullah Bhatti and Dr. Tahira Bibi will be the trainers.

NHA busy in clearing roads closed due to snowfall

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway Authority (NHA) was busy clearing roads that were blocked or closed for traffic in district Dir due to heavy snowfall.

According to NHA Spokesperson, the Caretaker Minister for Communications Shahid Ashraf Tarar has issued special instructions to open NHA road infrastructure for two-way traffic as soon as possible.

He said that machinery and personnel should be present at all times near sensitive points at the snowfall-affected roads. The NHA staff and machinery were busy removing snow to clear the roads as soon as possible.

Chairman NHA Arshad Majeed Mohmand has also ordered district Dir officers of NHA to stay in touch and cooperate with the local administration.

The authority has its offices located in snowfall areas and has also issued high alert so that arrangements can be made in advance to keep roads open for traffic during snowfall.

IHC moved for orders in connection with medical check up of Bushra Bibi

ISLAMABAD (Online): Uzma Khan sister of PTI founder has resorted to Islamabad High Court (IHC) for medical check up of Bushra Bibi.

The petitioner has taken plea in the petition that Bushra Bibi is imprisoned in Bani Gala residence following her conviction in Toshakhana case.

It was requested in the petition family doctor Asim Yousuf be allowed for medical check up of Bushra Bibi.

Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, guests, faculty members and a large number of students also attended the session. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Abdul Aziz said that the ruling elite decides the language of the region. Today, in the era of global-

ization, the international establishment wants us to think that our languages are being vanished.

He was of the view that language cannot be eliminated if it is deeply rooted and linked with the culture & civilization of that region. Dr Sahir further said that the power corridor decides the language of the people and he quoted the example of the Persian language before the east India Company.

Estate Office allots 1,227 govt accommodations in two year

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Estate Office, Ministry of Housing and Works has allotted as many as 1,227 quarters of Cat-IV, government accommodations to the federal government employees during the last two years.

"The Estate Office has made all the allotments on merit by keeping view of the seniority of the government employees who are working in different ministries and divisions," an official in the Ministry told APP.

He said that the Ministry of Housing and Works also intends to modify gov-

ernment accommodation allocation rules to facilitate federal government employees.

The official said a proposed amendment to modify the Allocation Rules, 2002 is under consideration which will be implemented as soon as possible.

He said the ministry plans to eliminate Rule 20 of Government House Allotment.

This rule currently allows a government house allocated to a retired federal employee to be assigned to their employed son or daughter.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy in construction work of Yadgar-e-Dastoor on a green belt along Constitution Avenue in the Federal Capital.

NUML organizes national conference on Mother-Tongue

ISLAMABAD (APP): One day National Conference on "Multilingual and Cultural Implications of Mother-Tongue in context of Globalization" was organized by the Department of Urdu Language & Literature of the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) here on Tuesday.

Rector NUML Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani (Retd) presided over the session while Dean Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities AIOU Professor Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir was the chief guest and Dr. Arshid Mahmood Nashaad Associate Professor AIOU was the keynote speaker of the inaugural session.

Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, guests, faculty members and a large number of students also attended the session. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Abdul Aziz said that the ruling elite decides the language of the region. Today, in the era of global-

AC cracks down on price hike, encroachment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Assistant Commissioner (AC) Potohar, Nahel Hafiz on Tuesday conducted an anti-encroachment operation at vegetable market in federal capital and inspected price hike, and other facilities being provided to the customers there.

In a bid to curb overcharging, he reviewed market rates, promptly displaying the official rate list at the vegetable market.

With a commitment to upholding regulations, warnings were issued to other potential violators, signaling a clear message that such actions will not be tolerated.

The visit underscored the commitment of local authorities to ensure the smooth functioning of essential markets, vital for the daily lives of residents.

The AC was accompanied by the Market Committee Secretary, and other stakeholders.



Senator Saadia Abbasi, Chairperson Senate standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat Presiding over a meeting of the Committee at Parliament House Islamabad.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Wednesday February 21, 2024

Open the books

The knocking on its doors keeps growing louder. How long can the ECP ignore it? Over the weekend, Pakistan's most prominent elections monitoring body as well as its top human rights watchdog have added their voices to calls for an audit of election results.

On Saturday, the same day a senior bureaucrat had 'confessed' to his involvement in results tampering, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan expressed its reservations regarding the "integrity and credibility" of the Feb 8 exercise, noting a range of issues that it said had "cast a shadow over the democratic process".

A day later, the Free and Fair Election Network urged the ECP to take immediate action and address complaints regarding illegalities committed in the compilation of election results. It also proposed a three-phase process to comprehensively address the widespread allegations of rigging, which is based on an audit of each step in the results consolidation process.

In Pakistan, it is almost customary for election candidates to refuse to acknowledge their defeat. Except a few, most are generally quick to cast aspersions and question the integrity of any election which does not go in their favour.

This time, however, certain irregularities have been so widespread that even otherwise impartial observers are joining the chorus of voices demanding a recount and investigation into the post-poll results compilation process.

For example, there are ample witnesses to the fact that both election laws and the rules governing how vote counting and compilation is supposed to be done were not adhered to by many returning officers on election day.

Many independent observers, candidates and accredited media personnel reported being excluded or evicted from the Form 47 compilation process which was completed at ROs' offices, indicating that the most important check on the process was bypassed without any convincing explanation being given.

Compiled behind closed doors, many results later issued by ROs did not match the consolidated results from Form 45s issued to different candidates' polling agents. Fortunately, there is an extensive paper trail for each constituency, which can still be used to verify them.

Fafen has called for an audit led by the ECP that starts by closely examining this paper trail. The monitor notes that the ECP still has power to adjudicate results "before the expiration of 60 days after publication of the name of returned candidate in the official gazette". It suggests that independent observers as well as election candidates be invited to participate in this audit, so that all controversies can be resolved satisfactorily.

As such, these suggestions are not unreasonable or outside the law. They might show the ECP a way to redeem its image. Will it choose to assert itself as an independent, principled body, or continue to look the other way?

Will the Supreme Court Nullify the Elections 2024?

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Today, both the Supreme Court and the Islamabad High Court voiced their profound concern over separate yet crucial issues. The Supreme Court took a stern stance regarding a petition filed to declare the 2024 Elections null and void, emphasizing the gravity of such a legal move and expressing dissatisfaction with the subsequent withdrawal of the appeal. Meanwhile, the Islamabad High Court addressed the disappearance of 12 Baloch students from Islamabad, expressing deep frustration and dismay over the violation of their fundamental human rights enshrined in the constitution and the law of the land.

Interestingly, both cases are intertwined, albeit in different ways, with the establishment. In the Supreme Court case, a retired Brigadier filed the appeal to declare the 2024 election null and void, implicating the country's electoral process. Conversely, in the High Court case, the nation's esteemed spy agencies were implicated regarding the disappearance of individuals. While the issue of missing persons warrants attention, let's delve into the Supreme Court case concerning the elec-

tion appeal.

Delving into the motives behind the retired Brigadier's petition before the Supreme Court of Pakistan reveals a concern for the fairness and integrity of the electoral process, especially amidst allegations of widespread rigging. However, in filing the application, the retired Brigadier may not have fully grasped the financial implications of the re-elections to the state, political parties and the candidates, and the complex political dynamics at play within Pakistan, potentially underestimating the nuances of the situation.

He may have overlooked the broader implications of nullifying the elections, such as the potential impact on investor confidence, trade relations with friendly countries, and the stability of the stock exchange. Additionally, withdrawing support from organizations like the IMF and creditors could exacerbate economic challenges, leading to increased inflation and hardship for the common populace.

He might have erred in grasping the dynamics of allegations of rigging by PTI, JUI, GDA, and JI which in fact are emblematic of the broader landscape of partisan politics in Pakistan, where accusations of electoral misconduct are commonplace and often wielded as political leverage.

The futility of the petition became evident as major parties like PML(N), PPP,

and MQM accepted the election results. PTI, while forming the government in KP and opting for opposition roles elsewhere, is concurrently engaging in legal and political battles to contest the alleged electoral malpractices. Despite serious reservations about the fairness of the process, parties like GDA, JI, and JUI have refrained from demanding the nullification of the elections. Instead, aggrieved parties are pursuing their grievances through legal avenues, such as Election Tribunals and the Supreme Court of Pakistan, or through political activism.

These realizations may have dawned on the Brigadier later, may be coupled with pressure or intimidation, either personally or from external forces, prompting him to withdraw the petition. Alternatively, he may have reconsidered the implications of pursuing the case further and decided to step back for personal or strategic reasons. However, the Supreme Court's decision to proceed with the hearing indicates that they saw merit in investigating the allegations of rigging, regardless of the petitioner's withdrawal.

Alternatively, the latest confession of the Commissioner Rawalpindi where he implicated the chief election commissioner and the Chief Justice in the alleged massive and blatant riggings might be the actual reasons which

might have prompted to the Supreme Court to take up this petition on its guise discuss the commissioner's confession and allegations in an attempt to clear the chief justice from his alleged involvement in the rigging.

As the legal battle would unfold, the Supreme Court would face the arduous task of navigating complex political terrain. Though the petitioner's plea raises fundamental questions about the credibility of the electoral outcome, none of the political parties, the legal fraternity or civil society have ever voiced their intention to declare the elections null and void. All of them have preferred to resort to the legal battle and wage democratic campaigns to seek justice.

In this scenario, if the supreme court proceeds with the hearing, it might first determine the competency of the retired Brigadier to file any appeal to nullify the elections.

This typically involves demonstrating a personal stake in the outcome of the election, such as being a candidate who lost due to the alleged irregularities.

Moreover, the petition must be based on specific and verifiable grounds, such as evidence of widespread irregularities, rigging, or violations of electoral laws. The court may consider mere dissatisfaction with the elections as insufficient reason to

petition the supreme court.

The Supreme Court may also take into account that major political parties like PPP, PTI, PML(N), or MQM have accepted the election results and may be hesitant to become parties to the petition. Conversely, smaller parties that were marginalized in the elections, as well as individuals or civil society organizations advocating for electoral transparency and accountability, may step forward to defend the petition. They may argue that the pervasive irregularities have undermined the legitimacy of the results, warranting judicial intervention to nullify the elections.

The aggrieved political parties like PTI, JI, GDA and JUI if summoned by the SC may argue that though the election process was replete with irregularities, the overall integrity of the election was not compromised to the extent that would warrant nullifying the results. Additionally, they may stress the importance of addressing the genuine grievances by alternative avenues such as legal challenges or democratic campaigns.

The Supreme Court after meticulously weighing the arguments may consider various options while deciding the case. If the evidence fails to substantiate widespread rigging or irregularities that significantly undermine the election's integrity, the su-

preme court might dismiss the petition. And if credible allegations warrant further investigation, ordering a recount or an inquiry in specific constituencies to rectify concerns without nullifying the entire election.

However, in the event of irrefutable evidence of systemic fraud that fundamentally compromises the election's fairness, declaring it null and void may be the necessary course of action, ensuring democratic principles prevail and future electoral integrity is maintained.

The Supreme Court's determination to proceed with hearing the petition, even after its withdrawal, underscores the gravity of the situation surrounding the 2024 elections. It reflects an attempt by the Chief Justice to clear his name and may reflect the Court's commitment to address the widespread allegations of rigging that have garnered attention nationally, regionally, and internationally.

The direction taken by the Supreme Court in this pivotal case could significantly impact the outcome of the controversial elections.

Its findings have the potential to guide the country out of its current political, economic, and financial challenges or further entrench it in political and legal turmoil.

Therefore, the Supreme Court's actions carry immense weight and importance in navigating the country's future course.

A giant's strength



Arifa Noor

It's time to be worried. Really worried for Pakistan.

Our political engineering formula has come undone. The hawa which was clearly blowing hard couldn't secure a win for the blue-eyed party and engineer an election in Punjab. The ever-capricious electables have been playing up for some time now and refuse to swing around with the wind. And parties refuse to fall apart quietly after the first dozen or so among their leadership are given a software update.

And then, the people. Decades ago, it was decided they were illiterate, poor and desperate for money, and hence the political process could be reduced to 'they sell their vote for a few thousand, let's not blame them', while the more organised or better off went for the promise of a naali (drain) or sadak (road). But this time around, the poor and the sadak lovers have changed their colours. Their blood has also turned white. Caste and community no longer mean the political world to them. They have turned into selfish adults who want to exercise the individual right to vote, even encouraging their mothers and sisters to think similarly. The absence of the bat didn't confuse them, for the wily creatures used smartphones, believing it over mainstream media.

Instead of the meek, the tech-savvy are threatening to inherit the earth. Resultantly, those who are clinging on, decided to switch off Twitter (X). Cri-

sis management doesn't get more effective than this. After all, as far as tactics go, it is subtler than upturning results in constituencies where the infamous Form 45s were handed out long before someone found out that it wasn't enough to beat people black and blue, and that races have to be managed. It seems as if those who had made sure no one got hold of Form 45 in 2018 has been sent home and an undergraduate lot, which still hasn't attended Post-Poll Rigging 101, is in charge.

The civilian side is not handling the new breakups and romances well either. One political party ran a superb campaign rooted in the 1990s for an election taking place in 2024. It came second but was the first to hold a victory celebration and declare itself the biggest party. Confusion over numbers or just confidence in the engineers? Who knows? But they tried to wiggle out of the federal government once the PPP began playing hard to get; however, the confession of a Rawalpindi commissioner soon put an end to their airs. Since then, there are no sources reporting that the PML-N is considering not forming the government at the centre, and just clinging to Punjab. (The questions over the north Punjab results don't just reduce their already miserable National Assembly number but also the majority on which Maryam Nawaz will stroll into the chief minister's house.)

In the confusion, no one bothers to ask who designed and ran that uninspiring election campaign, which got them to the 80-seat mark in an election, where no one else was contesting. Considering they ran Islamabad directly since April 2022 and had a say in Punjab since the caretakers came in and still barely scraped through in the election, it's hard to imagine how they plan to

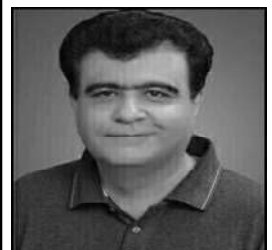
reverse this trend by governing directly. But who dare ask difficult questions at this moment?

The PPP continues to blow hot and scorn PML-N, while forming committees and holding meetings for a power-sharing formula. (As an aside, I recently learnt of 'breadcrumbing in relationships'.) It's worth pondering why no one believes the PPP and is convinced it will end up in government yet again. Does it have something to do with the fact that after the son announced the tough decision taken in the party's two-day meeting, the other chairman suddenly appeared at a press conference of senior citizens who laid claim to government-making at the home of Chaudhry Shujaat? Perhaps, there is no greater sign of the times than the visuals of that press conference with the good Chaudhry seated in the middle. He headed the king's party of the 1990s.

The confusion within it is only bound to increase as access to its leader is restricted and the lawyers and politicians figure out how to proceed. But with Sheikh Waqas Akram, Ali Mohammad Khan, Latif Khosa and Sher Afzal Marwat leading the assault in the National Assembly, Shehbaz Sharif will for the first time in his life find out what an opposition is all about. It might just end up being a bigger surprise for him than 1999 when he was said to be sleeping as his brother chose a new COAS.

In all of this, one can only hope we will bury the myth — among the many others — of an election bringing about stability and quiet. That old 'analysis' is about as relevant as a text message, and it should be dropped along with the caretaker government (one waxes with bated breath), as we brace ourselves for not just PDM 2.0 but also instability pro max. -- Courtesy Dawn

Dead on arrival?



Dr Niaz Murtaza

Instead of giving a fresh start or the political stability that has been lacking since 2017, our badly rigged polls have hobbled our ability to tackle the huge problems that are threatening chaos. These problems include ever-rising inflation and the default threat; a surge in terrorism; and testy ties with three neighbours. They also include political polarisation and gridlock; a Constitution mauling by all major parties and institutions and thus institutional collapse. All this makes us, arguably, the most unstable and troubled state in South Asia.

A new inept PDM regime, lacking strong legitimacy, mandate, unity and ideas to tackle these challenges, may lead dead on arrival. It will see internal and civilian-establishment tussles. It will face a PTI, revitalised after the post-May 9 setbacks by the polls results, with new legitimacy and energy to do what it does best — furious agitation.

A quick, simple review of the Form 45s of about 40 National Assembly seats can settle matters in three to four days, but establishment ploys may foil that. The PTI has uploaded its copies online and a review by credible media and civil society groups can help generate pressure for quick ECP action if its claims are found valid. The PTI may want street protest. But the brutality of the post-May 9 crackdown may mute it. Western pressure linked to a new IMF loan can force

our hand too, but the PTI's wild US conspiracy past talk may mute it. Even if a quick end in PTI's favour doesn't come, it will retain the upper hand with many ways to down PDM 2.0 slowly over time via a thousand cuts.

Its big numbers at the centre and in Punjab will cripple smooth legislature work. Its strong social media teams will unleash huge public pressure against all unpopular reform acts the new regime must take to meet IMF terms. Its KP set-up may withhold the cooperation needed to end terrorism. Its expatriate teams will work to poison Western minds against PDM 2.0. It will look to exploit fissures between PML-N and the establishment. In short, the PTI will use in-house, street, legal and foreign ploys deftly to cripple PDM 2.0. Against this well-oiled, superfat PTI outfit will be the slow-motion, septuagenarian PML-N dinosaurs, unable to control the narrative. It will have to last five years to give relief to people after two to three years of a tough IMF programme to win the next polls (it is unclear if it will). Thus, political stability and economic revival may remain elusive.

Even the Jamaat-Islami, JUI-F and GDA claim rigging, but their claims differ from the PTI ones. These parties did not face the visible pre-poll rigging that the PTI did, as confirmed even by neutral observers. Nor are they making specific rigging claims or providing initial proof of it, unlike the PTI's Form 45 claims. Thus, such claims are as vague and wild as the PTI's in 2013.

Beyond rigging issues, the overall mandate delivered by the elections also undermines our ability to make a fresh start under competent hands. Religious and king's parties did poorly, but so

did, unluckily, new and even older leftist parties. Thus, it was a mandate for the overtly status quo PML-N and PPP politics and the status quo PTI and MQM politics wrapped in thin populist foils. So badly have establishment forays into politics clogged the veins of our political system that the latter is unable to produce the regenerative politics needed to solve our many problems. Still, there is no immediate alternative to the current parties, and the way forward has to come from them until better parties start emerging.

Given this, Pak-istan cannot afford a second rigged regime, brought to power dubio-u-s-ly by the establishment after 2018, and the endless political stability seen after 2018. Thus, it is critical for all stakeholders to show maturity. The initiative must come from the establishment, which must end its political meddling. The ECP must quickly and transparently retabulate the results of the contested seats. The winners must then be allowed to form governments. Politically motivated cases and verdicts must be reversed legally. All political parties must recognise the dire problems we face, which can only be tackled by competent persons who have not been involved in the extreme political polarisation we have seen since 2014.

This means that the Sharifs, Zardaris and Imran Khan must focus on running their parties and appoint competent persons from within their ranks who can work constructively with the opposition to rescue Pakistan from the edge of an abyss. Otherwise Pakistan may remain mired in self-defeating and destructive politics, insecurity and economic turmoil. -- Courtesy Dawn

Sindh Cabinet approves increase in Abiana, water charges to meet M&R expenditures

KARACHI (APP): The provincial caretaker cabinet in its meeting held under the chairmanship of Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar has made some decisions, including increasing the rate of Abiana and water, surveying unsurveyed land, rewriting the record of rights, and agreeing that the land of Pakistan Steel Mill can be used for industrial purposes by the federal government.

The meeting was held at CM House on Tuesday and was attended by provincial cabinet ministers, Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, Chairman P&D Shakil Mangnejo, Secretary Local Govt Manzoor Shaikh, Secretary Finance Kazim Jatui and others.

The cabinet agreed that the land of Pakistan Steel Mills could be used by the federal government for establishing an Export Processing Zone.

However, there is a condition that the land must be used only for industrial purposes. It should be noted that during 1973-74, the Sindh government granted land to Pakistan Steel Mill. At present, Pakistan Steel Mills is using/controlling 13344.34 acres of land.

Minister for Irrigation, Ishwar Lal told the cabinet that the Abiana Rate and Water Supply Rate needed to be gradually increased to meet the Maintenance & Repair (M&R) requirement of irrigation infrastructure.

The Abiana (water charges) recovery is much less than the M&R expenditure for reasons, including Abiana are very much on the lower side and were revised in the year 1999.

The average annual Abiana collection is Rs 528.45 million against the average annual M&R expenditure of Rs 4,464.77 million.

As per Sindh Irrigation Department study 2014, the average annual M&R requirement is Rs 11353 million.

Secretary Irrigation Niaz Abbasi giving a comparison of the Sindh and Punjab rates said that Sindh collected abiana for wheat at Rs 53.3 per acre in 1999, 2021 and 2024 while Punjab collected Rs 150 in 2021 and Rs 400 in 2024. Similarly, Sindh collected Rs 181.87 in 1999, 2021 and 2024 for Sugarcane while Punjab collected Rs 250 in 2021 and 1600 in 2024.

The cabinet was told that the rate of Sindh for Cotton remained at Rs 93.09 per acre while Punjab has 250 in 2021 and Rs 1000 in 2024.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar presides over a cabinet meeting, held at CM House in Karachi.

Important to focus on character building of children along with education and training: Baligh

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman inaugurated three new programs for education and training of children at Children's Library Complex Lahore. Secretary School Education, Muhammad Ahsan Waheed, Chairman Board of Governors Children Library Complex Dr Nasir Javed, Managing Director Punjab Textbook Board, Naveed Shehzad Mirza, Managing Director Children Library Complex, Ahmed Khawar Shehzad and other personalities were present in the ceremony.

Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman inaugurated Knowledge Value and Skill Based Education, Space Race Pakistan and Virtual Reality Platform.

Governor Punjab, Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that it is very important to focus on the character building of children along with education and training. He said that the future of the country and the nation hinges on good education of children. The Punjab Governor said that the increase in the number of out of school children is alarming. He emphasized that we all have to forget our petty differences and play a role to address this issue. He said that management of Children Library Complex deserves appreciation for promoting educational and recreational activities by organizing national and international days, exhibitions and festivals. Governor Punjab said that Children Library Complex is providing educational.

CM inaugurates upgraded Mayo Children's Hospital

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, accompanied by children Masooma Fatima and Ibrahim suffering from kidney disorders, inaugurated the upgraded Mayo Children's Hospital, here on Tuesday.

The upgradation of Mayo Children's Hospital has been completed in record time, showcasing exceptional speed and quality. The hospital's bed capacity has been increased to 360 beds.

The CM inspected various wards of the state-of-the-art hospital and commended the high-quality work of the upgradation. The Secretary Communication and Works provided a briefing on the project, while the Secretary Health highlighted the improved treatment facilities.

CM Naqvi praised the hard work of the entire team involved in the upgradation, especially acknowledging the Department of Communication and Works, Secretary Sohail Ashraf, and XEN Maryam for their dedicated efforts. He also applauded the commitment of professors, doctors, and staff at Mayo Children's Hospital.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan giving away shield to Retired Secretary Excise and Taxation GB Momin Jan at CM Secretariat.

Providing protocol Nawaz LHC sends application to IG Punjab seeking action against CCPO Lahore

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has referred to IG Police Punjab application seeking initiation of action against CCPO Lahore for providing protocol and saluting to PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif on his return from London to Pakistan.

The court directed IG police Punjab to take action as per law. Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh heard the petition filed by citizen Kamran whereby the step of not initiating action against CCPO Lahore Bilal Kamyana was challenged.

The petition said Nawaz Sharif was convicted and declared proclaimed offender and he was given protocol on October 21 last year. Moreover CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana saluted a convicted person which runs contrary to police rules. He submitted application to the concerned authorities for taking action but it was not addressed.

Pak-Korean Nutrition Centre holds training on dietary issues at BZU

MULTAN (APP): Pak-Korean Nutrition Center organized a training session aimed at addressing prevalent dietary issues in Pakistan especially malnutrition among kids and rising trend of diseases.

The event was organized under the supervision of Chairman of the Department of Human Nutrition at Baha Uddin Zakariya University, Professor Dr. Tauseef Sultan. Dean Faculty of Food Sciences and Nutrition Dr Saeed Akhtar was special guest at the event. The session focused on equipping students with the necessary skills to tackle societal nutritional challenges and providing comprehensive training on nutritional diagnosis and counseling. The session also emphasized on the importance of dietary management in various health conditions.

Addressing the session, Dr Tauseef Sultan stated that Pakistan urged students and other experts to play an important role in highlighting and addressing the issues linked with food.

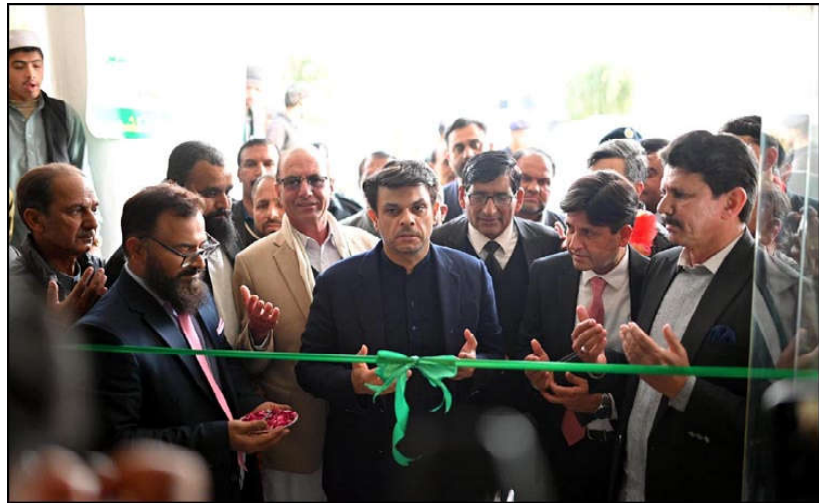
35th 'Vision Eye Camp' held to bring sight & hope to almost 600 patients

LAHORE: Vision Eye Care, an international relief organization dedicated to the prevention of blindness with a footprint in 39 countries around the world, launched its 35th cataract surgery project, the 'Vision Eye Camp,' in Karachi and Lahore.

Organized through sponsorships from the Parwaaz Financial Services Limited, CITI Group, Hananum Foundation, Lotte Akhtar Beverages (Pvt) Ltd, Haimont Group, and Galleria Design, the Camp aimed to treat 600 patients and perform 150 cataract surgeries. The Camp was organized with three distinguished ophthalmologists, Dr. Donghwa Kim, Dr. Dongkwon Lim, and Dr. Mathew Akashi (Medical Director, UCH Lahore),



along with four nurses and five volunteers, offering high-quality eye health services. Having embarked on blindness prevention projects in Pakistan since 2002, Vision Care has played a key role in facilitating patients facing vision impairments. In Lahore, the organization initiated public eye health services in 2006. By offering opportunities for sight restoration, Vision Care endeavors to not only conduct cataract surgeries for low-income groups but also implement eye screening programs and provide magnifiers to those who lack access to adequate medical care. Biannually, Vision Care holds the 'Vision Eye Camp' in Pakistan, conducting over 100 cataract surgeries each session.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis, Jawad Sohrah Malik Inaugurating First Protectorate Offices in Bagh and Rawalakot, AJK.

Irshad inaugurates child protection unit at Kohat

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education and Prisons, Justice Retd. Irshad Qaisar on Tuesday inaugurated a child protection unit at Nishtar Special Education Center, Kohat.

The function was arranged by the Child Protection and Welfare Commission Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in assistance with UNICEF.

The minister on the occasion said the caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was committed to discharge its national and international responsibility by providing protection to its children and people looking after them. For this purpose, she said all available resources were to be utilized.

Likewise, she said in collaboration with UNICEF, the provincial government was making efforts to establish child protection committees at district level and devising a comprehensive policy for child protection units besides, working on constancy of helpline 1121 of child protection. She also praised the efforts of UNICEF towards this end.

She said the children were our future and providing them with best possible opportunities and welfare initiatives was the need of the hour. She said the KP has surpassed other provinces in child protection endeavors.

The function was also addressed by the Chief Protection Officer, Ejaz Ahmad, Child Protection Specialist of UNICEF, Suhail Ahmad, Professor of Kohat University, Mehmood Khattak and Program Manager, Muhammad Wasim.

Later, the minister cut the ribbon by formally inaugurating the child protection unit and visited its various sections.



PESHAWAR: Peshawar Mayor, Zubair Ali delivering speech during the session of City Council in Peshawar.

First Lady advocates education, women empowerment

KARACHI (APP): First Lady, Samina Alvi on Tuesday underscored the invaluable contributions of teachers and the imperative need for their recognition in shaping the future of nation.

Addressing the Teacher's Appreciation Ceremony of Behbud Girls College and Higher Secondary School, she lauded Behbud Association for their dedication to recognising and appreciating the hard work of teachers.

She emphasised the vital role, teachers play in shaping the future of their students and commended the organisation for championing the cause of women empowerment through education.

The first lady stressed the importance of teachers focusing on critical thinking, IT skills, and communication skills in children. In a society increasingly reliant on these skills, she underscored the need for character building and instilling values to foster civilised and compassionate citizens.

Expressing concern over the educational landscape, the first lady asserted, "Teachers are the backbone of our schools, working tirelessly to mould children into constructive contributors to society."

She highlighted the transformative power of education and emphasised that change in society is achievable through effective education.

She expressed sorrow over the fact that 10 million children were out of school in the country.

Diving deeper into the education discourse, the first lady drew attention to the critical role of mothers in laying the foundation for a child's education.

She stated, "An educated mother is a strong pillar of a strong society."

One injured succumbed to his injuries

By Adeel Ahmed SHIKARPUR: One retired Border Force official was injured in the firing of some group of armed men in the jurisdiction of Rustam Police Station.

According to reports reached here that some group of armed men opened fires upon one Qadir Bux son of Mehruallah Brohi who was sitting at a local hotel.

The assailants managed good their escape while firing.

The injured was sent to area hospital for Medical treatment from where the injured Qadir Bux Brohi was referred to Sukkur hospital due to precarious condition.

Today the injured Qadir Bux Brohi succumbed to his injuries.

Neither FIR was registered Nor any cause of murder was ascertained till late evening of Tuesday.

Further police investigation into the matter is in process.

PTI decides to move HC against closure of social media website X

PESHAWAR (Online): PTI leader Ali Muhammad Khan has decided to resort to high court against closure of social media website X.

Ali Muhammad Khan has said in a statement it is fourth day since the closure of social media platform X. I being a lawyer am going to challenge the dictatorial act of this fascist regime in Islamabad High Court (IHC) because this dictatorship is not acceptable.

He said freedom of expression is basic human right. These dictatorial tactics of previous century can not run in this modern era. Closing internet or social media platform is not solution to problems.

Traffic restored at Malam Jabba, Lowari Tunnel

SWAT (Online): Traffic has been restored at Malam Jabba and Lowari Tunnel by removing snow from several kilometers of the nearby roads.

In this regard, rescue teams of Pakistan Army and district administration remained active throughout the night.

Due to heavy snowfall yesterday, many passengers and tourists were also shifted to safe places.

Governor stresses students of read books, play role for country's development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali stressed youngsters to divert their attention towards habit of books reading in existing era of social media and internet adding that students should spare time for book reading keeping in view its importance for their personal grooming. He said that books can change mindset and lives of young generation.

He was addressing the inauguration ceremony of Grand Book Fair in Khyber Medical College as a chief guest.

The event was also attended by Dean KMC, Dr. Mehmood Aurangzeb, Chairman Board of Governor, Dr. Umar Ayub, Dr. Fakr-e-Alam, faculty members and students.

The governor who inaugurated the book fair said that significance of book reading could not be undermined in existing age of social media and internet adding that students should spare time for book reading keeping in view its importance for their personal grooming. He said that books can change mindset of youngsters besides nurturing their vision and improve capabilities.

He appreciated efforts of organizers to hold the event and said that book reading would keep abreast students of day to day development happening in this age of transformation and technology.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurating Grand Book Fair Festival at Khyber Medical College.

Mayor Karachi says: All arrangements to be made on Shab-e-Barat

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Tuesday said that lighting, cleanliness and other arrangements will be made inside the boundaries and routes of the cemeteries to facilitate the citizens going to the graveyard for Fateha khawani on the occasion of Shab-e-Barat.

A facilitation centre will be established at all the graveyards with deployment of city wardens, 1122 ambulance and a fire tender and tanker of drinking water and a team of city wardens will be deployed for the movement and parking of vehicles outside the cemeteries, he said this while addressing a meeting held in his office on Tuesday regarding the arrangements for Shab-e-Barat.

Municipal Commissioner S.M. Afzal Zaidi, Director General Technical Services, Director General Parks, Senior Director Coordination, Director Municipal Services, Director Cemetery, Director City Warden, Chief Fire Officer, Chief Engineer Electrical and other officers were also present on the occasion.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that a large number of citizens come to the graves of their relatives and friends to offer Fateha on Shab-e-Barat, so keeping in view the past experiences, all arrangements should be made including cleaning of the roads around the cemeteries, lighting and water supply.

He directed the Senior Director Municipal Services to visit all graveyards, especially Mohammad Shah Graveyard, Sakhi Hasan, Mewa Shah, Azeempura and Model Colony cemeteries and ensure cleanliness arrangements.

EC notifies names of candidates returned from PK-20, PK-21

PESHAWAR (APP): The Election Commission (EC) of Pakistan has notified the names of candidates returned on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial assembly constituencies including PK-20 Bajaur II and PK-21 Bajaur III.

According to the notification, Anwar Zeb Khan and Ajmal Khan have been returned on Bajaur PK-20 and PK-21 respectively. Anwar Zeb Khan secured 12917 votes while Ajmal Khan secured 16712 votes. The number of votes polled in PK-20 is 40507 and 39827 in PK-21. Both the candidates have contested elections as independents.

The independent candidates may join a political party within three days of issuance of notification under clause 3 of Article 106 of the constitution, said the notification issued here Tuesday.



MUZAFFRABAD: Activists of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Cell shouting slogans during protest against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his arrival to Jammu and Kashmir, in the city.

Farhadov vows to foster Azerbaijan-Pak trade relations

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov emphasized Azerbaijan's strong commitment to fostering bilateral trade relations with Pakistan during his meeting with business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) on Tuesday.

He highlighted the commencement of direct flights between the two countries since last year by AZAL and PIA, and wished to expand flight connectivity, ultimately aiming for daily flights from various cities. The Ambassador stressed the key role of private sector

in driving economic ties. LCCI President Kashif Anwar extended a warm welcome to Ambassador Farhadov and acknowledged the enduring diplomatic, historical, and cultural ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Ambassador Khazar Farhadov expressed optimism regarding the significant increase in trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, attributed to the introduction of direct flights.

He noted a substantial rise in the number of Pakistani students studying in Azerbaijan, underscoring the importance of private sector engagement in fostering robust economic ties. The Ambassador emphasized the need for market exploration, partnerships, and reciprocal investments between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, citing successful trade relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey as a model. He highlighted Azerbaijan's position as a key international transport corridor and said that Azerbaijan's Socar Trading company provides LNG to Pakistan. Farhadov stressed the importance of people-to-people contact and the accessibility of the

Azerbaijani Embassy, expressing Azerbaijan's consideration in participating in possible joint projects also under Pakistan's SIFC.

He advocated for the establishment of preferential and transit trade agreements between the two countries and identified tourism as a promising area for collaboration, citing Azerbaijan's reception of tens of thousands of Pakistani tourists every year. The Ambassador highly appreciated ten times increase in direct and indirect, with contribution of SOCAR Trading, trade turnover in last two years.



RAWALPINDI: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the members of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, at National Health Summit on Dental Hygiene.

Atif Ikram Sheikh says: Land mafia detrimental to investments & industrialization

Independent Report

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has said that land mafia in Sindh has discouraged investments into industries of the province; and, damaged the image of Pakistan as an investment destination. Law & order is the lifeline of investment, industrial, trade, logistics, commercial and economic activities, he added.

It is pertinent to note that Mr. Riffat Mukhtar Raja, Inspector General of Sindh Police, visited FPCCI Head Office in Karachi along with top leadership of Sindh Police; including, Mr. Khadim Hussain Rind, Additional IG Karachi; Syed Pir Muhammad Shah, DIG Establishment; Mr. Iqbal Dara, DIG Traffic and Syed Asad Raza, DIG South and Syed Ali Asif, Additional IG Admin. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz

Magoon, SVP FPCCI, explained that we can unleash an industrial revolution in Sindh, if we can curb and eliminate land mafia from the province. He added that, due to criminal activities of the land mafia, new industrial areas are not attracting industries; and, instead, the industrial plots in established industrial areas in Karachi have become so expensive that they are now available at PKR. 400 million per acre. No new industry can afford these expensive plots and expansion of the existing ones is also hampered, he added. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon apprised that incidents of extortion or bhatta after kidnappings have also witnessed an increase of over 300 percent as the figures show that 50 incidents of extortion were reported in 2023; whereas 12 such cases had appeared in 2022.

Dr Iqrar says: Promotion of latest technology imperative to increase agri productivity

FAISALABAD (APP): University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan said that promotion of latest technology was imperative to increase per acre agri productivity in the country.

He was addressing the concluding ceremony of a two-day conference titled "emerging technologies for crop improvement" jointly organized by Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics, and Center for Advanced Studies (CAS), University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

He said that adoption of modern agricultural technology was indispensable for achieving food self-sufficiency. In the

context of climate change, varieties of crops with more resistance will have to be introduced so that the dream of agricultural development can be achieved, he added.

He said, "By increasing per acre production, we can not only achieve food self-sufficiency but economic condition of the farmers would also be improved."

Pro-Vice Chancellor UAF Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan said that the conference provided ample opportunities to implement coordinated efforts.

He said that agricultural golden chapter can be opened by making joint efforts of scientists at the international level.

DGAARI inaugurates early cotton cultivation

FAISALABAD (APP): Ayub Agricultural Research Institute's (AARI) newly appointed Director General (DG) Malik Allah Bukhsh has inaugurated early (Ageti) cotton cultivation here on Tuesday and said that early cultivation would play a pivotal role in obtaining bumper production. During inaugural ceremony at Cotton Research Station Faisalabad, he said that cotton is a precious crop of Pakistan which not only provide raw material to the local textile industry but also help in stabilizing

national economy by fetching precious foreign exchange up to Rs.30 billion. He said that Agriculture department has activated its entire field staff to persuade and guide the farmers for ensuring early cotton cultivation over maximum space of their lands because early cultivated crops gives maximum production as chances of pest and disease attack on early cultivation are less than the late sowing. Chief Scientist Cotton Research Institute Multan Dr Muhammad Sarwar said that approved cotton varieties.

'Multan division ideal for early sowing of cotton'; Saqib Ateel

MULTAN (APP): Secretary of Agriculture South Punjab Saqib Ateel said that the Multan division was ideal for early sowing of cotton because of low challenges to the crop.

He said this while paying a visit to a cotton field being developed through the Integrated Pest Management Model (IPM) at 5-Kassi in Tehsil Kabirwala. The sucking pests did not affect the early sown cotton, Saqib hinted while talking to farmers. The early sown

cotton gets more time for proper nurture of the crop due to climate factors and it also helps to improve cotton quality, he added.

He urged farmers to use triple gene-seed varieties as these were highly resistant against pink bollworms.

On this occasion, Deputy Director of Agriculture Rana Muhammad Arif and other officials were also present. They also briefed the secretary about the overall cotton situation in the district.

Pakistan's regional exports increase 21.68% in 7 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 21.68 per cent in the first seven months of the financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding months of last year.

The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$2614.021 million, which is 14.54 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$17977.963 million during July-January (2023-24), State

Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Pakistan carried out its border trade with the farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives.

Pakistan's exports to China witnessed an increase of 44.53 per cent to \$1726.679 million in seven months of this year from \$1194.639 million last year while exports to Afghanistan witnessed a nominal decline of 0.08

percent from \$285.177 million to \$284.927 million.

The country's exports to Bangladesh also decreased by 23.27 percent to \$367.776 million this year from \$479.357 whereas exports to Sri Lanka rose by 24.65 percent to \$227.254 million from \$182.313.

The exports to India decreased to \$0.150 million from \$0.153 million in the previous year. Exports to Nepal increased by 2.38 per cent to \$1.887 million from 1843 million while to Maldives increased by 12.45 per cent to \$5.348 million from 4.734 million, it added.

SMBR reviews reforms for Revenue Academy

LAHORE (APP): Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR) Nabil Javed conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing reforms taken for the Revenue Academy during a meeting held here on Tuesday. Revenue Secretary Shafiqullah Mushtaq provided a detailed briefing to the SMBR, highlighting that over 4,000 employees underwent training at the academy within a year. The training encompassed various officials, including Tehsildar, Patwari, and personnel from the Pakistan Administrative Services (PAS) group. Expressing a vision for modernization, SMBR Nabil Javed outlined plans to enhance the Revenue Academy's structure. He directed the appointment of a senior officer as the Principal of the Revenue Academy, with a mandate to submit a report within a week.

CCP approves acquisition of Fauji Cereals business by Fauji Foods limited

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the acquisition of M/s Fauji Foundation's Fauji Cereals Business by M/s Fauji Foods Limited. The Fauji Foundation, established as a charitable trust for the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families, submitted a pre-merger application to the CCP under Section 11 of the Competition Act, 2010.

The proposed transaction involves the acquisition of the Fauji Cereals Business by M/s Fauji Foods Limited through a Business Transfer Agreement. M/s Fauji Foods Limited is a publicly listed company incorporated in Pakistan, primarily focused on the production and sale of dairy and allied products.

CCP's assessment of

the pre-merger application indicated that there were no overlaps between the merging parties in the areas of business activities such as Breakfast Cereals and Wheat, Barley & Porridge. Therefore, the CCP concluded that market conditions will remain unchanged post-transaction, with no significant alteration to the competitive landscape in these product categories.

Following competition assessment, CCP concluded that the proposed transaction involves the acquisition of shares and does not suggest any substantial lessening of competition or the creation or strengthening of a dominant position in the relevant market. Restructuring will ensure the Breakfast Cereal business is consolidated under one arm and result in future profitability.



Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif addressing launching ceremony of parental guide titled "Safeguarding Your Child in the Digital Age" at Telenor Headquarters in Islamabad.

FPCCI, SCWEC jointly organizing trade fair from March 7th to 9th 2024

Independent Report

LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) & the SCWEC, jointly organizing a three-day event comprising a trade fair named "SAARC Bazaar" from March 7th to 9th, 2024 at Expo Center Lahore, Pakistan.

The SAARC Bazaar aims to empower South Asian entrepreneurs and SMEs, particularly the women entrepreneurs in the cottage industry of Pakistan. This three-day exhibition will serve as a platform for women, artisans and craftsmen engaged in

cottage industries in South Asian countries to showcase their products.

The Women's Business Conference, themed "Invest in South Asian Women: A Path towards Regional Progress" will be held on March 7, 2024, on the eve of International Women's Day in Lahore, Pakistan at Pearl Continental Hotel. The conference will feature insightful discussions, keynote addresses, and networking opportunities aimed at fostering partnerships and driving sustainable growth across the region.

PSX gains 4.49 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) gained 4.49 percent on Tuesday, showing a nominal positive change of 0.01 percent, closing at 60,464.24 points against 60,459.75 points the previous trading day.

A total of 364,443,122 shares valuing Rs 10,928 billion were traded during the day as compared to 261,799,826 shares valuing Rs 9,907 billion the last day.

Some 349 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 174 of them recorded gains and 155 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 20 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 117,022,297 shares at Rs 6.27 per share, PIAC(A) with 19,289,500 shares at Rs 11.10 per share, and K-Electric Limited with 19,168,663 shares at Rs 4.26 per share.

Pakistan Tobacco Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 49.16 per share price, closing at Rs 1,030.00, whereas the runner-up was Indus Ismail Industries Limited with a Rs 45.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,200.00.

Gold rates up by Rs 150 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola 24 karat gold increased by Rs 150 and was sold at Rs 214,450 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs 214,300 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 128 to Rs 183,856 from Rs 183,728 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 168,535 from Rs 168,417, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs 20 to Rs 2,570 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs 17.15 to Rs 2,203.36. The price of gold in the international market remained stagnant at \$2,042, the Association reported.



Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, is presenting the commemorative shield to Mr. Riffat Mukhtar Raja, IG Sindh Police. Mr. Aman Paracha & Mr. Asif Sakhi, VPs FPCCI, were also present on the occasion.

NTDC installs 2nd 250MVA Auto Transformer at 220 kv Grid Station Ghakkar

LAHORE (APP): The National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) has successfully replaced and augmented 2nd 160 MVA Auto Transformer (T-2) with 250 MVA, 220/132 kV rating unit at 220 kv grid station NTDC Ghakkar.

The NTDC spokesman confirmed to media here Tuesday that 250 MVA, 220/132kV auto transformer was successfully energised today. This work, as part of World Bank funded National Transmission Modernization Project

(NTMP-1), has been completed under System Constraints Removal Programme which will see an enhancement in the capacity of 220 kv grid station Ghakkar.

He added that it would also help meet the increasing load demand of the GEPCO (Gujranwala Electric Power Company) region.

The augmentation of new 250 MVA auto transformer would benefit the industrial, rural and urban consumers of the GEPCO region, besides increasing the system reliability.



PESHAWAR: Cobblers preparing traditional shoes (Peshawari Chappal) at his workplace.



Engagement with Provincial Government Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on February 20, 2024 for the conduct of 7th integrated digital agricultural census.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships, MSC Spring and Evriali carrying Containers and Wheat, berthed at Container Terminal and Grain Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Maersk Brooklyn, Siamisam, Stefanost and Agia Eirini Force carrying Containers, LNG, Wheat and Coal also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours.

A total of six ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, two ships, MSC Spring III and Evriali left the port on today morning, and another ship Haj Mohammad is expected to sail on today afternoon. A cargo volume of 102,319 tonnes, comprising 50,580 tonnes imports cargo and 51,739 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,005 Containers (1,030 TEUs Imports and 1,975 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are twelve ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim.

Plugging loopholes of smuggling is herculean task: Dr Sajjad Arshad

FAISALABAD (APP): Plugging loopholes of smuggling and ensuring availability of dollar at a stable rate was herculean task but at the same time provision of energy at regionally competitive rates was more imperative to catalyze the economy, said Dr Sajjad Arshad, Acting President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). He was addressing to the delegation of the 49th Mandatory Training Course at the Staff Training Institute Establishment and Administration Department Government of KPK. The participants of this course visited FCCI and interacted with the office bearers on the role of the private sector in the national economy.

He said, "Pakistan is blessed with cheap labor in abundance and if electricity at competitive rate is ensured, our industrial sector could perform much better."

He also underlined the importance of the SME sector and said that it could neither expand their existing units nor introduce new technology due to the financial crunch and high cost of loans.

He mentioned the Chinese model and said that it was producing 50% cheap electricity through solar and wind while the remaining was generated through water. About socioeconomic issues, the Acting President said that Pakistan was ranked at 161st position in health quality index while 46% women are anemic and 40% children were facing stunted growth. He further said, "26 million children are out of school and we must provide them with basic facilities to make them a productive part of the society."

WHO completes second Gaza hospital evacuation amid fighting

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The World Health Organization said on Tuesday it had completed a second evacuation mission from Gaza's Nasser Hospital but voiced concern for nearly 150 patients and medics who remain at the site amid continuing fighting.

The Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest, stopped working last week after a week-long Israeli siege followed by a raid, the U.N. agency said. WHO staff and other aid groups have so far evacuated a total of 32 critical patients including injured children and those with paralysis, but

the agency is concerned for those left behind with supplies dwindling.

"WHO fears for the safety and well-being of the patients and health workers remaining in the hospital and warns that further disruption to lifesaving care for the sick and injured would lead to more deaths," the WHO said on the social media site X, saying those remaining included 130 patients and 15 medics.

Israel says Hamas, the Islamist group that has run Gaza since 2007, uses hospitals for cover. Hamas denies this and says Israel's allegations serve as a pretext to destroy the healthcare system.

The WHO's Tarik Jašarević told reporters in Geneva that WHO staff who were part of the rescue mission had to navigate through pitch-black corridors with flashlights to find patients against a backdrop of gunfire.

Help had to arrive on foot because a deep, muddy ditch near the site made the road impassable, the WHO said.

"It's very difficult to see these scenes of people just being cut off," he said, saying food supplies were limited. "It's heartbreaking to see that there are people in health facilities who are not able to be treated correctly," he said.



Displaced Palestinians gather to receive food at a government school in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, amid ongoing strikes by Israeli forces.

Beijing criticizes proposed US sanctions

BEIJING (Online): Beijing has responded to reports that Washington is planning to impose "broad" sanctions on the country, vowing to defend Chinese businesses from measures intended to target firms for allegedly helping Russia.

The proposed sanctions were discussed on Monday by CNBC, which interviewed a number of Congress members about the plans. Democrat Gerald Connolly, who sits on the House Committee on Foreign Relations, claimed "the very threat" of sanctions from the US and potentially the EU "ought to clarify

some thinking in Beijing."

However, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Tuesday that Beijing rejects unilateral economic restrictions as a matter of principle and will defend the interests of its businesses.

"China has the right to conduct normal cooperation with countries around the world," Mao said during a daily briefing. "We have always opposed unilateral sanctions and 'long-arm jurisdiction' that have no basis in international law and are not authorized by the UN Security Council."

South Africa asks World Court to find Israeli occupation illegal

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: South Africa on Tuesday urged the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to issue a non-binding legal opinion that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is illegal, arguing it would help efforts to reach a settlement. Representatives of South Africa opened the second day of hearings at the ICJ, also known as the World Court, in the Hague. The hearing follows a request by the U.N. General Assembly for an advisory, or non-binding, opinion on the occupation in 2022.

The deputy head of the FSIN prison authority, Valery Boyarnev, was promoted to colonel general of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The director of the Anti-Corruption Foundation, which was established by Navalny, wrote on his Telegram channel on Tuesday that Boyarnev was personally responsible for Navalny's torture in prison.

"This must be understood as Putin's open reward for the torture," Ivan Zhdanov said of Boyarnev's promotion.

In July 2023, an order by Boyarnev to restrict the opposition politician's ability to buy food and daily necessities became known during a court hearing

Palestine urges ICJ to declare Israel's occupation of their territory illegal

HAGUE (Online): Palestine has urged the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to declare Israel's occupation of their territory illegal to pave the way for a two-state solution to the conflict for a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki told the 15-judge ICJ panel in the Hague that his people have been suffering colonialism and apartheid under the Israelis.

Israel's open-ended military occupation has violated the prohibition on territorial conquest and the Palestinians' right to self-determination, and has imposed a system of racial discrimination and apartheid, say the Palestinians. "This occupation is annexation and supremacist in nature," Palestinian Foreign

Minister Riad Malki said on Tuesday.

He called on the court to uphold the Palestinian right to self-determination and declare that "the Israeli occupation is illegal and must end immediately, totally and unconditionally".

Oral proceedings continue at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories. South Africa, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, Bangladesh and Belgium present early arguments.

More than 50 states and at least three international organisations will address judges at the United Nations' top court until February 26. A nonbinding legal opinion is expected after months of deliberation by the judges.

Putin promotes high ranking prison officer after Navalny's death

Monitoring Desk
GAZPROM ARENA: Russian President Vladimir Putin has promoted a high-ranking prison officer several days after the death of leading opposition figure Alexei Navalny.

The deputy head of the FSIN prison authority, Valery Boyarnev, was promoted to colonel general of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The director of the Anti-Corruption Foundation, which was established by Navalny, wrote on his Telegram channel on Tuesday that Boyarnev was personally responsible for Navalny's torture in prison.

"This must be understood as Putin's open reward for the torture," Ivan Zhdanov said of Boyarnev's promotion.

In July 2023, an order by Boyarnev to restrict the opposition politician's ability to buy food and daily necessities became known during a court hearing

against Navalny.

Prisoners can normally use their money to supplement their own meagre rations in the prison shop.

According to Zhdanov, the newly appointed colonel general was also responsible for further harassment of Navalny.

Boyarnev's promotion became known on Monday when the presidential decree was published in the legal database. In addition to Boyarnev, three other law enforcement officers were promoted to the rank of general. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied any connection between Navalny's death and the promotions, downplaying it as a normal procedure.

Navalny, 47, died on Friday in a Siberian prison camp. Weakened by repeated solitary confinement, Navalny is said to have collapsed during a tour of the icy prison yard and died despite attempts at resuscitation.

William Ruto and Bola Tinubu: Africa's 'flying presidents' under fire

Monitoring Desk
KENYAN: Since Kenya's William Ruto and Nigeria's Bola Tinubu became presidents, they have faced similar criticism over their frequent trips abroad.

The two men have been the subject of unflattering descriptions - the costs associated with their alleged penchant for air travel often contrasted with tough economic conditions at home.

A Kenyan newspaper, the Standard, nicknamed Mr Ruto the "Flying President". It said "so great is his love for flying that it appears that he cannot pass up any opportunity" despite pressing domestic demands, such as dealing with the high cost of living.

Last month, as Mr Tinubu made yet another trip to Europe, Nigeria's opposition leader Atiku Abubakar said on social media that Nigeria does not need a "tourist-in-chief". He criticised the president's private visit "while Nigeria

is drowning in the ocean of insecurity".

This in some ways can be seen as a cheap shot, easily levelled by any critic. Presidents need to attend heads-of-state meetings and nurture foreign relations. This is important not only for diplomatic reasons, but also economic ones, as lucrative investment deals can be negotiated.

But some have pointed out that late Tanzanian President John Magufuli never travelled outside Africa in his six years in office. Kenyan foreign policy analyst Prof Macharia Munene acknowledges that some trips are necessary but says others are undoubtedly "wasteful".

"You have presidents who love to be in the air... Some of these trips are personal glorifications, not so much for the country," he told the BBC. Mr Ruto and Mr Tinubu and their spokespersons defend their trips as being vital to help address the very problems they are accused of ignoring.

Analysis-Parole for Thailand's Thaksin reflects rise of new threat to old guard

Monitoring Desk
BANGKOK: The early release of Thailand's once-fugitive ex-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra represents to many a deal the influential billionaire made with his enemies to counter an even greater threat to the royalist-military establishment.

To some observers of Thailand's convoluted politics, Thaksin's parole after returning from self-imposed exile in August was the latest act in an elaborate effort to crush the hugely popular anti-establishment Move Forward party that finished first in last year's election.

Move Forward, which advocates institutional reforms including some involving the monarchy, was blocked from forming a government by a Senate appointed by a junta that seized power in 2014 coup against a government led by Thaksin's Pheu Thai party.

Three months later, Pheu Thai - which during the election campaign had shared Move Forward's

platform of ending military dominance of politics - formed its own coalition government that included some of the very figures involved in the 2014 coup.

The same day, Thaksin, 74, flew back to Thailand on a private jet and surrendered to authorities on various criminal convictions in absentia. He complained of chest pains and was transferred to a police hospital, where he remained until Sunday, the first day he was eligible for parole. "His comeback has to do with the deal he made with the establishment," said Tipitop Phakdeewanich, a political scientist at Thailand's Ubon Ratchathani University. Reuters requests for comments on Monday went unanswered. Thaksin's family, party and Thai authorities all say there was no such quid pro quo. But many analysts are unconvinced. One reason is that while Thaksin's probusiness agenda posed challenges to Thailand's patronage system, Move Forward's anti-establishment proposals went much further.



Ambassador of Qatar to Russia Sheikh Ahmed bin Nasser Al Thani and Russia's presidential commissioner for children's rights Maria Lvova-Belova (unseen) interact with Ukrainian children, at the Qatari embassy in Moscow.

China offers backing to Hungary in security matters, law enforcement

Monitoring Desk
HUNGARY: China has offered long-term support to Budapest in the security field, expanding mutual ties beyond economic cooperation, Reuters reported on Feb. 19 after Chinese Public Security Minister Wang Xiaohong's visit to Hungary.

Wang met Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Feb. 16 as the two countries aim to deepen their friendship and "strengthen communication and coordination in international and regional affairs," the Chinese state-owned news agency Xinhua said.

Under Orban, Hungary has been fostering close ties with authoritarian regimes like China or Russia, much to the dismay of its EU and NATO partners.

Wang reportedly said he hopes to open a new level of cooperation with

the Central European country in areas such as combating terrorism and transnational crimes.

These efforts should also include security capacity building under China's Belt and Road Initiative, Reuters said.

During his stay in Hungary, Wang signed documents on law enforcement and security cooperation with Hungarian Interior Minister Sandor Pinter, according to Reuters.

A security pact between Hungary and China is likely to further strain Budapest's relationship with Western countries.

Orban has repeatedly undermined Western consensus on supporting Ukraine and countering Russia, delaying aid and sanctions. Hungary is also the last country that has not yet ratified Sweden's accession to NATO.

Germany summons Russian envoy over death of Navalny

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: The German Foreign Office is summoning the Russian ambassador on Monday over the death of Alexei Navalny, a ministry spokeswoman said.

The politically motivated proceedings against Navalny and numerous other critics of the Russian government, as well as the inhumane prison conditions, show how brutally the Russian judiciary acts against dissidents and the means used by President Vladimir Putin to suppress freedom of expression, the spokeswoman said.

"We condemn this in the strongest possible terms and expressly call for the release of all those imprisoned in Russia for political reasons," she said.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's spokesman separately called on Russia to fully clarify the circumstances of Navalny's death in a Siberian prison camp and also to release his body to his family.

Mexico protesters in mass rally against electoral changes

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: Huge crowds have rallied in Mexico's capital, protesting against proposed changes to the electoral authority ahead of June's presidential elections.

The Mexico City government said some 90,000 people turned out in the city's Zocalo Square. The rally organisers said the figure was much higher.

The opposition accuses President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of trying to weaken the National Electoral Institute - an autonomous, non-partisan body. He says the INE is biased and corrupt.

Since his victory in the 2018 presidential elections, Mr López Obrador has been pushing for a reform of the INE, which he says will save taxpayers \$150m (£119m) a year by drastically reducing the agency's staff.

German defence minister calls Red Sea mission 'important signal'

Monitoring Desk
RED SEA: German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius has emphasized the importance of the planned deployment of a German frigate in the Red Sea as part of an EU naval mission to protect shipping from Houthi militants in Yemen.

"We will protect international security and freedom of navigation. The impact will not be underestimated," the minister told public broadcaster ZDF on Tuesday.

The deployment is a "very important sig-

nal to the attacking Houthi and the organisations and states behind them."

On Monday, EU foreign ministers approved the mission, which involves sending European warships and airborne early warning systems to the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and surrounding waters.

The vessels will have orders only to fire on the militants if they attack first and will not be authorized to shoot pre-emptively. The operational command is to be in the Greek city of Larissa.



Lebanese activists block the road leading to the Egyptian embassy in Beirut during a protest on Monday against the closure of the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.

Von der Leyen to seek second term as European Commission president

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has informed members of her conservative party in Germany that she is seeking a second term in one of Europe's most powerful posts, sources told dpa.

She became the first woman to lead the European Union's executive when she was elected to the post in 2019, a job which places her in charge of about 32,000 EU employees as well as much of the bloc's political agenda.

At a meeting on Monday in Berlin, Von der Leyen told German col-

leagues from her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party that she was looking forward to the joint campaign ahead of elections for the European Parliament in June. A public announcement was expected later Monday. As European Commission president, she frequently represents the bloc at almost all major international summits such as the G7 and G20. The US magazine "Forbes" recently named von der Leyen the "most powerful woman in the world." Von der Leyen's four years at the helm of the European Commission have been marked by the war in Ukraine.

Israel calls on residents of two Gaza City neighbourhoods to flee

Monitoring Desk
GAZA CITY: Israel has ordered new evacuations from two neighbourhoods in Gaza City, indicating impending military operations there. The calls were issued on Tuesday morning for the neighbourhoods of Zeitoun and Turkman, located in the north of the Gaza Strip. Israeli troops first moved into the area in November. The residents were told to move to a designated area further south along the Mediterranean coast.

The UN says up to 1.7 million of the more than 2.2 million residents of the Gaza Strip have had to leave their homes since the war began on October 7.

Pressure mounts on SA ruling party as unemployment rises again ahead of election

Monitoring Desk
CAPE TOWN: South Africa's unemployment rate, already the highest in the world, rose to 32.1% in the fourth quarter of 2023, according to official government figures released on Tuesday. The Quarterly Labor Force Survey reported that the number of unemployed working-age people in South Africa rose to 7.9 million after 46,000 more became unemployed in the last three months of 2023, increasing from 31.9%.

The news is a blow to the ruling African National Congress party as it faces its steepest election test ever in a few months. The desperately high unemployment rate is a key voter issue. Unemployment among aged 15-24 was 59.4% at the end of last year as Africa's most advanced economy continued to struggle to create jobs for young people entering the workforce.

The ANC has been in government since the end of the apartheid system of white minority rule in 1994 but has seen its support gradually wane over the last 30 years.

Greek farmers take tractors to Athens to protest rising costs

Monitoring Desk
ATHENS: Greek farmers were expected to drive into Athens with tractors on Tuesday to protest outside parliament over the impact of rising energy costs, competition from abroad and recent flooding. Their protest echoes grievances in other parts of Europe, including France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland and Italy, where farmers have staged similar demonstrations. Greek farmers' unions have been in negotiations.



LONDON: British film producer and director Christopher Nolan poses with the award for Best film and Best director for "Oppenheimer" during the British Academy's film awards ceremony.

President underlines need for combined efforts to overcome education, health, economic issues

RAWALPINDI (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that the entire nation had set a precedent in the world with their collective efforts during Covid-19 pandemic and stressed that such a display of unity was critical to address disconcerting issues in education, health and economic sectors.

Addressing a National Health Summit organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), the president said that during Covid-19 pandemic when the deadly wave was hitting the globe, Pakistan emerged as the third best performing country in the world to avert the damages in health and economic sectors.

He said it was all possible due to the collective efforts and cooperation of the people and all stakeholders who displayed union in their efforts to ward

off the spread of the pandemic.

"That precedent has carved a path for the future which can guide us in our endeavours to overcome the contemporary challenges," he opined.

Highlighting the importance of physical hygiene, the president said that from the Islamic teachings, it stood proved that personal hygiene was linked with spiritual purity.

He said about 90 percent dental cases could be cured if prevention habits were developed by the people including regular brushing of teeth, similar was the case with communicable diseases.

The president urged all the stakeholders and the business community to play their parts in creating awareness among the masses over health-related issues including mental stress and population

growth.

The serious issue of 26 million out-of-school children required combined efforts and mosques could be utilized to impart education to these children, he added. The president mentioned Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka where the literacy rate among the children was higher than Pakistan. He also cited the precedent of China that lifted about 700 million people out of poverty by focusing on health and education sectors.

"The State can show the path but it is the responsibility of all stakeholders of the society to share the responsibility by addressing issues in the education and health sectors," he added.

President Alvi further stressed upon focusing on priorities and continuity of policies which required public involvement.



Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif cutting ribbon to inaugurate Data Center at PTA Headquarters in Islamabad.

Step afoot to provide all kinds of training to medical staff for improving treatment: Abdullah

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Secretary Health Abdullah Khan said that it was the first effort of Balochistan Health Department to provide its medical staff with all kinds of skills in the field of health and IMNCI training for the first time in Balochistan would improve the treatment of children.

He expressed these views while addressing a two-day training on Early Childhood Development, Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness (IMNCI) as chief guest.

The training was started with contribution of Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Program, Health Department and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

Provincial Coordinator MNCH Dr. Gul Sabin Azim Ghorizi (IMNCI) explained the aims and objectives of the training.

Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan said that the training would promote early childhood development which would reduce infant mortality, disease and disability and improve healthy development of children in five years of age.

Nationally, more than 80 percent of deaths among young children are due to neonatal conditions and infectious diseases such as

pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, measles and meningitis, he said.

He said that the IMNCI strategy aims to improve the skills of health workers and health systems to prevent common childhood diseases, including in the neonatal period, and support healthy child development.

Pediatrician Dr. Saima said that the baby should be breastfed immediately after birth due to mother's milk, the newborn child is protected from many diseases.

UNICEF's Dr. Saba told the training participants that the IMNCI's strategy promotes accurate identification of childhood illnesses in outpatient settings and ensures appropriate combined treatment of all major conditions affecting the young child and strengthens caregiver counseling, and speeds recovery in critically ill neonates and children.

PTA launches data center to enhance service delivery

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), inaugurated its Tier 3 compliant data center here on Tuesday. The ceremony was attended by Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology & Telecom, Dr. Umar Saif, said a news release.

The newly established data center is engineered to deliver efficiency and reliability, boasting 24x7 Network Operation Center (NOC) and Security Operation Center (SOC) to ensure seamless operations and robust security measures.

On this occasion, the caretaker Federal Minister said that this initiative aligns with our vision for a digitally stronger Pakistan and underscores the government's dedication to providing advanced and secure digital services.

Chairman PTA, Major General (Retd) Hafeez Ur Rehman, appreciated the efforts of all stakeholders involved in the successful establishment of the data center which will serve as a centralized platform for managing and provisioning a diverse range of e-services to consumers and telecom operators.

Aneeq stresses national harmony, positivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed stressed the importance of reducing hate and delivering good news to foster trust and belief among the people.

Talking to PTV, he urged individuals from all walks of life, including political leaders and bureaucrats, to contribute to the country's development and prosperity.

He emphasized the need for a collective effort guided by ethical and religious values.

The minister said that the ministry made a significant reduction in the Hajj package for 2024, reducing the financial burden on pilgrims.

This reduction, from Rs 11,75,000 to Rs 10,75,000 marked the first time in the country's history that the upcoming Hajj had become cheaper than the previous year's Hajj, he added.

In addition to affordability, the minister highlighted improvements in Hajj facilities, including the introduction of short-duration Hajj, allowing pilgrims to return after completion in 22 days.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking with media persons after the attending hearing of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto case at Supreme Court in the Federal Capital.

Kabir Afghan condemns torture on protesters in Chaman

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial General Secretary of Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkmAP) Kabir Afghan has condemned the alleged torture on protesters staging dharna (protest sit-in) in Chaman.

The PkmAP's provincial leader was addressing a hurriedly called press conference here at Quetta Press Club on Tuesday.

Other local leaders of the party were present on the occasion.

Kabir Afghan said that the people have been lodging protest against the condition of passport at the Pak-Afghan border in Chaman.

He said that we fully support the protest dharna being staged in Chaman and demand of the authorities to accept their genuine demands.

Kabir Afghan also mentioned that trade is being done without passport via Taftan border.

Therefore, the people of Chaman should also have permission to do trade without passport.

Kabir Afghan announced that the protest dharna would remain continued in Chaman till acceptance of the demands of the protesters.



QUETTA: Commandant BC Sarfaraz Ahmed Falki meeting with Caretaker Home Minister Mir Muhammad Zubair Khan Jamali.

Petition lands at SC Lahore Registry seeking probe into poll rigging

LAHORE (INP): A petition was moved in the Supreme Court (SC) Lahore Registry on Tuesday seeking investigation into the alleged rigging in the recently-held general elections in the country. The application was filed on behalf of citizen Mian Shabbir Ismail.

The federal government, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the chief secretaries of the four provinces were made respondents in the petition. The applicant requested the apex court to clear the dust regarding rigging allegations and reveal the facts.

It may be mentioned here that a similar kind of petition was first submitted at the apex court in Islamabad. Despite the fact that the mover seeking annulment of the general elections due to complaints of rigging, withdrew his petition on Monday, but Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa insisted he would still hear the case.

"Bring the petitioner back. Dial the cellphone number he has given on his application. We will hear the plea," the CJP ordered the SHO of the concerned police station after the petitioner did not show up in court.

A three-member bench of the apex court, headed by the CJP, and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Halali, had been constituted to hear the petition filed by a retired brigadier, Ali Khan.

Calling withdrawal of the petition a "joke", CJP Isa remarked that he would not allow this to happen again. "Do these people file petitions just for the sake of publicity," he said.



SUKKUR: Leaders and supporters of Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) are holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, at Moro National Highway road in Sukkur.

IHC orders for not harassing, taking adverse action against Sher Afzal

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered for not taking adverse action and harassing PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat.

Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz took up for hearing petition filed by Sher Afzal Marwat for issuance of orders by the court for not harassing him besides providing him details of cases against him.

Sher Afzal Marwat requested we cannot make expectation. You please issue order for not harassing and entering into house without warrants.

Later the court while issuing notice to the respondents ordered for providing details of cases against Sher Afzal Marwat, not harassing and taking adverse action against him.

The court while adjourning the hearing of the case till February 26 sought report.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan Dr. Shafiqur Rehman meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Terrorist killed in DI Khan IBO: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (INP): Security forces killed a terrorist in an exchange of fire during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail (DI) Khan district on Tuesday.

"During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between our troops and terrorists as a result of which terrorist Muhammad Sohail was killed," the ISPR said.

It added that he remained "actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, including target killing of innocent civilians". Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from him.

PTI withdraws case for specific seats after joining SIC

PESHAWAR (INP): PTI has opted to retract the case filed for specific seats following its Ittehad with the Sunni Ittehad Council. PTI's lawyer, Shah Faisal Advocate, confirmed that the party's decision aligns with the newfound Ittehad, rendering the case obsolete.

The petition, scheduled for today's hearing at the Peshawar High Court before Justices Ishfaq Ibrahim and Atiq Shah, sought specific seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. PTI had initially approached the court in pursuit of securing these seats and integrating independent candidates into the party.

Emphasizing PTI's stance, the petition underscored the party's entitlement to specific seats, asserting that the Supreme Court holds the authority to delist parties, not the Election Commission. However, in light of the Ittehad with the Sunni Ittehad Council, PTI has opted to withdraw the case.

The Sunni Ittehad Council, meanwhile, has also petitioned the Election Commission for specific seats.

Annual exams of Matric commences in Balochistan today

Independent Report QUETTA: The annual examinations of matric is due to start in Balochistan from today (Wednesday).

According to the Chairman of Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Quetta, around 143,000 candidates are taking part in the examinations.

Over 430 examination centers have been established for conducting the examinations all over the province.

The Chairman BISE informed that special arrangements have been made for prevention of cheating in the matric examinations.

PPP to return any seat, if proved won with rigging: Taj Haider

ISLAMABAD (INP): People's Party Senator Taj Haider on Tuesday told the Senate that the party will return any seat if proved to be won with rigging.

"Bring the form 45, we are prepared to return a seat if proved to be won by the party with election rigging," Senator Taj Haider speaking in the house said.

He said the People's Party standing with all those persons whose rights have been usurped at any place. He advised political parties to take a legal path instead of opting for chaos, "we want solution of problems" PPP senator said.

Governorship in Sindh our right, will not give up: MQM-P

KARACHI (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has clarified that Governorship in Sindh was right of the party and it will not give up.

According to details, MQM-P assuring Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) of its support in formation of government has sought support on three-point constitutional amendment.

PCP calls on leaders to focus on population-resource balance

By Anila Ejaz QUETTA: The Population Council Pakistan expressed hope that from the outset, both the new Prime Minister and the chief ministers of the four provinces would prioritise addressing the challenge of balancing population growth with available resources, starting

portance of balancing population growth and resources at all government levels.

The participants stressed that attaining the Sustainable Development Goals will establish a durable policy framework, guiding all future governments in a positive direction towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals which will set a positive direction for all future governments.

The Population Council Pakistan has presented the analysis of the election manifestos of the four major political parties of the country.



with their inaugural speeches and agendas.

At a media meeting by Population Council Pakistan, senior Director Programs Dr. Ali Mir, Project Director Samia Ali, Senior Communication Officer Ikram Ahad, and Central Vice President of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists Saleem Shahid, along with participants from all provinces stressed the importance of balancing population growth and resources at all government levels.

The participants stressed that attaining the Sustainable Development Goals will establish a durable policy framework, guiding all future governments in a positive direction towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals which will set a positive direction for all future governments.

The participants stressed that the forthcoming government will lay the foundation for a lasting

Zafar demands issuing of production order of Senator Ejaz Chaudhry

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Ali Zafar ignited a fiery debate in the Senate as he presented a resolution demanding the production order of Senator Ejaz Chaudhry, amidst allegations of election malpractice and unfair treatment towards PTI leaders.

Addressing the Senate on Tuesday, Senator Ali Zafar voiced concerns over what he perceived as injustice against PTI leaders following the recent elections. He highlighted instances of arrests and restrictions on rallies, lamenting the alleged theft of the people's mandate and calling attention to the stifling of media coverage and communication channels. The session witnessed heated exchanges as senators expressed frustration over perceived electoral irregularities.

Warning of dire consequences if electoral grievances remain unaddressed, Zafar underscored the potential for widespread unrest should the legitimacy of the mandate be disregarded.

Meanwhile, Senator Mushtaq Ahmed echoed Zafar's sentiments, demanding the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner over allegations of incompetence and bias. Ahmed criticized the Election Commission for purportedly failing to ensure transparent elections and accused it of facilitating a "fake government" through fraudulent practices. The session witnessed heated exchanges as senators expressed frustration over perceived electoral irregularities, signaling deep-seated concerns about the integrity of the democratic process in Pakistan.

SHC directs early removal of obscene contents from social media

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) has directed the authorities concerned for immediate removal of obscene content from social media. Chief Justice Sindh High Court, Aqeel Abbasi on Tuesday heard the petition against obscene content on social media, during which the petitioner's lawyer in his arguments said that obscenity was being promoted in the name of family v logging. During the hearing, PTA's counsel told the court that PTA does not have the authority to remove content on Facebook, YouTube or any other website, and to remove objectionable content, it has to write to the concerned authorities. Meanwhile, PTA's counsel sought time to submit the reply, on which the court said.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding provision of water in Gwadar.