

# Independent

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QUETTA: Chairman Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Mehmooh Khan Achakzai, President Balochistan National Party (BNP) Sardar Akhtar Mengal, President National Party, Dr Abdul Malik Baloch and Chairman Hazara Democratic Party (HDP) Abdul Khaliq Hazara sitting on stage on the occasion of a protest gathering against alleged rigging in the elections

## BNP, PkMAP, National Party and HDP demand punishment to those involved in changing results of general polls

4 parties alliance gives call for wheel jam strike on highways in Balochistan today:

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The leaders of four parties alliance have demanded that punishment should be given to those who are responsible for changing the results of general elections of February 8 in the province.

The leaders of the four parties including Chairman Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Mehmooh Khan Achakzai, President of Balochistan National Party (BNP) Sardar Akhtar Mengal, President of National Party, Dr Abdul Malik

Baloch, Chairman Hazara Democratic Party (HDP) Abdul Khaliq Hazara and others vowed to continue protest against the alleged rigging in the elections.

Until and unless the changes made in the election results are corrected, the protest movement would remain continued.

The central leaders of the four parties were addressing the protest public gathering outside the Deputy Commissioner's office on Saturday.

The four parties alliance announced wheel jam

strike on national highways all over the province against alleged rigging in the elections.

Addressing the protest gathering, BNP Chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that we would not adopt silence as long as the interference is ended by the Establishment in the political affairs and the public mandate is not accepted.

He on the occasion demanded to do court martial of the military officers involved in the election rigging.

Moreover, action

should also be taken under Article 6 against those who change the election results.

He said that while we have been struggling right from elections till now, but someone others were declared successful.

He said that 400 votes were shown to the candidates who otherwise got just 40 votes.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal urged all District Returning Officers and Returning Officers to show courage and strength like Commissioner Rawalpindi, who admitted rigging in the elections.

He said that we have to get all those punished who make changes in the election results.

The BNP President also vowed to continue protest till resolution of all issues being faced by the province including the issue of missing persons.

Addressing the protest gathering, Chairman PkMAP said that today's protest jalsa is being made against what it called the historic rigging in elections.

He said that we are the people who love their

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ECP rejects allegations

## Rawalpindi Commissioner resigns accepting responsibility of rigging in election

Liaquat Ali Chatha claims independent candidates winning with a lead of 70,000-80,000 votes were "made to lose by putting on fake stamps"; Also holds chief election commissioner and chief justice responsible for alleged rigging; Commissioner of any division has no direct role in conduct of election; ECP; PTI demands CEC resign for facilitating electoral rigging, wants stolen seats back; PML-N wants Commissioner's name on ECL, probe into his 'confession'

RAWALPINDI (Online): Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatha has accepted responsibility of election rigging in the division and resigned from his post saying Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) are involved in this rigging.

Commissioner has sent his resignation to chief minister Punjab, governor Punjab and chief secretary Punjab.

"I present myself to police on committing wrong doings, he said this while addressing a press conference held here in Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in connection

with PSL Saturday. "We changed the lead of 70,000 votes of winning candidates into their defeat by a margin of 50,000 votes. I have done injustice in Rawalpindi division being head of division. Therefore I should be hanged in Rawalpindi Kutcherow chowk," he said

He held he was appointed to hold election but he failed in holding fair and transparent election. I made the candidates winner by 70000 votes. I have no right to stay alive. Fake stamps are being affixed still in Rawalpindi.

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LAHORE: An attractive view of fireworks at the opening ceremony of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Twenty 20 Cricket matches at Gaddafi Stadium.

Elections step towards promoting democracy

## Anarchy, disorder will not be tolerated, warns PM

Kakar says any form of violence, or incitement for vigilantism will not be condoned and law would take its course; Victory and defeat are inherent aspects of democracy; Caretaker PM to politicians

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday said the recently conducted General Elections in the country had been a step towards promoting democracy. In a statement, he said, "Significant turnout from all segments of society, including both genders, has been acknowledged internationally."

"Post elections, it is imperative that all stakeholders realise that victory and defeat are inherent aspects of democratic processes," he added

He said that parties and

individuals who harboured any concerns regarding electoral irregularities were encouraged to pursue legal recourse through the available channels.

"Pakistan's legislative, judicial, and executive branches are resilient and stand ready to deliver impartial justice to all."

PM Kakar said, "While peaceful protest and assembly are fundamental rights, any form of agitation, violence, or incitement for vigilantism will not be condoned and law would take its course without any hesitation."

"Anarchy and disorder will not be tolerated at this crucial time. This only serves to advance the agenda for hostile forces, both domestic and foreign, to exploit and create grave law and order challenges."

"The caretaker government implores patience, as political parties engage in consultations to form governments at both the federal and provincial levels, in accordance with democratic traditions and norms. We hope that this process concludes as early as possible with mutual understanding and respect," he added.

## Changez Marri wins PB-9 Kohlu seat

QUETTA (APP): As per polling held on seven polling stations, Nawab Changez Marri of PML-N has been declared the winner from the PB-9 Kohlu seat.

He secured 7,544 votes, while Nasibullah Marri, the runner-up, managed to get 6,277 votes.

Earlier, the People's Party's Mir Naseebullah was declared inconclusively successful in the PB-9 Kohlu constituency. As many as 31 candidates were in the running for the constituency.

Polling could not be held in seven polling stations on February 8 due to security reasons.

## Five kidnapped workers of telecom company rescued in Kech

QUETTA (INP): Five kidnapped Punjab employees of a telecom company were rescued from district Kech of Balochistan on Saturday.

According to details, the said workers had gone to Sajidi Bazar in Hoshab tehsil of Kech district in Turbat on January 28, to install a mobile tower, from where they were abducted near Dandar Dhale Bazar some 7 km away from Awaran.

The district administration said that the abducted workers of telecom company were rescued where district Kech.



RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatha speaks at a press conference at his office

## 5 terrorists neutralised in two military operations in KP

RAWALPINDI (INP): Security forces successfully neutralised at least nine terrorists in two distinct operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province on Saturday, according to a statement issued by the military's media affairs wing.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the first operation, an intelligence-based mission in Tank District, resulted in the elimination of terrorists Rehmat Ullah, also known as Badar Mansur, and Amjad, alias Babri.

In a separate operation conducted in South Waziristan District, after an intense fire exchange, seven terrorists were killed.

The security forces also seized a significant cache of weapons, ammunition, and explosives from

the terrorists. These individuals had been actively engaged in various terrorist activities, targeting both security forces and committing extortion and acts of violence against innocent civilians in the region.

Tragically, amidst the operation, Sepoy Shahzeb Aslam, a courageous native of district Haripur, aged 29, valiantly fought and made the ultimate sacrifice by embracing Shahadat.

The security forces of Pakistan remain resolute in their commitment to eradicating the scourge of terrorism from the country.

The sacrifices made by our brave soldiers, such as Sepoy Shahzeb Aslam, serve to fortify our determination to ensure a secure and stable future.



QUETTA: Provincial President PML (N) Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail presiding over meeting of parliamentary members

## PTI's countrywide protest against electoral rigging

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Saturday held protests across the country against what it called poll rigging.

In Lahore, the police arrested and then released PTI leader Salman Akram Raja. A rally was taken out from F-9 Park Islamabad. PTI workers also protested at Ghantaghar (clock tower) Chowk in Faisalabad.

PTI workers gathered in the park in front of National Press Club Islamabad. Sher Afzal Marwat, Shoaib Shaheen, Shehryar Riaz and others also participated.

Protestors raised slogans while capital police did not arrest anyone during the protest. It is noted that the police sent back the van and water cannon. However, Safe City and CCTV cameras monitored the protest.

In Karachi, PTI workers protested outside the Election Commission office, slogans were raised against the ECP.

## Zardari calls PPP newly elected members from Balochistan in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former president Asif Ali Zardari has cancelled his visit to Quetta.

Former president has called elected members of assembly of PPP from Balochistan in Islamabad.

Newly elected members of PPP from Balochistan will reach Islamabad today and meet Asif Ali Zardari. The matter of government making in Balochistan will be discussed in the meeting. Sources said the names for chief minister Balochistan will come under consideration in the meeting.

## CT Minister for Information says: People of Balochistan reject four parties alliance's jalsa

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has rejected the jalsa (public meeting) of the four parties alliance in Quetta.

The caretaker Minister Information insisted that the people have already gave their verdict on February 8, now they should make their self-accountability. He also said that the course of tribunals is available for the complainants about rigging in elections.

The four parties alliance should realize the hardships and inconvenience being caused to the general public due to their protest, adding he stressed.

## No deal yet between PPP, PML-N on govt formation

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Representatives from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) met on Saturday to discuss the formation of a potential coalition government following the recent national elections.

According to the declaration issued on Saturday, the meeting, held by the coordination committees of both parties,

involved detailed discussions on proposals presented by each side. No official agreements were reached, but both parties agreed to reconvene on Monday for further deliberation.

The statement emphasized the importance of a strong democratic government in ensuring a stable Pakistan. Both the PML-N and PPP believe collaboration is crucial to achieving this goal.



LAHORE: Policemen arresting PTI leader Salman Akram Raja

## CJP Isa refutes Rawalpindi Commissioner's 'baseless' poll rigging allegations

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa while rejecting the allegations leveled by ex-Commissioner Rawalpindi has said baseless charges have been leveled and there is no truth or reality in the allegations.

He added that tomorrow, such accusations might escalate to include charges of theft and murder against him

He emphasised that while anyone could level allegations, they should be supported by evidence, noting that Chatha did not provide any evidence

He said we dealt with the case of election within 12 days. Country wanted elections. To a question he said what is my relevance with election. Chief justice has no direct link with election. Holding election is responsibility of Election Commission. Petitions continue to come to us with regard to election. We go on deciding them. Election case is fixed on Monday.

To a question from journalist that election case is fixed on Monday, will commissioner Rawalpindi be called CJP said if case is fixed then hear the case on Monday that what happens. I don't talk on pending cases.



QUETTA: Chief Executive Officer of ICQ, Brigadier Iftikhar and representative of NICVD Sindh, Dr Sohail Bangash signing a MoU between the first Institute of Cardiology Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (SMBZAN) Quetta and National Institute of Cardiology and Vascular Diseases (NICVD) Karachi

## SMBZAN, NICVD sign MoU for treatment of kids suffering from heart diseases

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the first Institute of Cardiology Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (SMBZAN) Quetta and National Institute of Cardiology and Vascular Diseases (NICVD) Karachi here on Saturday.

The MoU has been signed between the two institutions for treatment of the children suffering from the heart diseases in Quetta.

The children suffering from the cardiac issues would get free treatment facilities in the Institute of Cardiology Quetta which is equipped with modern healthcare facilities, as was informed during briefing of the MoU.

Those who were present on the occasion were included Chief Executive Officer of ICQ, Brigadier Iftikhar, Director General Health, Dr Ghulam Farooq, Head of Department NICVD, Surgeon Dr Sohail Bangash, Vice President of College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan (CPSP) Dr Ayesha Siddiqi and others.



# PML-N stalwarts not in favour of forming govt in Centre

"Formation of the federal govt is joint responsibility of all the parties in parliament, not PML-N," says Saad Rafique

LAHORE (INP): PML-N senior leader Khawaja Saad Rafique on Saturday asked the PTI-backed independents and the PPP to jointly form a government in Centre, as the fractured mandate continues fuelling and sustaining political uncertainty in Pakistan.

"No one has absolute majority in the present National Assembly," said Saad Rafique in a post shared on X - the popular social media platform which was previously known as X.

Countering the narrative spread by political pundits who have been singling out the Nawaz Sharif's party for leading the country's affairs after the Feb 8 elections, he said the formation of the federal government was a joint responsibility of all the parties in the parliament, not the PML-N.

"Independent members supported by PTI should take the initiative, form a joint central government with the PPP. We will congratulate you," he said, adding that the PML-N had no desire to wear "this crown of thorns".

Earlier on Friday, it was reported that most of the party leaders during a meeting chaired by three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif suggested that the PML-N should not form the federal government and only focus on Punjab where they had secured a majority after the induction of independents. However, some of them argued otherwise, saying Pakistan was facing serious economic crisis and there was a need to rescue the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Nawaz said the PML-N must not accept any un-

principled demand forwarded by allied parties just for the sake of coming into power in Centre.

It isn't Saad Rafique, as Rana Sanaulah, who is a close aide of Nawaz and heads the Punjab chapter of PML-N, told a private TV channel that the PML-N should not form the federal government and sit on the opposition benches.

One must recall that Nawaz has already refused to lead the next government and nominated his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif as the prime minister candidate as he didn't want a split mandate and was aiming at a simple majority.

In this connection, Maryam Nawaz - the PML-N chief organiser - too had earlier explained the reasons behind Nawaz not leading the government this time round which would

have given him the unmatched distinction of serving Pakistan for fourth time.

Maryam said the people had given a clear majority to Nawaz for his previous three stints as prime minister. "He has made it clear in his speeches during election campaign that he would not become part of any coalition government," she added.



LAHORE: Independent candidates meeting with PML-N President Mian Shabbaz Sharif after joining the Muslim League (N)

## Bilawal Bhutto suggests name of Murad Ali Shah for Sindh CM slot

KARACHI (INP): Former foreign minister and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday suggested the name of Syed Murad Ali Shah for the seat of Sindh chief minister at a meeting of senior party leaders held at Bilawal House in Karachi on Saturday.

Others whose names are under consideration for the slot are Faryal Talpur and Syed Nasir Hussain Shah.

It has also been suggested at the meeting that initially, the provincial cabinet will consist of 20 members, while two to three women will also be included in it.

Furthermore, it

has been proposed that not only old faces, but some new faces will also be part of the cabinet.

One of the party leaders has suggested that Syed Nasir Hussain Shah should be given the portfolio of a senior minister in the cabinet.

The names of Azra Afzal Pacheco, Saeed Ghani, Sharjeel Inam Memon, Sardar Shah, Senator Yousuf Baloch, Sajid Jokhio, Shehla Raza and Jam Khan Shoro have been finalized for the cabinet, while the names of Mukesh Kumar Chawla, Hari Ram Kishori Lal, and Taimur Talpur are still under consideration.

## PTI nears formation of KP cabinet: new faces expected alongside veterans

PESHAWAR (INP): In the wake of recent electoral victories, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is currently engaged in consultations for government formation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Following the announcement of the chief minister and speaker nominees, the party has shifted its focus to selecting ministers for the upcoming provincial cabinet.

The PTI is poised to introduce new faces into the expected cabinet lineup along with some old faces, with Taimur Jhagra, Shaoukat Yousafzai, and Kamran Bangash despite their electoral losses slated to be included as advisors.

Taimur Jhagra is ex-

pected to oversee the health portfolio, while Shaoukat Yousafzai is likely to handle information affairs and Kamran Bangash may be tasked with the sports and culture department.

Moreover, Mushtaq Ghani, the current KP Assembly speaker, is expected to reassume the education ministry, adding to the diverse array of expertise within the cabinet.

Several other names are also under consideration for ministerial roles, including former provincial minister Shakeel Khan, Khaliqur Rehman, Arif Ahmadzai, Fazal Shakur, Zahir Shah Toro, Meena Khan, and Syed Qasim Shah. Additionally, Babar Swati, Akbar Ayub, Faisal Amin

Gandapur, and Anwar Zeb are strong contenders for cabinet positions.

The ongoing consultations underscore PTI's commitment to assembling a competent and inclusive cabinet to address the varied needs of the province. With a mix of experienced politicians and fresh faces, the party aims to deliver on its promises of governance, development, and progress in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Previously, the PTI had nominated former minister Omar Ayub as its candidate for the prime minister's slot. A party leader had also announced that MPA-elect Aqibullah will be the party candidate for the KP Assembly speakership.



QUETTA: Members of Pashtoonkhw National Awami Party are holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024 at Manan Chowk

## India cannot suppress Kashmiris' demand for freedom by dint of force

ISLAMABAD (INP): All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter convener, Mahmood Ahmad Saghar, has said that India cannot suppress the just demand of freedom of the people of illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir by the dint of its military might.

Mahmood Ahmad Saghar in a statement issued in Islamabad on Saturday said the BJP's Hindutva government of India

through its installed IIOJK administration and its military continues to implement its brutal and colonial measures including cordon and search operations, arrests, forced eviction of people from their lands and homes, termination of employees from government services. The sole aim of these harsh measures is to crush the just demand of freedom and change the demography of the occupied territory, he added.

He said after the illegal

and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019, the Indian government has accelerated its atrocities against the innocent Kashmiris and has, so far, given domicile certificates to lakhs of non-Kashmiris to turn the Muslim majority region into a minority. e said the measures taken by Modi government are clear violations of the international laws and UN resolutions, as Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory.

## BNP, PkMAP, National Party and HDP...

Continued from page 1

homeland. We don't need to have certificate of being patriotic from anyone.

He said that we couldn't be able to make a national state for last 75 years.

However, we would go to any extreme for our country, he vowed.

He said that our people were killed and our resources were looted, but we didn't raise anti-Pakistan slogan.

Mehmood Khan Achakzai said that we want to run this country and we don't use abusive language against our country.

The Chairman PkMAP refuted the claim about his meeting with former Army Chief General Bajwa. If anyone proves it then he would withdraw politics, he added.

Mehmood Khan Achakzai on the occasion charged that Rs. 70 billions were taken from the people to get them selected in the elections.

He said that we would support those political parties which would get adopted the resolution in the assemblies about ending military's interference in politics.

He said that the democracy and love with homeland is in our blood.

He also said that although we would not carry weapons, but we are very dangerous people.

He said that he was standing with the central leader of PML-N, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif until he was standing with the constitution and law.

Speaking on the occasion, the President National Party Dr Abdul Malik Baloch said that the country can run through democracy and as such it should be ensured to run it democratically.

He said that the demand of four parties alliance is to end the rigging in elections.

He claimed that those who won in the elections are requesting not to make appeals against them that they have spent lot of

money.

He recalled that when the PDM was formed then the foremost point was to run the country under the constitution.

The very objective of the PDM was to stop the interference of institutions in the politics.

He said that the people who defeated Sardar Akhtar Mengal and Mehmood Khan Achakzai don't know about their victory even.

He said that if the person who was contesting election against him tells the names of 40 villages of his election constituency, he would withdraw the protest.

The NP president on the occasion also emphasized upon putting off the fire of Musharraf era in Balochistan.

Addressing the gathering, Chairman HDP said that the whole nation is lodging protest except three political parties in the country.

He asked the Peoples' Party, PML-N and MQM to mend their way.

He said that February 8's was the most dangerous blast that was carried out against us.

He said that we had pledged to take the province towards peace after getting victory in the 2018 elections. We developed sports complex in all districts of the province, but unfortunately, the way of those work is stopped, he added.

The Chairman HDP also said that the economic woes of the country would increase further if the government formed through rigged polls would come in power.

He also asked the Returning Officers of the province to admit that they were forced to do rigging in the elections.

If they do so, then we would forgive them, Hazara maintained.

Other leaders of different parties including Nawab Muhammad Ayaz Khan Jogeza, Qadir Ali Nayal and other leaders also addressed the protest gathering.

## Saad Rafique, Hammad Azhar trade election barbs on X platform

ISLAMABAD (INP): PML-N senior leader Khawaja Saad Rafique has suggested the PTI to join hands with the PPP and form a government at the Centre as his party has no desire to take the lead. n a post uploaded on X social platform on Saturday, Saad Rafique maintained that no one absolute majority in the newly-elected National Assembly. "The formation of the federal government is the joint responsibility of all the parties in the Parliament, not only of the PML-N," he added. The former federal minister said independent MNAs supported by the PTI should take the initiative and form a joint federal government with the PPP. "I will extend my greetings to you as the PML-N has no desire to do that," he added. PTI leader Hammad Azhar was quick to respond, saying "By stealing half of our seats they now say form a government. "Restore the public's real mandate as per Form 45, they will form such 'fine' governments at the Centre and in Punjab that the public will not even elect your 17 members next time. And in future, no one will think of cheating in a single ballot slip," he added.



PESHAWAR: Leaders and supporters of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, held at Ring road in Peshawar

## Jaiswal's heroic century puts India in commanding position against England

RAJKOT: Yashasvi Jaiswal showcased his attacking prowess with a splendid century, propelling India's lead over England to 322 in the third Test in Rajkot.

Jaiswal, however, had to retire at 104 due to a back issue. At the end of day three, India stood at 196-2 in their second inning, with Shubman Gill (65) and nightwatchman Kuldeep Yadav (three) at the crease.

The team faced the challenge with only 10 players available after Ashwin left the match due to a family emergency, and Devdutt Padikkal came in as a substitute fielder.

Despite early setbacks with the departure of captain Rohit Sharma, Jaiswal continued his impressive form, smashing a century in just his seventh Test match.

His aggressive play included hitting veteran James Anderson for six and two fours on consecutive balls. Jaiswal, who leads the series with 435 runs, formed a crucial partnership of 155 runs with Gill. England's Ben Duckett, who hit 153 in their innings, praised Jaiswal, stating he looks like a "superstar in the making." Duckett humorously remarked that Jaiswal is "due a couple of low ones," emphasising the Indian talent's exceptional form.

## Six perish as truck crushes car in Muridke

MURIDKE (INP): At least six people died and another three injured when a truck went out of control and crushed a car coming from Lahore on GT Road in Muridke on Saturday.

According to Rescue 1122 personnel, the speedy truck was taking U-turn in front of Ravi Rayan factory when its driver lost it control and hit a car coming from the opposite side.

Rescue 1122 teams rushed to the spot and shifted the seriously wounded to a hospital after on-the-spot first aid treatment.

The Rescue personnel handed over the dead bod-

ies to the police.

The deceased were identified as 22-year-old Shahbaz, 35-year-old Zabeer Abbas, 35-year-old Iram Shahzadi, 10-year-old Abdul Wahab, eight-year-old Aayan and six-year-old Iman Fatima.

The deceased were named as 40-year-old Naseem, 35-year-old Shameem and 18-year-old Khadija.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has expressed deep condolences over the loss of lives in traffic accident in Muridke. He offered his condolences to families of the deceased.

## Rawalpindi Commissioner resigns accepting...

Continued from page 1

I was intensely pressurized into wrong doings. Upon It I apologize to the nation, and I present myself to police due to admission of my offence. I should be punished. I have done injustice with the nation. I apologize to my Returning Officers. Because the people who were losing we made them winner. In early morning.

He urged bureaucracy not to indulge in any wrong doing. We have made winner 14 candidates illegally. "Alongwith me CJP and CEC should be hanged in Kutchery chowk on open rigging in election.

I tried to commit suicide in morning today after offering Fajar prayers.

On the other hand CPO Rawalpindi has taken commissioner Rawalpindi into custody. But he has not been arrested formally.

Police sources said how can police arrest him unless FIR is lodged.

Sources said commissioner Rawalpindi has sent his resignation to chief minister Punjab, governor Punjab, and chief secretary Punjab stating that he cannot become part of those who are out to dismember Pakistan.

Meanwhile Election Commission of Pakistan has strongly rejected the allegations levelled by Rawalpindi Commissioner against the chief election commissioner.

In a statement, a spokesperson of the election commission said no official of the commission gave any instruction to the Rawalpindi commissioner for change in the election results.

The spokesperson clarified that the commissioner of any division has no direct role in the conduct of the election. The commissioner is not made DRO, RO or the presiding officer.

The spokesperson said that this matter will be investigated.

Caretaker Punjab Chief

Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed to form a high-level committee to conduct an impartial investigation into the rigging allegations levelled by Commissioner Rawalpindi.

He said the real facts regarding allegations will be brought forward.

PTI leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has demanded declaring election in Rawalpindi division as null and void.

It is to be mentioned here that Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatha has resigned from his post over accepting responsibility of alleged rigging in elections 2024. Chatha admitted that the rigging took place in election and candidates who were leading in their constituencies with over 70,000 votes were converted to losers with the help of fake seals under his watch.

Barrister Gohar demanded an immediate inquiry of rigging allegations claimed by the Commissioner Rawalpindi division. He said the Commissioner when saying that the winning candidates were defeated, he must tell, which candidates were winning. "We were winning the election according to form 45 but later our candidates were defeated with form 47," PTI leader said. Barrister Gohar said that the Commissioner's statement is very serious. "We have to open the Pandora's Box if we move towards a new election," he added.

APP adds: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Marriyum Aurangzeb Saturday demanded complete investigation into allegations levelled by Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatha regarding rigging in general election in Rawalpindi division.

Addressing a press conference at PML-N's secretariat in Model Town, she said that it should be probed that with whom Rawalpindi Commissioner

was in contact for the last eight days, his meetings, phone calls, verification of accounts and entire activities should be investigated in this regard.

She said, "One cannot get off Scot-free after levelling baseless allegations without any evidence."

The PML-N leader said that certain elements were in habit of levelling baseless allegations and creating confusion. She said, "Commissioner Rawalpindi is discrediting elections and levelling baseless allegations without any proof."

If rigging was being conducted in front of Rawalpindi Commissioner, then why he didn't handed over the culprits to the police, she questioned.

She said that the country was going through critical phase and it could not afford any irresponsible behaviour.

She further said that any grievances related to the results of elections should be taken to appropriate forum.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Rawalpindi commissioner should be put on exit control list immediately besides taking all his phone records into custody.

PML-N leaders Azma Bukhari and Attallah Tarar were also present.



QUETTA: Junior Teachers Association leader, Muhammad Yousuf along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club

**SHOW CAUSE NOTICE**

Under Section 7

WHEREAS, It has been brought to the notice of the Competent Authority that Mr. Khuda Dad, Lecturer Geology (BS-17), Government Postgraduate Science College Quetta has committed the following acts of omission and commission:

"The Director Colleges & Higher Education has reported that you are continuously absent from official duty since 16th August, 2011 till to date".

2. WHEREAS, by reasons of above, you are found to be guilty in terms of Section 3 of Balochistan Employees' Efficiency And Discipline Act, 2011 and liable to any penalty which may include dismissal from service as prescribed under Section 4 of the ibid Act.

3. WHEREAS, I, Abdul Aziz Uqaili, Chief Secretary Balochistan being Competent Authority after considering the above mentioned facts of the case and reason/ground thereof, am satisfied that there is no need to hold an inquiry against you under Section 5 of the said Act.

4. NOW, THEREFORE, You are hereby called upon to submit written defence of Show Cause within seven (7) days of the receipt of this notice as to why you should not be proceeded under relevant provisions of Balochistan Employees' Efficiency & Discipline Act, 2011.

5. TAKE NOTICE that in case of failure to submit a reply within the prescribed period, it would be presumed that you have no defence to offer or have declined to offer the same and accepted the charge(s) and in that case, ex-parte order will be passed against you.

CHIEF SECRETARY / COMPETENT AUTHORITY

PRQ No.1441/16-2-2024

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## Nature-based solutions help better adapt, protect more lives: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers Saturday called for integrating anticipatory disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) approaches with climate science to make sure that more lives are protected from climatic disasters.

Speaking at a panel discussion organized at the World Social Forum in Kathmandu on Saturday by Pakistan's leading think tank 'Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Oxfam in Pakistan, the speakers said that the incidence of climatic hazards and disasters are increasing which plunged communities into vulnerability to disasters and are causing losses and damages, said a press release.

Speaking on the occasion, globally acclaimed climate justice expert Harjeet Singh said that the temperatures are the determining factor of climate change which calls for analyzing science for better adaptation and preparing communities against climatic hazards and disasters. He called upon the humanitarian sec-

tor to keep in mind the future warming levels and slow on-set disasters while designing humanitarian programmes.

He said the communities know much about the impacts of climate change such as glacier melting, changing cropping patterns, and water availability but they do not know why this is happening. He said that science gives the 'why' answer. He said while climate change is creating new poor with more marginalities, there is a need to opt for nature-based solutions for adaptation. He called for integrating humanitarian approaches with science.

The Deputy Executive Director of SDPI Dr. Shafiqat Munir said that climatic hazards are now putting cities and towns at risk urging the need for risk-sensitive urban planning through applying both Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) strategies. He said preparedness and anticipatory DRR approaches can better equip vulnerable communities at local levels to cope with

ensuing disasters/climatic hazards.

The localization of DRR-CCA strategies and implementation plans can help to save and protect more lives. He called for taking urgent collective action to achieve the Paris Agreement's objective on the Global Goal on Adaptation and Sendai Framework for DRR.

Oxfam's regional humanitarian coordinator Mr. Jermaine, from the Philippines, said that effective climate action requires a balanced approach, considering both adaptation and mitigation efforts. Similarly, there is a need to ensure equity, right, and justice in line with the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) framework that prioritize fairness and equitable adaptation strategies, he added.

Quoting from Cyclone Hayan 2013, he said due to inappropriate early warning messaging, the communities could not prepare against the Tsunami. He said that there is a need to train communities on DRR and early warning messaging should be clear.



ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Akbar Nasir Khan cutting the ribbon during inauguration ceremony of Car show at a shopping mall in Federal Capital.

## EuroVillage family-focused festival amuses residents of twin cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Thousands of people gathered at the Jinnah Convention Center here on Saturday to participate in "EuroVillage," a family-focused festival organized by the European Union and its Member States.

This year's celebration centered on the theme of co-creating a sustainable future, entitled "Stronger Together - Sustainable Forever." The event showcased over 60 years of the strong connection between the EU and Pakistan, highlighting the collaborative partnership in development, trade and investment, culture, education, environment and a wide array of other areas said a news release.

In her welcome remarks, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka,

noted: "EuroVillage is a special event for us; we cherish the people-to-people connections it offers. This year, we want you to experience our journey of co-creating a sustainable future. Europe has the ambition to be the first climate-neutral continent but also wants to support its partners toward the green transition. Pakistan is one of the countries at the greatest risk from climate change. The EU is working with Pakistan to help address challenges and create a sustainable future for all." The fifth edition of EuroVillage hosted the residents of Islamabad and Rawalpindi to experience European sustainability and enjoy an afternoon of culture, music, and food.

The festival features interactive information displays by the EU and Member States, offering games, quizzes, food, and various activities, providing visitors with an afternoon of learning, interaction, and entertainment.

The event also featured live performances by Pakistani artists including Farhan Saeed and Quratulain Balouch.

As a symbol of this partnership, an EU-Pakistan Dosti truck was displayed at the event blending the well-known Pakistani truck art with European symbols and designs. Euro Village was co-organized by the diplomatic missions of the European Union and Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Spain.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan Andrea Wicke chitchat with visitors on her stall during Euro Village 2024 at Jinnah Convention Center in Federal Capital.

## 2-Day inclusive education capacity building training held at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan) jointly organized a Two-Day Inclusive Education Capacity Building Training from February 14-15, 2024, at AIOU, Islamabad.

According to AIOU, over 25 participants from various stakeholders, including IDEA, UNHCR, CAR, CWSA, FGEI, FDE, DGSE, AIOU and NCRC, actively participated in this training.

The purpose of the training was to better understand the concepts of inclusive education, including the role schools and school leaders play in ensuring schools become more inclusive, and a demonstrated commitment to

learn more about the KIX research project and scaling activities, currently underway in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nepal.

The AIOU Project team, in collaboration with the CW4WAfghan team, conducted an activities-based training for key education sector stakeholders in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Training experts from AIOU, CW4WAfghan, Sightsavers, and NCRC shared their expertise, knowledge, and best practices to enhance the output of the GPE/KIX project.

Notably, the project stands out as a unique initiative where three countries collaboratively developed an open course on inclusive education, applying the NICs (Networked Improvement Communities) approach through course facilitators.

Participants, including school leaders from UNHCR schools in Peshawar, FDE, and schools under the Department of Schools, Government of Punjab, appreciated the approach. The three-country project team plans to share the final reports with major stakeholders in their respective countries to further scale up the project's outputs and achievements.

## 3-days sports festival ended in Neelum Valley

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 3-day sports festival organized by the Pakistan Army in Neelum Valley concluded successfully in Athmakam, Neelum District, Azad Kashmir, on Saturday.

According to a private news channel, the festival featured a range of traditional and regional sports competitions, including cricket, tug-of-war, and javelin throw, among others.

Participating in the event were 20 teams from various educational institutions, showcasing their talent and sportsmanship.

The purpose of organizing this sports festival was to promote healthy activities and find new talent in the area.

The students took an active part in this sports festival, thanked the Pak Army and said that holding such tournaments would give rise to new players.

The Commandant Officer presented gifts to the students on behalf of the Army, encouraging their continued involvement in sports and healthy activities. Addressing the ceremony, the Commandant Officer emphasized that sports events serve as an excellent platform to engage youth in positive activities and steer them away from negative influences.

The closing ceremony was attended by dignitaries including the Deputy Commissioner, Senior Superintendent of Police, officials from the local administration and security forces, as well as numerous guests from diverse backgrounds.

## Malik, Sana's 1st post wedding appearance steals spotlight

ISLAMABAD (INP): One of the top trending Pakistani couples, Shoaib Malik and Sana Javed have finally been spotted together for the very first time after their surprise wedding, at an airport which has managed to steal all the spotlight, also evoked speculation that either the couple is heading for a honeymoon or Sana is just simply accompanying Shoaib amidst PSL travels.

In the latest welcoming events, a delightful video came to light during which the newlywed Sana Javed and Shoaib Malik have been seen at Multan Airport in order to attend the much-anticipated Pakistan Super League (PSL) ceremony

which is about to be held today night.

The span of the video featuring the couple dressed up in regular trousers and shirt with minimum luggage moving on the airport amidst security circle.

The Internet took Sana and Shoaib's first appearance very amusing, and expressed celebrated reactions as well as interesting opinions.

As per the information, Shoaib will be representing Karachi Kings in the league's latest edition with the team's first match slated to take place against Multan Sultan at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Sunday.



ISLAMABAD: Children are looks of handmade science items models making by students during a science exhibition at a private school in the Federal Capital.

## So-called security heightened in IIOJK ahead of Modi's visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Authorities have beefed up so-called security across Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) ahead of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the territory.

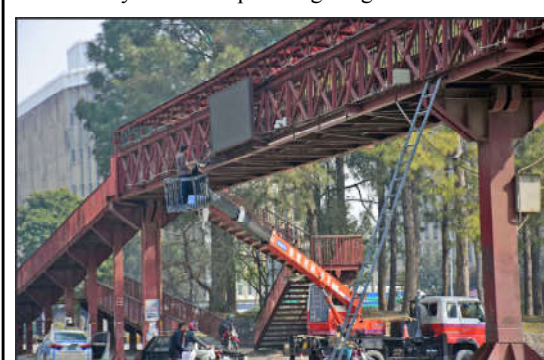
According to Kashmir Media Service, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Jammu on February 20. During his daylong visit, he is scheduled to address a public rally at Maulana Azad Stadium in the heart of Jammu city.

Modi will also inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple projects virtually, interact with the people via video conferencing and deliver job letters to youth.

Reportedly, the venue for the rally has been put

under siege and tight security arrangements are made around it. All vehicles passing near the venue are being frisked and special check posts are installed along the River Tawi bank, adjacent to the MA Stadium. All sports activities are also temporarily suspended in the Stadium.

The so-called security has also been heightened in the Kashmir valley ahead of Modi's visit to Jammu. Quoting a top police officer, a report said, "Besides upgradation of vigil on the borders, the security forces are patrolling the highways and other spots, from the security point of view", adding, "Frisking has also been intensified in many south districts including Kulgam."



ISLAMABAD: Workers busy in repairing CCTV cameras at a road in the Federal Capital.

## Commissioner tried to become hero of social media before his retirement: Hanif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N central leader and MNA elected Hanif Abbasi has said what commissioner Rawalpindi Liaqat Ali Chatha has said is based on falsehood.

"Commissioner Rawalpindi is neither RO nor has he any monitoring role. He has nothing with him. My civil meter was running. I went to him. I talked to him on mega projects and I was seeing no pressure on him. He congratulated me by telephone where common men and media are not allowed. Commissioner Sahb came to know how that stamps are being affixed, he said this while addressing a press

conference here Saturday. Why the conscience of commissioner woke up after 10 days, he questioned. Election was not held by commissioner but was held by election commission.

Commissioner Rawalpindi leveled gross allegations against chief election commissioner and Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP).

Commissioner Rawalpindi said he is suffering from depression and sought name of some medicines from me, he added.

Commissioner Rawalpindi tried to become hero of social media before his retirement, he added.



ISLAMABAD: People are sitting in traditional cable cars (Dolly) as crossing a Nallah at Pindorian area in the Federal Capital.

## CM inaugurates dispensary in KP House Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister, Justice (ret'd) Arshad Hussain Shah on Saturday inaugurated a dispensary in KP House Islamabad.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the caretaker CM said that the dispensary is proof of the provincial

government's commitment to provide basic facilities of health to people.

He said that the health department is also endeavouring to improve healthcare delivery for the betterment of people, adding that improvement of the health system was among the priorities of the government.

## Vihari's jaggery famous for its taste

ISLAMABAD (APP): In Vihari, jaggery holds a special place as both a cherished souvenir and a favorite culinary delight.

According to a report aired on PTV, jaggery is a staple in the region's cuisine, known for its rich flavor and numerous health benefits.

The process of preparing sugarcane juice to create jaggery involves several meticulous steps, ensuring its authentic taste and quality.

Additionally, the infusion of different dry fruits enhances its deliciousness, adding layers of flavor to this beloved sweetener.

Jaggery, crafted through indigenous methods, boasts a myriad of health benefits. Not only is it a valuable source of energy, but it also supports digestive health, making it a popular choice among locals.

Beyond its culinary uses, jaggery finds its way into various delicacies, such as tea and halwa, renowned for their exceptional taste and texture.

Often offered as gifts across the country, jaggery serves as a symbol of warmth and hospitality.

While jaggery is lauded for its nutritional value and culinary versatility, it's important to note that diabetic patients should consume it in moderation, as advised by modern research. The process of preparing sugarcane juice to create jaggery involves several meticulous steps, ensuring its authentic taste and quality.

In essence, jaggery stands as a testament to Vihari district's rich culinary heritage, delighting palates and nurturing well-being with its wholesome goodness.



ISLAMABAD: People are facing difficulties due to PTI protest rally at Jinnah Avenue in Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: People enjoy peacock dance during their visit to Bird Aviary at Lake View Park.

## Capital Police maintains peace and order during political protest

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police maintain peace and security in Islamabad, handle any emergency situations promptly, and enforce Section 144 effectively.

Due to terrorist activity threats, the district administration imposed Section 144 on public gatherings and rallies in the federal capital. All political parties were informed about the implementation of Section 144 through public information platforms. Security measures were also increased in the city, and effective search operations continued at checkpoints.

Special teams from the Counter-Terrorism Department Islamabad were de-

ployed on patrol to counter any emergency situation. Additionally, special teams from the traffic division were directed to maintain traffic flow in the city.

Moreover, no arrests were made during the political protests, and the monitoring rooms at Safe City ensured continuous monitoring through cameras. Peaceful protests are within the bounds of the law, but legal action will be taken against those violating Section 144.

Ensuring peace and public safety in Islamabad is among the top priority of the Islamabad Capital Police. Citizens were urged to refrain from participating in illegal activities, respect the law, and avoid adopting or inciting violent behavior. Any violation of Section 144 will result in legal action.

## 15 outlaws arrested; drugs, weapons and valuables recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 15 outlaws including three professional beggars from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs, weapons and valuables from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Secretariat police team arrested two accused namely Saleh Khan and Khan Muhammad and recovered stolen valuables from their possession. The Shalimar police team arrested two accused namely Sardar Khan and Ahsan Ali and recovered one 09 mm

pistol and 106 ice from their possession.

Likewise, the Sumbal police team arrested an accused namely Bilal involved in illegally refilling gas cylinders.

The Sabzi Mandi police team arrested an accused namely Jabar Ali involved in theft activities. The Khanna police team arrested an accused namely Siraj and recovered 610 gram heroin from his possession, while the police team also arrested the accused namely Muhammad Akram involved in illegally selling petrol.

Similarly, the Koral police team arrested an accused namely Riyasat Hussain and recovered 560 gram hashish from his possession, while the police team also arrested the accused namely Muhammad Banaras involved in illegally selling petrol. The Sihala police team arrested an accused namely Khalil

Ahmed involved in illegally selling petrol.

Moreover, the Humak police team arrested an accused namely Latif and recovered 718 gram heroin from his possession. The Phulgran police team arrested an accused namely Jameel Zada and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

During the ongoing crackdown against professional beggars, the Islamabad Capital Police apprehended three professional beggars.

ICCPD Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed the police officials to further intensify the crackdown against the criminal elements. "Safety and security of the citizens is our foremost priority and no laxity will be tolerated in this regard", he maintained.



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## All the king's men

King's parties — political parties believed to have been created and nurtured by unelected forces — have a long and chequered history in Pakistan.

While some parties have developed a genuine popular following, other projects have fizzled out rather quickly. Three king's parties suffered the latter fate in last week's elections.

The Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party, constructed by assembling PTI deserters, was being touted as the next big thing, particularly in Punjab. Yet this prediction failed spectacularly as it managed only two National Assembly seats, also putting in a dismal performance in Punjab. Chastened by the rout, IPP supremo Jahangir Tareen retired from politics. One wonders if the IPP will survive till the next election cycle.

The PTI-Parliamentarians did worse, winning no NA seats, while the Balochistan Awami Party, created by the powers that be in 2018 and comprising mostly ex-PML-N members, was also humbled in the polls.

As mentioned, cobbling together king's parties is not a new phenomenon. For the longest time, the name of the Muslim League — Pakistan's grand old party — was used by military strongmen, including generals Ayub Khan and Zia, to form parties that could give their projects a civilian face.

Gen Musharraf patronised the PML-Q in 2002, carving it out of PML. But whereas the party of the Sharifs has survived, the Q-League is not a potent political force. Today, there are countless factions of the Muslim League, many of them the products of military rule, or one-man parties. In other instances, electoral alliances were carved out to keep popular parties in check, such as the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad in 1988. Yet some parties have earned their democratic stripes, despite being products of dictatorship. The PML-N is a prime example; Nawaz Sharif began his political journey in the Zia era, but today, has a genuine following. Other than parties custom-built by the gentlemen in Rawalpindi, other political forces, while not being the king's men, have served the purpose at critical junctures.

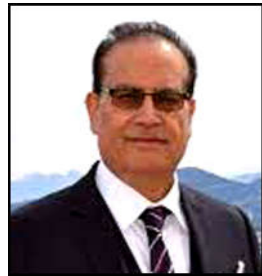
The MQM is one example, as it has done the bidding of the establishment at various times, and been rewarded with 'heavy' mandates in Karachi. The PPP also played ball with the powers, particularly in the turbulent 1990s. These alliances with unelected forces — while serving the short-term interests of these parties — have done long-term harm to Pakistani democracy.

The only way to stave off the continuous crises that afflict Pakistani politics is for powerful quarters to stop creating and patronising political parties, and to let representatives genuinely elected by the people chart the future course of this country. Inorganic creations have short shelf-lives and limited appeal, and despite widespread manipulation of the system, are rejected by voters. Only those political forces thrive that either turn away from their creators, or look only to the people for legitimacy.

# Election-2024 Fiasco- Fixing Responsibility

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President (Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



The government and Election Commission attributed the slow-down and collapse of the internet during the 2024 elections to the Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) raises questions, given PTA's declared objectives. These objectives emphasize the regulation of telecommunication systems and services, promoting user interests, ensuring a wide range of high-quality and competitive services, and modernizing telecommunication systems through-out Pakistan. Additionally, PTA is tasked with investigating complaints against licensees and taking action on alleged contraventions of its provisions and rules.

The situation suggests discrepancy between PTA's mission and reported internet disruptions during a critical of national elections. If the slow-down was indeed under PTA's control, it would be at odds with its mandate to promote and protect telecommunication service quality and accessibility for all users in Pakistan, including during significant events like elections which rely heavily on transparent and open communication channels. This scenario underscores the need for a thorough investigation to determine whether the disruptions were due to technical failures within PTA's oversight or deliberate actions that contravened its objectives.

PTA perhaps has to give a lot more explanations for internet slowdown which has jeopardized the entire election exercise costing billions to the government exchequer and for keeping the entire nation at razor's edge. These are not the political parties which are blaming the government for deliberate slow down; this allegation is also supported by independent watchdogs like NetBlocks which have termed the disruption and slow-down of the internet during the Elections-2024 campaign events deliberate rather than due to genuine technical issues.

NetBlocks described the incidents as "nation-scale disruption to social media platforms," which were consistent with previous events imposed during opposition rallies or speeches by opposition leaders and the immediate restoration of services following these events, have led to widespread skepticism about the official explanations. The independent observers have argued that these disruptions were politically motivated, aimed at silencing opposition voices and controlling the flow of information during the election period, rather than being the result of genuine technical problems????.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan condemned the suspension of internet services as a breach of international law and fundamental rights, emphasizing the importance of freedom of expression, especially in the context of

elections?? lending credence to the argument that the internet disruptions were seen as more than just technical glitches.

The election process, which was closely watched by the entire nation and had profound implications for the country's future, was reportedly marred by these disruptions. This situation was particularly critical because the integrity and smooth conduct of the elections depended heavily on stable communication channels, especially in the digital age where much of the electoral communication and reporting relies on internet access.

The absence of public accountability or scrutiny of PTA by contesting parties, civil society, and government bodies is surprising, especially considering the verified reports of inefficiency and unpreparedness. Such a lapse in responsibility, especially when the stakes involved the democratic process and the future governance of the country, raises questions about the regulatory oversight and crisis management capabilities of the authority.

The 2024 elections in Pakistan have drawn widespread criticism for allegedly compromising the integrity of the voting process, leading regional and international media to describe the event as exceptionally unfair, non-transparent, and heavily rigged in the nation's history. Both the United States and the United Kingdom have voiced significant concerns over the electoral proceedings, advocating for thorough investiga-

tions into the numerous reported irregularities.

The US Department of State specifically called attention to infringements on the freedoms of expression and assembly, underscoring the fundamental democratic principles at risk. Similarly, the UK Foreign Secretary raised issues regarding internet accessibility and anomalies in the reporting of election results, indicating potential barriers to a free and fair electoral process. Moreover, the European Union expressed dismay over the compromised level playing field, highlighting constraints on political engagement and accusations of electoral meddling. These international reactions underscore a collective call for transparency and accountability in addressing the alleged shortcomings of the electoral exercise in Pakistan.

Given the significant impact of internet disruptions during the 2024 elections in Pakistan, it is imperative for PTI, alongside other affected political parties and civil society activists, to advocate for the appointment of an independent panel. This panel should comprise both internationally and nationally renowned Information Technology experts tasked with conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the internet backbone's technical capacity to handle the entire election process's demands.

A key point of inquiry should be whether the existing internet infrastructure was adequately equipped to support the volume of elec-

tion-related communications. If limitations were known, the pertinent question arises as to why such critical information was not communicated to the Election Commission, the media, and the public at large. The investigation should delve into whether there were any efforts to augment capacity in anticipation of the increased load and scrutinize the extent of consultation between the Election Commission and PTA regarding the online election system's readiness.

In cases where assurances were provided to the Election Commission about the sufficiency of internet services for election communications, yet failures occurred, the investigation must explore the causes of these discrepancies. Conversely, if no consultations took place, both PTA and the Election Commission may bear responsibility for the oversight.

This inquiry should also aim to pinpoint the specific individuals or groups within PTA and related bodies accountable for maintaining the integrity of internet services and identify any lapses in their duties that contributed to the nationwide anxiety experienced during the elections.

Such a thorough and transparent investigation is essential for restoring public confidence in Pakistan's electoral infrastructure and ensuring the robustness of its digital communications for future electoral exercises.

Based upon the report of the independent investigators,

PTI should pursue all constitutional and legal fora to seek justice. The technical evaluation of internet services capability and sustainability will clear the fog on the entire process and will bring forward the actual culprit.

The Election 2024 debacle in Pakistan, marked by allegations of internet disruptions and electoral malpractices, necessitates an unwavering commitment to transparency and accountability. The dissonance between the Pakistan Telecom Authority's (PTA) stated goals and the observed internet challenges during such a pivotal event underscores the urgency for a meticulous investigation. The involvement of independent IT experts, alongside scrutiny from entities like NetBlocks and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, is crucial in dissecting the root causes—be they technical oversights or deliberate obstructions. International concern from the US, UK, and EU amplifies the call for clarity, stressing the global implications of Pakistan's electoral integrity. For PTI and civil society, the path forward involves leveraging legal avenues and constitutional mechanisms, informed by a comprehensive technical audit of the telecommunications infrastructure.

This proactive approach, grounded in the findings of a thorough inquiry, is essential not only for redressing the immediate grievances but also for fortifying Pakistan's democratic framework against future vulnerabilities.

## Created in toil



Amin Valliani

Every individual, male or female, born in this material world has to have their share of toil. According to the Holy Quran, man is created in toil (90:4). Toiling (the Quranic term being 'al-kabad') refers to the fact that a man in this world has not been created to enjoy and live a life of ease and comfort. Rather, the world for him is a place of enduring and undergoing toil, labour and hardship, and no one is immune from this.

We should not forget that our daily meal is the result of toil. People work day and night to get two square meals a day. Toiling is even necessary to remain fit, healthy, enjoying a sound sleep and gaining success. Success is not something that will come without toil, as it is a prerequisite.

Along with toiling, one needs to be seeking continuous grace and guidance from Allah, be consistent in one's efforts, while not letting go of patience and ethics on the road to success, so that the fruits may be durable and long-lasting. Though the desire for immediate and instant success is quite strong in many people, to gain durable success, quick-fix prescriptions may not work.

There are many examples where people have achieved massive success by working hard. All scientific inventions and discoveries are the result of laborious work and toil. Thomas A. Edison invented the lightbulb after many attempts and fail-

ures and is believed to have said: "I have found 10,000 ways that won't work."

We should also be ready to get going again and again with the same spirit, even if we encounter some hurdles. But working hard, in the correct manner, pays well in the end.

In every society, people are engaged in toil. They rise early and go to bed late, they work from dawn to dusk, face problems, undergo hardships and adversities which, in fact, make them strong and courageous and also open the door to further progress. This is the true nature of life. Even birds, such as ducks and hens, toil all day in the sun.

But one should be clear that Allah does not burden a person beyond his or her ability to cope (2:286). A teacher used to tell an inspiring story to his students. He said, "Initially, when Allah created birds, they had no wings. They used to crawl on earth. Then, one day, Allah decided to bestow the birds with wings. He threw wings towards their feet and commanded them to pick up the same and carry them on their backs. At first, this seemed difficult for the little creatures but [they] later picked up the wings and carried them on their backs. What happened then? What they once considered a hampering weight and burden, enabled them to fly."

Life is not a bed of roses. Whatever one dreams of cannot be accomplished without hard work. Though one faces adversities, these are a 'tonic' that works in favour of a person. In other words, no person is so broken, so oppressed by the burdens of bad health, poverty and unhappiness that there is no way out of their problem or no way to bear it in the

last resort. This is so because all individuals exist within the Divine framework of creation. The burdens we carry by necessity or by choice, instead of weighing us down, actually lift us up. The Holy Quran says "Verily, with hardship, there is relief (94:5)".

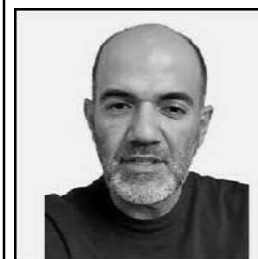
Life demands constant struggle and one has to strive for improvement. Today must be better and tomorrow must be even more so. The success stories of many great people amply prove that struggling with strong willpower leads them to growth and development.

Moreover, history is a witness to this fact that every person in his material life has to toil in order to survive and prosper. Even the prophets and other chosen people considered close to Allah also have had an appropriate share of toiling in their earthly life. But they have left a lesson for coming generations demonstrating how to bear it during their lifetime. The life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) bears witness to the fact that he endured every kind of hardship for the sake of his mission.

Similarly, all other great prophets, like Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim, Ya'qub, Yusuf, Musa, Ayub and Isa, had their fair share of trials and tribulations, as recounted in Quranic parables, as well as authentic hadith literature. Some had to face the powerful tyrants of their time, while others dealt with ill health or separation from their loved ones. Today, these venerable individuals are examples for humankind.

All these aforementioned examples justify the fact that one must understand the nature of life and continue to toil for durable success, no matter the odds and challenges one is faced with. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Why we fail



Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Feb 8 has come and gone. The post-poll rigging and smoky backroom deals will carry on for some time. The frenzied wheeling and dealing will then give way to the new (read: old) status quo. Or maybe there will be even more chaos because a viable power-sharing agreement cannot be formed. And then someone in a uniform, or a suitable proxy, will save us in the name of national security.

Indeed, the more things change, the more they stay the same. As one of its last gifts, the so-called caretaker government has approved a 45 per cent hike in gas prices to assure the IMF that working people will continue to be sacrificed.

Then again, it is reductive to say that nothing has changed. Much has been said about the 'rebellion' against the establishment by mostly young voters who ostensibly don't have very much hope in systemic change but are certainly wise enough to disrupt the powers that be and the so-called 'greater national interest'.

But this will not stop our self-proclaimed guardians from doing what they do, and our mainstream politicians will generally comply. Supporters of the PML-N, PPP, PTI or the other (smaller) usual suspects can decry their opponents' nominees for prime, chief or other minister/ governor slots till kingdom come without troubling the establishment-centric order one bit.

No one in this cynical game of thrones occupies any moral high ground.

It is certainly important to acknowledge that its rank-and-file workers, have suffered the wrath of the state's coercive apparatus. And it is the largely young supporters of the PTI that have turned against the establishment overlords who, till two years ago, happily patronised Imran Khan and his (then loyal) lieutenants.

They are right when they say their mandate is being stolen — both by the Election Commission and the buying of 'independents'. They are entitled to protest against this blatant injustice. But this has all happened before, and it will continue to happen in the future unless something changes in the way the majority of ordinary Pakistanis — including tech-savvy young people — think about and then do politics. Diehard PTI supporters of Imran Khan — and those 'democrats' and 'progressives' who align themselves with the Sharifs, Bhuttos or any of Pakistan's other entrenched political families — must recognise that none of these 'big men' (and the handful of women in the power game) will ever be in the vanguard of an anti-establishment struggle, a task that can only be accomplished by the mass of this country's people, if meaningfully organised. Among other things, it is essential to stop treating the peripheries like they are inconsequential.

Many of the pitched online battles that have followed Feb 8 have largely invisibilised the rigging and subsequent protests in Balochistan, or the murderous attack on Mohsin Dawar and his party comrades in Waziristan. Why should we be surprised, then, that young popular leaders like Manzoor Pashteen and Mahrang Baloch reject parliamentary politics as a manipulated

farce that offers no prospect of change?

What if the increasingly large number of young people in mainland Pakistan who ostensibly went out to vote against the establishment made common cause with those who mobilise again state repression and exploitation of resources in the ethnic peripheries? What if it became understood that cutting these elements down to political size means an economic programme to secure basic needs for working people while uniting against IMF-imposed austerity and domestic (land and other) mafias? What if those who are now asking for big powers like the US, Gulf kingdoms or China to take note of the rigging recognised that the establishment will win if foreign policy remains limited to extracting geostrategic rents from the highest bidders?

This is the stuff of ideological politics, and we are admittedly not living through a conjuncture in which substantive ideas inform political debate and alignments. Which is why this election is not like 1970. Yes, it can be argued that many people came out to cast their votes to reject the militarised state apparatus in both cases. But 54 years ago, the working people and youth of this country (including erstwhile East Pakistan) also rejected class and ethnic domination, and chose socialism. This time, there is no shared vision of the future that animates otherwise politicised young people. Hollow identity politics which equates democracy with an oppressed ethnic group or gender taking individual office misses the forest for the trees. We need to truly decolonise the state and socialise the means of production. Without such a vision politics will be little more than sensation, we will continue to fail, and future generations will pay. -- Courtesy Dawn



## CM pays tribute to Karachi Police Office attack martyrs

KARACHI (APP): Provincial Caretaker Chief Minister, Justice (Rtd) Maqbool Baqir offered heartfelt tributes on Saturday to the brave souls who lost their lives in the tragic Karachi Police Office attack.

Reflecting on the solemn occasion marking the attack's first anniversary, the interim CM emphasized the enduring remembrance of our fallen heroes.

He underscored the invaluable significance of these martyrs, noting their unwavering courage in confronting and defeating terrorism.

Justice (Rtd) Maqbool Baqir expressed unwavering confidence in the prowess of law enforcement agencies, affirming their pivotal role in ridding the nation of terrorism and paving the way for its progress and prosperity.

It is noteworthy to mention that on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Karachi Police Office fell victim to a terrorist attack resulting in the martyrdom of 5 personnel, while 18 Rangers and Police personnel, and one Edhi volunteer sustained injuries.

Following the terrorist assault, a joint operation was launched systematically for clearing the police office building, leading to the elimination of 3 terrorists.

Senior police officers valiantly confronted the attack on the frontlines, resulting in the martyrdom of 5 officials, including Rangers Inspector Taimur, Police Head Constable Ghulam Abbas, Head Constable Abdul Latif, Constable Saad, and Sanitary Worker Ajmal Masih.



RAWALPINDI: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Hanif Abbasi addressing a press conference along with Chaudhary Tanveer, Malik Ibrar and Sardar Naseem at his residence in the city.

## UNHCR advisory committee urged to prioritize HR situation in IIOJK

MIRPUR (APP): US-based Acting Chief of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF-Yaseen Malik) and renowned representative of the Kashmiri Diaspora community, Raja Muzaffar, has called upon the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Advisory Committee to prioritize the fast-deteriorating human rights situation in the illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir state.

In an appeal lodged on Saturday, the appellant acting Chairman of the JKLF, Yasin Malik, Raja Muzaffar, said that the appeal recognizes the significant work undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in shedding light on the challenges faced by the local population, according to a message reaching and released to the media here on Saturday.

Highlighting the groundbreaking report released by the Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) on June 14, 2018, which focused on human rights in Kashmir, Muzaffar emphasized the need for urgent attention and action. As Kashmiri residents, they eagerly await the results of the ongoing investigation initiated by OHCHR.

The appeal respectfully urges the UNHCR Advisory Committee to prioritize a visit to both parts of Kashmir, allowing them to gather firsthand information, engage with local stakeholders, and witness the challenges faced by the affected population.

## VC says: UoS brought about educational revolution

SARGODHA (APP): Vice Chancellor of University of Sargodha Prof Dr. Qaiser Abbas said that the establishment of the university had brought about not only an educational revolution but also an economic and social revolution in the City of Falcons (Sargodha).

He expressed these views at a special meeting with the former students (alumni) of the institution here on Saturday. According to a press release issued by UoS, the VC said that students who graduate from any educational institution remain affiliated with the institution in some way and play a vital and key role in the educational development of the institution.

He said, "Without resolving local issues, we cannot make our mark at the international level, for which we have devised a comprehensive and integrated programme to link educational programs with the industry, the results of which are coming to the fore. Students from other countries are coming here to quench their thirst for knowledge, which is why the university ranks first in teaching in Punjab and second in the country."

The VC said that the University of Sargodha looks at all its former students, especially high-performing alumni, with great respect and an alumni club has been established in the institution and its office would be set up as well as access to the library has been given to these former students for which they have also been issued library cards.

He said, "Government College Sargodha, which was upgraded to the University of Sargodha, is celebrating its centenary in 2029, which is not only a great honor for us but also for the city of Sargodha."



LAHORE: Women activists of Jamaat-e-Islami hold a protest against Israel attack on Gaza, outside press club in the Provincial Capital.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing Students of IT classes at Governor House.

## CM visits headquarters of Elite Force, Patrolling Police

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a visit to the Provincial Headquarters of the Elite Force Punjab and the Punjab Highway Patrolling Police on Saturday.

The CM inspected the Elite Force Officers Block, Punjab Highway Patrolling Police and other sections. Mohsin Naqvi visited the Control Room of the Punjab Highway Patrolling Police and monitored the Highway Patrolling System. He met with police officers and directed them to perform their duties with great dedication and in a professional manner.

The CM apprised that a crackdown had been launched against those driving their vehicles and motorcycles without a licence, adding that every possible step was being taken to ensure road safety. The Patrolling Police has to take a lead regarding road safety, he added. Mohsin Naqvi also visited the cafeteria of the Punjab Highway Patrolling Police and lauded its quality.

IG Police Dr. Usman Anwar and Additional IG Punjab Highway Patrolling Police gave a briefing about the Control Room. The Secretary Communication & Works, CCPO, Additional IG Elite Force, Additional IG Punjab Highway Patrolling Police, DIG Elite, DIG Punjab Highway Patrolling Police and officials concerned were also present.

Meanwhile, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inspecting the Control Room of Punjab Highway Patrolling Police during his visit to Elite Force Punjab and Punjab Highway Patrolling Police Headquarter.

## 188 kite seller held in grand operation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police arrested 188 kite seller and recovered thousands of kites, strings, liquor, weapons, and sound systems from their possession within two days.

During this year 356 kite sellers, and kite flyer were arrested and 48,000 kites and 800 strings were confiscated.

In Potohar Town, Police have arrested 147 kite sellers and recovered more than 5300 kites, 200 strings, 326 bottles of liquor, 02 pistols, and sound system from their custody.

In Rawal Town, police held 18 kite sellers and confiscated 438 kites and more than 15 strings from their possession.

Similarly, Suddar Division Police arrested 23 kite sellers, and kite flyer and recovered 630 kites and 18 strings from their possession.

## WASA disconnects 158 connections of defaulters

MULTAN (APP): Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) teams have disconnected 158 connections of commercial and domestic defaulters and recovered over Rs five million in two days.

This was stated in a meeting held under the supervision of Deputy Managing Director Engineering and Chairman Recovery Committee Jawad Kaleemullah to review the performance of the recovery section.

## CM orders probe into rigging allegation

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi took notice of the rigging allegations, levelled by the commissioner Rawalpindi division, and ordered carrying out an impartial probe in this regard.

The CM ordered for formation of a high-level committee to investigate the rigging allegations. He said the real facts should be brought to light regarding the allegations about rigging during general election.

## CEO health inspects THQ Jhumra

FAISALABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) District Health Authority Dr. Asfandiar visited the THQ Jhumra on Saturday.

He inspected the medical facilities provided to the patients in various departments and expressed satisfaction over the arrangements.

He also inspected equipment and other arrangements. He was informed that a checkup facility was provided to 15,438 patients in OPD, 3135 emergencies and 213 delivery cases were handled; 176 surgeries and 1036 patients were treated in the in-door of the hospital.

He also talked with attendants of the patients and inquired about the availability of treatment and availability of medicines.

## CCPO reviews PSL security arrangements

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana Saturday chaired a meeting at his office to review security arrangements for peaceful conduct of matches of Pakistan Super League-9 (PSL-9).

It was informed in the meeting that nine matches under the PSL-9 would be played in the provincial capital. More than 7,000 policemen have been deputed for security of the matches. The CCPO said Lahore police would ensure comprehensive security for the matches. Lahore police are providing foolproof security to national and international players as well as enthusiasts, he added.

The CCPO ordered continuous coordination with the line departments and implementation of the security plans for cricket stadiums, accommodation of players, and routes, ensuring thorough checking of every individual entering the stadium and women spectators to be checked by lady police. He ordered for effective measures to maintain traffic flow during the PSL matches and ordered prompt action against fake certificates, electricity theft, and pending investigations, as well as a crackdown on proclaimed offenders (POs) and other culprits.

The meeting was attended by DIG (Operations) Ali Nasir Rizvi, DIG (Investigations) Imran Kishwar, SSP (Operations) Syed Ali Raza, SSP (Admin) Atif Nazir, SSP (Investigations) Anooch Masood Ch.



LAHORE: Candidates stand in a queue outside Qila Gujjar Singh Police Station to submit their application for recruitment in Punjab police, in the Provincial Capital.

## ANF recovers 363 kg drugs in nine operations; arrests 13 accused

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover over 363 kg drugs and arrested 13 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that 5 kg Ice and 3 kg ketamine drug were recovered from a parcel at a cargo office at Jinnah Airport while an accused was also arrested.

504 grams heroin was recovered from the possession of a passenger going to Bahrain at Peshawar Airport.

In the third operation, 84 kg opium and 120 kg hashish were recovered from two suspects arrested at Ravi Motorway Toll Plaza Lahore.

54 kg opium and 48 kg hashish were recovered from 3 suspects netted on Kot Abdul Malik Motorway Lahore.

In the fifth operation, 17 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of 2 suspects arrested near Sangjami Toll Plaza Islamabad while 5.5 kg heroin, 9 kg hashish and 1.5 kg suspicious material were recovered from Zakhakhel Khyber area.

In two different operations conducted near M-1 Islamabad, 14 kg hashish was recovered from three drug smugglers.

208 grams hashish and 343 grams hashish oil were recovered from the possession of an accused nabbed on Ferozpur Road, Lahore.

## Khuhro urges judiciary to take notice of attempts to malign institutions

HYDERABAD (APP): President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Sindh chapter, Nisar Ahmed Khuhro has urged the judiciary to take notice against those trying to malign the institutions.

Addressing a press conference at the residence of PPP Hyderabad President Sagheer Qureshi here on Saturday, Khuhro said that there is no room for the imposition of martial law in the constitution of the country and any politician inviting the army could be tried under Article 6 of the constitution.

He said that the country could no longer afford instability because the people had already suffered a lot at the hands of inflation, poverty, and unemployment.

He said the PPP had decided to vote in favour of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's candidate for the post of Prime Minister to stabilise the country and for the continuity of the democratic process.

Commenting on the protests of JUI-F in Sindh, he said that the party was holding sit-in demonstrations in Sindh from where it had never secured seats in assemblies. Former Senator Moulana Bux Chandio was also present on the occasion.



HYDERABAD: President PPP Sindh Nisar Ahmed Khuhro addressing a press conference along with senator Moulana Bux Chandio, at Qureshi House.

## Gandapur demands to fix constituencies which were rigged

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) nominated Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Ali Amin Gandapur has said that the conscience of Rawalpindi Commissioner has woken up so now the constituencies which were rigged should be fixed.

Ali Amin Gandapur addressed the protest in Peshawar holding the photo of the PTI founder Imran Khan.

Gandapur said it was their duty to protect the mandate of the people and they are also ready to sacrifice to achieve the goal. He added that they are facing challenges but they will continue to come out on the roads for their rights. The PTI leader said Imran Khan wanted the people to wake up and he congratulated him that the people have woken up.

He said they have to ensure the safety of the public. He said they just want reform, those who will not reform, be ready for punishment.

He told the people of KP that he would ensure the protection of the public after making government. He added that he will work to provide jobs and employment to the youth.

Gandapur also said that they will bring such a system, which will be an example in the world and they will work to give rights.



PESHAWAR: Tehreek e Insaf leader Ali Amin Gandapur is addressing a protest rally on the Ring Road against rigging.

## 10 nabbed for carrying illegal arms

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 10 illegal armholders, and drug dealers and recovered arms, ammunition from their possession during a crackdown here on Saturday.

According to a police spokesman, Rawat Police held Akram and recovered 12 bore rifle from his possession.

Similarly, Wah Cantt police nabbed Asad, Haq Nawaz, and Mooin besides recovering 03 pistols of 30 bore from their custody.

While, Civil Lines Police recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from Ihtesham and 01 pistol of 30 bore from Abdul Rehman. Following the operation, Sadiqabad police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Shehzad. Gujjar Khan police recovered 01 pistol 30-bore from Khabib.

## AC reviews WSSC cleanliness drive under 'Khushal KP Program'

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A cleanliness drive under the Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Programme launched by The Water and Sanitation Services (WSSC) DI Khan was in full swing to keep the city neat and clean.

Under the program, the main drains of the city got cleaned, and garbage was also removed from different localities.

On the special instructions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) of DI Khan Mansoor Arshad, Assistant Commissioner (AC) of DI Khan Muhammad Faseeh Ishaq Abbasi, and WSSC staff, they reviewed the sanitation arrangements at various places in the city, including Tank Adda, Wensum College, Mufti Mahmood School, and other different places.

On this occasion, the AC said that drains should be cleaned before expected rains. He called for the cooperation of the citizens and urged them to refrain from dumping garbage in the drains to ensure cleanliness and the elimination of encroachment.

He appealed to the citizens not to throw garbage in drains, but that it should be placed in designated places so that it could be disposed of easily.

## LDA DG reviews progress on Avenue-1 development

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Development Authority (LDA) Director General Muhammad Ali Randhawa, during a meeting held here on Saturday, reviewed the pace of development work being carried out at the LDA Avenue-1.

Official sources said progress had been started in K and L blocks, with the successful completion of development work, including the installation of electricity poles. The commissioner was provided a detailed briefing on the status of 'K Block' of LDA Avenue-1.

LDA Avenue-1 Director and Project Director briefed the meeting about commercial activities and ongoing measures to beautify the green belts and parks in Jubilee Town and Avenue-1. The meeting revealed that work has been started for revamping of LDA's One Window Cell at Avenue-1 while Central Park of LDA Avenue One is near completion.

The commissioner, who is also the DG LDA,

## Kohat police arrests six gamblers

KOHAT (APP): The Kohat police on Saturday arrested six gamblers involved in gambling on pheasant fairs.

According to police, acting on a tip-off SHO Gumbat police station Riyaz Hussain foiled the gambling party along with the police force, and recovered 20,600 rupees worth of gambling money and four pheasants from their possession.

A case was registered against the gamblers at the Gumbat police station.



## WTO chief insists global trade body still counts

GENEVA (AFP/APP): The head of the World Trade Organization insisted Friday that the WTO was still relevant as it prepares for its main gathering with few major deals on the table.

WTO members' trade ministers have their biennial meeting in Abu Dhabi from February 26-29, at which they could put the final touches to a further fisheries deal.

But other potential agreements seem stuck in the weeds as anxiety swells over the impact of current geopolitical tensions.

The global trade body's chief, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala dismissed

claims that the organisation was no longer relevant.

"I reject the use of the word irrelevant," she told journalists at the WTO's headquarters in Geneva.

"People don't realise, they've taken for granted that 75 percent of world trade is taking place on WTO terms: 75 percent, despite all the FTAs (free trade agreements) and regional agreements.

"Can you imagine if those rules did not exist to govern world trade? What would it be?"

"Be careful what you say."

The Abu Dhabi talks will be the 13th ministerial meeting since the WTO's creation in 1995.

The WTO is hoping for results, particularly on fishing, agriculture and electronic commerce, but disagreements remain between the organisation's members.

Okonjo-Iweala said her team was working around the clock to draft agreements for the talks.

She said the mood among diplomats finessing the draft texts for the Abu Dhabi meeting was more positive and constructive than before the last ministerial meeting in 2022, held at the WTO's Geneva headquarters.

However, the "positive atmosphere has to be mixed with a dose of realism because negotiating

positions are still quite tough" notably on agriculture, she added.

They were working to seal new agreements on tackling subsidies that promote overfishing, and extending the practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions.

Okonjo-Iweala said she expected the meeting to be tough due to the "economic and political headwinds", from the war in Ukraine, the attacks in the Red Sea, inflation, rising food prices and economic difficulties in Europe and China.

She also noted the elections scheduled this year around the world.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors look cars during Car show at a shopping mall in Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Wholesalers are selling Sugarcane at fruit and vegetable market in the Federal Capital.

## Sukkur trade exhibition & export awareness seminar inaugurated

SUKKUR (APP): Commissioner Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi inaugurated a two-day Sukkur trade exhibition and export awareness seminar.

The exhibition was organised by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) at Sukkur IBA Public School to foster economic growth and promote export opportunities in the region. Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Muhammad Dital Kalhori, Abdul Fateh Shaikh, former president of the Sukkur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and Shabnam Zafar, President of Khairpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry and business community, underscoring the significance of collaboration and partnership in driving economic prosperity.

TDAP organized a Seminar on the National Exporters Training

Program and E-Commerce 101, which witnessed a remarkable turnout of over 100 participants. Led by experts Afshan Uroos, Deputy Manager TDAP Aadi Mukhtar, Assistant Director TDAP, the sessions provided invaluable insights into a wide array of subjects, including Export Procedures and Documentation, marketing, financing, E-Commerce, and Pakistan Trade Portal utilization. Representatives from different institutions such as the State Bank of Pakistan and SGS also contributed exclusive information on compliances and financing, enriching the learning experience for attendees.

The session culminated in an interactive Q&A session, followed by a vote of thanks to Mohsin Bullo, Deputy Manager TDAP, expressing gratitude to all participants for their active engagement.

## LESCO collects over Rs 16m from defaulters in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), recovered more than Rs 16 million from 517 chronic defaulters in all five districts - Lahore, Sheikhpura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara - on the 153rd day of its recovery campaign.

A LESCO spokesman told the media on Saturday that on the 153rd day, Chief Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Noreez Humayun recovered outstanding dues of Rs 2.16 million from 96 defaulters in Northern Circle and Rs 6.43 million from 74 defaulters in Eastern Circle respectively. Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Watto along with Tehsildar Model Town Rana Arsal and Tehsildar Cant. Sajjad

Qureshi recovered Rs 0.98 million from 48 defaulters in Central Circle, and Rs 1.22 million from 39 defaulters in South Circle; while Manager (Technical) Engineer Muhammad Feroq with the assistance of Tehsildar Nankana Sahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhpura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar recovered Rs 0.50 million from 47 defaulters in Nankana Circle and Rs 2.35 million from 67 defaulters in Sheikhpura Circle. He added that LESCO Manager E&S (PMU) Engineer Abbas Ali in collaboration with Naib Tehsildar Kasur and Okara Mirza Zahid Baig recovered outstanding dues of Rs 0.51 million from 69 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 2.46 million from 77 defaulters in Kasur Circle.

Up till now during the recovery campaign, the LESCO with the help of Tehsildars (Recovery),



ISLAMABAD: A vendor is preparing empty plastic sacks for selling purpose at his workplace at fruit and vegetable market in the Federal Capital.

## FDO organizes Trade Fair for poor artists, female farmers

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Farmer Development Organization (FDO) arranged 'Trade Fair' to offer opportunity to poor women farmers, artists and other poor labourers to display their handmade articles so that they could earn livelihood.

The initiative is meant provide them excellent marketing platform. The Trade Fair was introduced at Rest House Juwana Bangla, in sub-tehsil Ranpur. Scores of artisans from across the area set up their stalls.

Programme Manager FDO Pervez Iqbal Ansari talking to APP stated that the region was faced with poverty. A number of families could not manage eatables.

"Food is of vital importance for proper upbringing of the people. By arranging such fairs, the problem of food insecurity can be tackled," he added.

"The FDO is offering resources to the artisans and other poor families," he informed.

On the occasion, hundreds of citizens visited the Trade Fair.

## Shaanxi sees record surge in foreign invested firms

XI'AN (Xinhua/APP): A total of 408 new foreign-funded enterprises were registered in northwest China's Shaanxi Province in 2023, marking a record high over the past two decades, with a year-on-year increase of 29.9 percent, according to the province's commerce department.

Among these enterprises, 336 foreign-invested companies were added to the tertiary industry last year, with a yearly growth of 26.8 percent. New firms in the high-tech service industry rose 61.3 percent year on year to 129, according to the commerce department.

The province's actual utilization of foreign investment increased by 3.7 percent last year totaling 9.99 billion yuan (about 1.41 billion U.S. dollars).

## Trader bodies urge govt to reconsider recent hike in gas tariff

ISLAMABAD (APP): Trader bodies on Saturday urged the federal government to reconsider its decision to hike in gas tariff to address concerns of the business community.

President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and President, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Jiftikhar Ahmed Sheikh made the demand during a meeting held here, said a news release.

They have shown concerns over the federal cabinet's approval of a 67 percent increase in gas tariffs as it would increase production costs, reduce industrial activities, and badly hurt exports.

During a meeting, they urged the government

to take solid measures and ensure competitive energy tariffs for the industry to boost industrialization and exports.

President ICCI said that the economy of Pakistan is in deep trouble as the manufacturing sector is still struggling to recover, textile sector exports declined by around 3 percent during July-January 2023-24, and foreign exchange reserves of US\$ 8 billion are insufficient to cover only 6 weeks of imports.

He said Pakistan needs US\$ 22 billion in external financing during 2024-25 to meet its financing needs.

To cope with these challenges, Pakistan urgently needs to boost industrialization and exports.

## LCCI demands crackdown on beggars at traffic signals

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Saturday expressed deep concern over a surge in the number of beggars at traffic signals and urged the authorities concerned to accelerate crackdown on professional beggars.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar also appreciated Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Ammara Athar for taking a swift action on the LCCI letter, requesting empowerment of traffic wardens to take action against beggars on traffic signals. He said that the beggar mafia was

exploiting citizens and looting them financially by any possible means. He said that the number of beggars is on the rise with every passing day, adding that hordes of beggars were a common sight at various places such as traffic signals, etc. need to be controlled on priority basis.

The LCCI president said that the department concerned should make sure that there were proper laws in practice to curb the beggar mafia. He said beggars could easily be resettled and sent to any rehabilitation centres.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors displayed shoes attraction for customers at Khanna Pull area in the Federal Capital.

## China to become global powerhouse in tech, pharma: IMD

GENEVA (Xinhua/APP): China is becoming a global powerhouse in tech and pharmaceuticals, according to a new indicator released by the Switzerland-based International Institute for Management Development (IMD).

The IMD launched its inaugural China Company Transformation Indicator (CCTI) earlier this month, focusing on technology, pharmaceuticals and apparel.

It found that internet technology firms still dominate China's technological sector, with Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent among the top five, alongside JD.com and NetEase.

IMD China's CEO Mark Greeven said in a video interview with Xinhua that three hard tech companies have also secured their place among the top 10, including semiconductor giant SMIC, computer maker

Lenovo and global security technology leader Hikvision.

Meanwhile, China's hidden technology champions are likely to become global contenders in the future, said Greeven, who directed the CCTI research.

The IMD indicator also highlighted a dynamic interplay between foreign multinational corporations and innovative national companies in the pharmaceutical sector, currently led by big-name companies like Pfizer, Roche, AstraZeneca, and the emerging Chinese company Hengrui Pharmaceuticals.

Likewise, automotive businesses like BYD and battery company CATL are globalizing, he said.

"Innovation is the name of the game. All the top performers have been or are investing in innovation for the future," he said.

## Businessmen for commercial activities at Ghulam Khan, Kharlachi border posts

PESHAWAR (APP): Businessmen dealing in Pak-Afghan trade have demanded Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Ministry of Commerce to open Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi borders with Afghanistan for full-fledged commercial activities in the wake of the excessive transportation burden on the Torkhem border post.

In a joint press statement issued here on Saturday, Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi and former Senior Vice President (SVP) Sarhad Chamber of

Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Engr Manzoor Elahi said due to closure of Chaman border for the last three months and limited operation at Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi border posts, all the workload of trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been shifted to Torkhem border.

"Excessive transportation of goods from Torkhem to Afghanistan and Central Asian Countries (CARs), ensued in prolonging travel duration of goods laden trucks from ten days to around one and a half month and excessive increase in charges," they explained.

Transportation charges for trucks nowadays has been hiked to an exorbitant level of Rs. 1.1 million (1100,000) because of prolonged travel duration of around one and a half months which makes it almost impossible for businessmen to bear the expense, they went on to say. Zia said a truck carrying goods to Afghanistan returns to Pakistan after around 45 days and the owners are now preferring local transportation within the country, instead of sending their vehicles to Afghanistan which is creating an acute shortage of vehicles.

## Gold rates increase by Rs.800

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.800 and was sold at Rs.213,200 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.212,400 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.686 to Rs.182,785 from Rs.182,099 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.167,553 from Rs.166,924, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.30 to Rs2,550 whereas that of ten ten gram Silver went down by Rs.25.72 to Rs.2,186.21. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$9 to \$2,034 from \$2,025, the Association reported.

## Cement exports increase 49.70% to \$150.652m in 7 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of cement witnessed an increase of 49.70 per cent during the first seven months of the financial year 2023-24, as against the exports of the corresponding months of last year.

The cement exports from the country were recorded at US \$150.652 million during July-January (2023-24) against the exports of US \$100.635 million during July-January (2022-23), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In terms of quantity, the exports of cement also surged by 88.98 per cent going up from 2,061,713 metric tons to 3,896,206

metric tons, according to the data.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the exports of cement witnessed a nominal decrease of 1.98 per cent during the month of January 2024 as compared to the same month of last year.

The exports of cement from the country during January 2024 were recorded at US \$15.025 million against the exports of US \$14.728 million in January 2023.

On a month-on-month basis, exports of cement also dipped by 32.83 per cent during January 2024 when compared to the exports of US \$21.927 million.

## Saudi Arabia ranks 1st in international tourist arrivals growth in 2023

RIYADH (SPA/APP): Saudi Arabia topped the UN Tourism's ranking for the growth of international tourist arrivals in 2023 compared to 2019 among large destinations, achieving an increase of 56%, according to the World Tourism Barometer report released last month.

Moreover, the report indicates Saudi Arabia recording a remarkable tourism recovery rate of 156% in international tourist arrivals in 2023 compared to 2019.

These notable achievements in the tourism sector have positioned Saudi Arabia as a leader in the Middle East region's global tourism recovery, which was the only region to surpass pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels with a 122% recovery rate in international tourist arrivals in 2023 compared to 2019. Various tourist destinations within the Kingdom witnessed a significant increase in both domestic and inbound visitors in 2023.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors are Jujube (Bair) at fruit and vegetable market in the Federal Capital.

## China dominates global new energy car sales

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP): The sales of new energy passenger cars in China accounted for nearly two-thirds of the world's total last year, industrial data showed.

Some 8.87 million units of such vehicles were sold in the Chinese market in 2023, up 37 percent from a year ago and making up 63.5 percent of the global sales, Cui Dongshu, secretary general of the China Passenger Car Association, said.

The penetration rate of new energy vehicles (NEVs) in China, or the proportion of NEVs in all car sales, rose to almost 30 percent in 2023. The NEV market has witnessed robust expansion in China over the past years thanks to the country's accelerated push for green development and a rapidly growing auto market. In 2023, electric passenger cars accounted for 69 percent of the country's sales, while plug-in hybrids gripped 31 percent.

Brazilian Agricultural Ministry commented at U.S. Department.



## Russian emigres gather across Europe to mourn Navalny, denounce Putin

**Monitoring Desk**  
BERLIN: Hundreds of protesters, many of them Russian emigres, gathered in cities across Europe and beyond to express their outrage over the death of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

Often gathering outside Russian embassies, they chanted slogans critical of Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom they blamed for the activist's death, holding up signs calling him a "killer" and demanding accountability.

Putin's most formidable domestic opponent, Navalny fell unconscious and died on Friday after a walk at the Arctic penal colony where he was serv-

ing a three-decade sentence, prison authorities said.

In Berlin, a crowd of 500 to 600 people, according to police estimates, gathered on the city's Unter den Linden boulevard, chanting in a mixture of Russian, German and English.

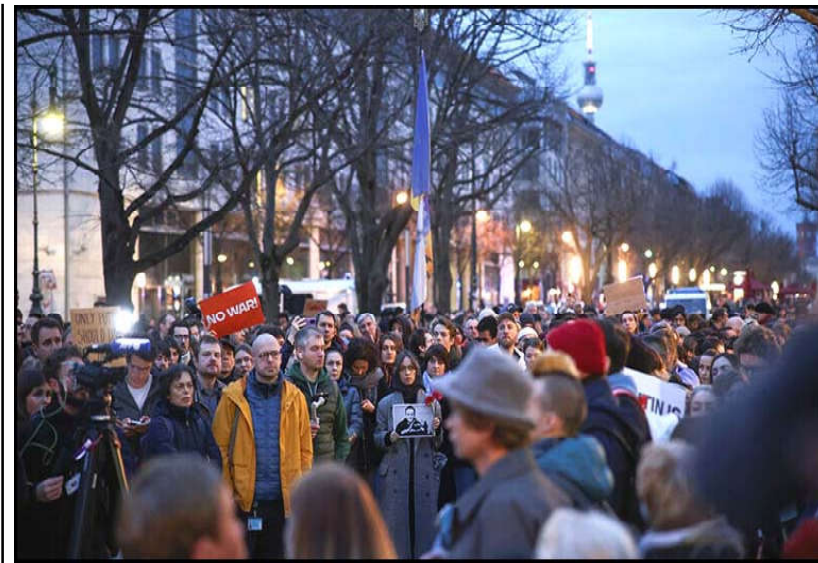
Some chanted "Putin to the Hague", referring to the international criminal court investigating possible war crimes committed in Ukraine. Police used barriers to close off the road between the Russian embassy and the crowd.

"Alexei Navalny is the leader of the Russian opposition and we always kept hope in his name," said a Russian man draped in a blue-and-white anti-war

flag, giving his name only as Ilya.

Russians Anna and Anastasia and Scotland's Alison pay their respects to Alexei Navalny outside the Russian embassy in London, Britain, February 16.—Reuters/Hollie Adams

In Lithuania, formerly run from Moscow but now a member of NATO and the European Union and home to a sizeable community of emigres, protesters placed flowers and candles by a portrait of Navalny. "He was always with us, so it is all surreal," said Lyusya Shtein, 26, a Pussy Riot activist who has lived in Vilnius since leaving Russia in 2022. "None of us yet understand what happened".



People attend a vigil held in front of the Russian embassy in Berlin, Germany.

## Egypt building 'walled enclosure' for Gazans in Sinai, says WSJ

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Egypt is constructing a walled camp in the Sinai Peninsula to receive displaced Palestinian civilians from the Gaza Strip, a US media report and an Egyptian human rights monitor said on Friday.

But Israel said it had no plans to move civilians there, as it prepares an offensive in Rafah, in Gaza's far south.

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) said an eight-square-mile "walled enclosure" was under construction on the Egyptian side

of the border.

The compound was part of "contingency plans" if ceasefire talks in Cairo failed and could accommodate more than 100,000 people, it added.

The Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, an Egyptian NGO, released a report this week that it said showed construction of the compound to receive Palestinian refugees "in the case of a mass exodus".

Journalists reviewed satellite pictures taken on Thursday of the area in northern Sinai, showing

## South Korean president's office says handling of heckler within law

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL (Internews): South Korean security guards were acting within the law when they removed a man who was heckling President Yoon Suk Yeol as he was making a speech at a university graduation ceremony, the president's office said on Friday.

Videos widely shared on X showed several members of Yoon's security detail muzzling and removing the man, who appeared to be a student, from the ceremony at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology (KAIST).

## Belgian PM backs EU bonds to boost defence spending

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS (Internews): Joint European Union borrowing could help fund higher defence spending but governments would still have to make tough political choices to sustain it, Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said.

Many European governments have committed to increasing military spending in response to Russia's war in Ukraine and doubts about the U.S. commitment to European security via NATO, called into question again in recent days by Donald Trump.

With many national budgets under strain, leaders including Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, French President

## Berlin, Paris ink 'historic' security pacts with Kyiv

**Monitoring Desk**  
BERLIN: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky signed a security deal with Germany on Friday in Berlin, hailed by Chancellor Olaf Scholz as a "historic step" anchoring sustained support for Kyiv in its raging battles against Russia.

Hours later, Zelensky and his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron also signed a similar security pact calling for French military and civilian aid for Kyiv in its war against Russia, officials said. The deal covers aid pledge for up to three billion euros (\$3.2bn) for 2024, after 1.7bn in 2022 and 2.1bn last year.

With the Ukraine war about to enter a third year, the president was set to make a new plea for sustained help with financing and armaments at the

Munich Security Conference, where leaders like US Vice President Kamala Harris are to gather.

Zelensky's European tour comes at a critical time with Ukraine facing mounting pressure on the eastern frontlines because of ammunition shortages and fresh Russian attacks.

Fierce fighting raged around beleaguered Avdiivka, on the eastern frontline, which has become a main Russian target, ahead of the Feb 24 invasion anniversary. The long-term future of billions of dollars of Western aid is meanwhile in doubt, with the biggest contributor, the US, in the throes of an election year. A possible \$60-billion package of military aid has been held up in Washington since last year because of wrangling in Congress.

## 'Freezing democracy': All our bank accounts frozen, says Congress

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI (INP): The Indian National Congress has said that its bank accounts have been frozen, just weeks ahead of the general elections. Congress treasurer Ajay Maken speaking to media today said the banks are not honouring the cheques the party is issuing. He said, "All the accounts of the country's main opposition party including of Indian Youth Congress have been frozen by the IT department".

Describing the move as a disturbing blow to the democratic process, Maken said, "Democracy doesn't exist; this is like a one-rule party, and the principal opposition party has been subjugated".

He went on to say: "This is equivalent to freezing the democracy. Democracy has completely ended in India". He urged the judiciary to intervene and save democracy. "Right now we don't have any money to spend, to pay electricity bills, to pay salaries to our

employees. Everything will be impacted" he added.

Maken also announced that the Congress will take to the streets and organise a widespread agitation over this matter.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge that the move to freeze the accounts of the country's largest opposition party just before the Lok Sabha elections is a deep assault on Indian democracy. In a post on X, he said, "Intoxicated with power, the Modi government has frozen the accounts of the country's largest opposition party - the Indian National Congress - just before the Lok Sabha elections. This is a deep assault on India's democracy." Reacting to the development, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the Narendra Modi government was behind the IT department's action. "Don't be afraid Modi ji, Congress is not about the power of money but of people."



French President Emmanuel Macron and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskiy exchange documents after signing an agreement at the Elysee Palace in Paris, France.

## Britain's Labour Party deals double blow to PM Sunak's Conservatives

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON (INP): Britain's Labour dealt a crushing blow to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservatives on Friday, winning contests for two new lawmakers in votes that suggested the opposition party was on track to win a national election later this year.

The double defeat underlined the flagging fortunes of the governing party and will do little to silence Sunak's critics, who fear the Conservatives could face an all-but wipe-out at the national election and want him to change course.

The 43-year-old former investment banker has struggled to restore his party's fortunes despite recasting himself at various points over the past year as a bold reformer, a stable technocrat and now as someone who needs more time "to stick to the plan" because, he says, that plan is working.

But with the Labour Party ahead in the polls, Sunak might well need to bend to the demands of some in his party to offer an increasingly disaffected electorate a more right-wing conservative agenda before the election.

"By winning in these Tory strongholds, we can confidently say that Labour is back in the service of working people and we will work tirelessly to deliver for them," Labour leader Keir Starmer said in a statement.

"The Tories (Conservatives) have failed. Rishi's recession proves that. That's why we've seen so many former Conservative voters switching directly to this changed Labour Party," Labour overturned a hefty Conservative majority in the central English town of Wellingborough to win the parliamentary seat with 13,844 votes against 7,408 in what polling.

## With half votes in, Prabowo leads Indonesia race

**Monitoring Desk**  
JAKARTA: Indonesian Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto was on course to win the presidential election by a wide margin, election commission results showed Friday, with 50 percent of votes counted.

The official result is not expected until late March but early indications all point to the 72-year-old ex-general being anointed successor to popular outgoing leader Joko Widodo.

But both of his rivals said they would wait for the official result and have not conceded.

With half the ballots now counted, Prabowo holds a commanding 56.89 percent of votes, more than double his nearest rival and enough for a first-round majority, the election commission's website showed.

Former Jakarta governor Anies Baswedan stood at 25.27 percent on Friday morning and former Central Java governor Ganjar Pranowo had 17.84 percent of the vote.

## India's Supreme Court scraps Electoral Bonds in setback to Modi's BJP

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI (Internews): India's Supreme Court on Thursday scrapped a seven-year-old election funding system that allows individuals and companies to make unlimited and anonymous donations to political parties, calling it "unconstitutional".

The decision is seen as a setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, which has been the largest beneficiary of the system it introduced in 2017.

The system, called Electoral Bonds, was challenged by members of the opposition and a civil society group on the grounds that it hindered the public's right to know who had given money to political parties.

Under the system, a person or company could buy bonds from the state-run State Bank of India (SBI), opens new tab and donate them to a political party.

Individuals and companies bought 165.18 bil-

lion rupees (\$1.99 billion) of such bonds in total up to November 2023, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), a non-government civil society group working on election funding in India. The group was a petitioner challenging the system.

A five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said: "Political contributions give a seat at the table to the contributor this access also translates into influence over policy making."

In making its ruling, it said: "The scheme has been declared unconstitutional, the issuance of fresh bonds is prohibited." BJP spokesperson Gopal Krishna Agarwal said the party was "committed to continuous reforms on electoral funding" and would abide by the ruling. Individuals could donate any amount of cash. Companies had been restricted based on their revenue and profits.

## New EU rules policing digital content set to kick in from today

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS: Digital companies will have nowhere to hide after the EU's landmark content law enters into full force from Saturday, with the risk of heavy fines for any violations.

The new rules, known as the Digital Services Act (DSA), kicked in last year for the world's largest platforms, including Facebook and TikTok, but will now apply to all except the smallest companies.

When the European Union proposed the law in 2020, the objective was simple: to tame the wild west online, where Brussels felt companies were not doing enough to block illegal content or acting sufficiently to protect consumers.

## Trump fined \$355m, barred from New York business in fraud trial

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK: A judge ruled on Friday that Donald Trump must pay \$354.9 million in penalties for fraudulently overstating his net worth to dupe lenders, handing the former US president another legal setback in a civil case that imperils his real estate empire.

Justice Arthur Engoron also banned Trump from serving as an officer or director of any New York corporation for three years.

Engoron cancelled his prior ruling from September ordering the "dissolution" of companies that control pillars of Trump's real estate empire, saying on

Friday that this was no longer necessary because he is appointing an independent monitor and compliance director to oversee Trump's businesses.

In the ruling, Engoron wrote that Trump and the other defendants in the case "are incapable of admitting the error of their ways".

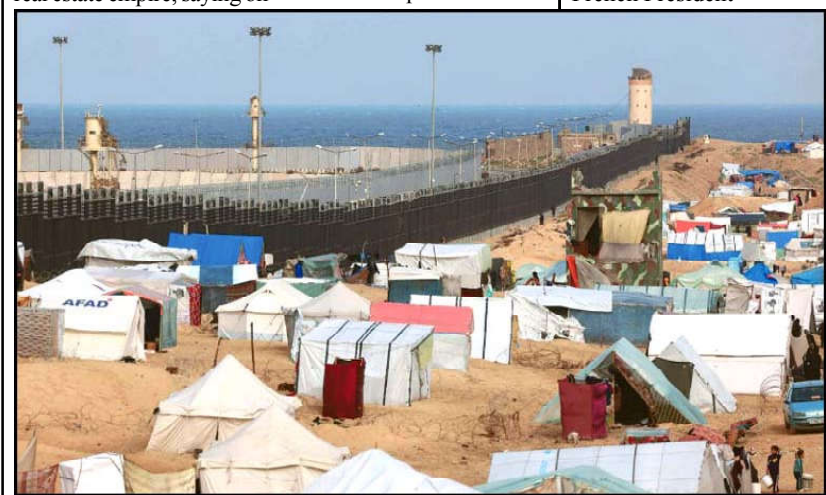
"Their complete lack of contrition and remorse borders on pathological," Engoron wrote. "Instead, they adopt a 'See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil' posture that the evidence belies."

The lawsuit brought by New York Attorney General Letitia James accused Trump and his fam-

## Two dead, scores injured after police open fire in India's Manipur state

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI (INP): At least two people were killed and scores injured in India's northeastern Manipur state after security forces opened fire at a mob in Churachandpur district late on Thursday, a police official said, as sporadic violence continued in the region.

Close to 200 people have died since fierce fighting broke out last May between members of the majority Meitei and minority Kuki communities in the state bordering Myanmar over sharing economic benefits and quotas given to the tribes. Thousands remain displaced in relief camps.



Displaced Palestinians camp in Rafah, near the border fence between Gaza Strip and Egypt.

## Canada, Australia, NZ call for immediate ceasefire in Gaza ahead of Rafah assault

**Monitoring Desk**  
SYDNEY (Internews): The leaders of Canada, Australia and New Zealand on Thursday called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, according to a joint statement released in response to reports about Israel's planned military operation in Rafah.

"We are gravely concerned by indications that Israel is planning a ground offensive into Rafah. A military operation into Rafah would be catastrophic," the statement by the prime ministers of the three countries said. "An immediate humanitarian ceasefire is urgently needed."

Israel will press ahead

with an offensive against Hamas in Rafah, the last refuge for displaced Palestinians in southern Gaza, after allowing civilians to vacate the area, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday. The statement urged Israel not to conduct the offensive, however it said any ceasefire could not be "one sided," and would require Hamas to disarm and immediately release all remaining hostages.

The leaders also said the International Court of Justice's January ruling in a genocide case brought by South Africa obligated Israel to protect civilians and deliver basic services.

## Google to launch anti-misinformation campaign ahead of EU elections

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON (Internews): (This Feb. 15 story has been corrected to change the launch date from 'March' to 'spring' in paragraph 5).

Google (GOOGL.O), opens new tab is preparing to launch an anti-misinformation campaign across five countries in the European Union (EU), the company said ahead of the bloc's parliamentary elections and tougher new rules tackling online content.

## Greece legalises same sex marriage in landmark change

**Monitoring Desk**  
ATHENS (Internews): Greece's parliament approved a bill allowing same-sex civil marriage on Thursday, a landmark victory for supporters of LGBT rights that was greeted with cheers by onlookers in parliament and dozens gathered on the streets of Athens.

The law gives same-sex couples the right to wed and adopt children and comes after decades of campaigning by the LGBT community for marriage equality in the socially conservative country. Greece is one of the first Orthodox Christian

countries to allow such unions. "This is a historic moment," Stella Belia, the head of same-sex parents group Rainbow Families, said. "This is a day of joy."

The bill was approved by 176 lawmakers in the 300-seat parliament and will become law when its published in the official government gazette. Although members of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' centre-right New Democracy party abstained or voted against the bill, it gained enough support from the leftist opposition.

## 'Informant' charged with lying about Biden bribery

**Monitoring Desk**  
LOS ANGELES: The special counsel probing claims that Hunter Biden used his father's power and prestige to secure millions of dollars in bribes from a Ukrainian firm has charged a one-time FBI informant with lying, according to a federal indictment. Alexander Smirnov, 43, is accused of fabricating claims that the US president's son demanded the money to protect Burisma—on whose board he was serving at the time—from an investigation.

Smirnov's evidence has been touted by Republicans as proof that the Bidens were collectively involved in a criminal enterprise, which some in the party are using as justification for so far unsuccessful attempts to impeach President Joe Biden. A grand jury indictment filed in federal court in California on Wednesday says that for at least a decade

Smirnov was acting as a "confidential human source (CHS)" for the FBI, providing his handler with information to be used in criminal investigations.

"Despite repeated admonishments that he must provide truthful information to the FBI and that he must not fabricate evidence, the defendant provided false derogatory information to the FBI about" Joe and Hunter Biden, the filing says. The indictment says in June 2020, Smirnov told his handler for the first time about meetings he claimed had taken place four or five years earlier in which executives from Burisma said they had hired Hunter Biden to "protect us, through his dad, from all kinds of problems." He told the FBI the executives said "they had specifically paid \$5 million each to Joe Biden and Hunter Biden so that Hunter Biden would "take care of all those issues through his dad."

## Civil unrest in Haryana and Punjab after police use artillery on protesters, railway track blocked

**Monitoring Desk**  
CHANDIGARH (INP): Amid escalating tensions between farmers and security forces, protesters have alleged the use of artillery by Haryana police, leading to the blockage of railway tracks and the takeover of toll plazas in Punjab.

The situation has prompted a panel of three Indian ministers to convene talks with farmer leaders in Chandigarh.

This marks the third round of discussions between the protesting farmers and government representatives, following inconclusive dialogues on February 8 and 12. Farmers from Punjab have been stationed at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders of Punjab and Haryana, expressing their intent to march towards Delhi to assert their demands to the Centre.

Gurnam Singh Charuri, a prominent farmer leader, declared that toll plazas in Haryana would be rendered 'free' for a duration of three hours on February 16. Additionally, he announced plans for a

tractor parade in every tehsil of the state on February 17, along with a collective meeting of all farmers' organizations scheduled for February 18.

In Chandigarh, farm leaders including Jagjit Singh Dullewal, Sarwan Singh Pandher, and Jarnail Singh arrived for discussions with the Central team composed of Union ministers Arjun Munda, Piyush Goyal, and Nityanand Rai, scheduled to commence at 5 pm.

The protest's impact extended to transportation, with reports indicating the diversion of several trains along the Delhi-Amritsar route due to farmers obstructing tracks at various locations in Punjab, in response to the Haryana Police's actions against protesters.

In a show of solidarity, the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Charuni) led by Gurnam Singh announced its support for the ongoing protests and pledged to conduct peaceful demonstrations in Haryana.



JAKARTA: Election Commission officials and parties' witnesses carry out a sub-district level recapitulation of the tabulation results from polling stations across Indonesia.





ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the closing ceremony of the Invitational Golf Tournament organized by Serena Hotels.

## Public participation vital for country's development, prosperity: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Saturday said that no country could aspire to attain progress and prosperity without the participation of its people and Pakistan being the fifth populous country in the world, possessed immense potential to excel in every field of life.

Addressing an awards distribution ceremony of the annual Invitational Golf Tournament held at Margalla Greens Golf Club, the president said that the people were a vital driving force for making contributions to the overall progress of a country. "About 250 million people of Pakistan with their collective efforts can make a difference; they can transform and rebuild Pakistan by utilizing their potential and intellect," he observed.

Under the 'Sports Diplomacy' initiative, Serena Hotels hosted the tournament in collaboration with the Margalla Greens Golf Club. Several golfers, diplomats, and a large number of sports buffs attended the event.

In his address, President Alvi further underscored the significance of promoting active lifestyles and outdoor pursuits, emphasizing the positive impact on national well-being and the betterment of communities. Congratulating the organizers, he said that the event was enjoyable amidst the natural verdant atmosphere.

He observed that due to the modern lifestyle, people were accustomed to the latest facilities and moving away from hectic physical activities which were not beneficial for health. The human body responds to different exercises daily and they continue to decline with the passage of age, if no proper physical activity was adopted, he added.

The president further said that during Covid 19, Pakistan emerged as the third most successful performing country in the world due to the collective efforts by all the institutions and compilation of data.

## Pakistan urges UNHRC to avoid 'double standards', address Kashmir situation

UNITED NATIONS (INP): Pakistan has called on the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to shift its attention to economic, social and cultural rights instead of "disproportionately" focusing on human rights situations in developing countries.

"The Council and human rights mechanisms should also address historical and current phenomena such as racial discrimination, xenophobia, social inequalities, Islamophobia, and hate crimes," Ambassador Munir Akram said in a discussion on the future of the Geneva-based Council.

"While some situations are prominently projected and amplified at the HRC; other, more serious situations — Jammu & Kashmir — are ignored," he said, underscoring the need for avoiding double standards in addressing rights "situations" at the U.N.

The 47-member Council, armed with more powers, was created in 2006 following the failures of its predecessor — the 1946 Human Rights Commission.

"Today," the Pakistani envoy said, "the HRC is also the target of serious criticism and suffers from many of the same deficits as the Commission; in particular due to the Council's political biases, selective and partial approach, and structural issues — which seriously jeopardize its credibility."

"There is a greater emphasis on civil and political rights, while economic, social and cultural rights — as well as the right to development — get short shrift," Ambassador Akram told participants.

The Council's agenda, he noted, has been overloaded with some subjects that should be dealt with by the UN's specialized agencies.

"There is a concerted effort by Western countries to impose norms which are clearly incompatible with the national laws and cultures of other countries — sexual orientation, gender identity," the Pakistani envoy said, pointing out that some of its mechanisms as also the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are largely staffed by nationals from developed countries.

## Four youth of same family die in Bhakkar car-truck smash

BHAKKAR (INP): Four young men of a same family breathed their last when their car hit by a truck on Bhakkar-Jhang Road on Saturday. The accident occurred in Hyderabad Thal area. The family of the young men was hosting a wedding but the festivities have now turned into mourning.

An injured in the accident was rushed to CMH Bhakkar but later he was referred to Lahore for emergency treatment.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr. Qibla Ayaz, addressing during a seminar at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.

## This is unique election, form 47 has out-paced form 45: Shahid Khaqan

KARACHI (Online): Former Prime Minister (PM) Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has said this is unique election that form 47 has out paced form 45 in February 8 election.

"Election Commission (EC) has worked wonder that form 47 was formed before form 45. This is strange election. Google was too surprised what are the results, he said this while talking to media men outside NAB court.

He held this is strange thing no one desires to come to power at present but every one is talking of power too that power should be given to him then every thing would become OK.

He went on to say I think these elections are cause to deterioration in the country.

Leave power aside. Today all know no one deserves for power today. Today country is issue, he added. Former PM said he had never said that election be not held. Today elections did not give any result nor will they give solution to problems.

People should come out of politics of power then some result would come out.

He underlined politics is meant for power. Today we are endeavoring to grab power at every cost. These things cause loss to nation and country.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of the European countries at the opening ceremony of 'Eurovillage' organized by European Union at Expo Centre in the federal capital.

## Imran Khan to retain Mianwali seat: PTI leader

MIANWALI (INP): Former prime minister Imran Khan would retain the Mianwali seat, party leader Ali Muhammad Khan said on Friday.

In a post on X, he wrote that Ali informed about his decision while meeting him in Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi. He was accompanied by party leader Latif Khosa.

"Khosha told Khan that he owed his Lahore seat to him. On this, Khan said no and added that he would come [be part of assembly] on Mianwali seat," he wrote. The former prime minister won elections from Lahore and Mianwali. Khan is imprisoned in Adiala Jail in the cypher case, but he has been calling the shots.

Ali wrote that Khan wanted to have the model of "Fatah Makkah" after coming to power and the party would not take any political revenge. The former prime minister also called for forming a truth and reconciliation commission.

## PPP to form committee to probe Bilawal's NA-127, Lahore defeat

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has decided to constitute a committee, consisting of senior party members, to probe not only the reasons for the defeat of its Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's from NA-127, Lahore in the general elections held on February 8 but also identify those who were responsible for.

Quoting its sources, the channel reported that the committee, which would be formed after the formation of the coalition government at Center, would conduct an investigation based on the reports submitted by party stalwarts like Sherry Rehman, Shehla Raza and Mukesh Chawla.

PPP Lahore chapter President Chaudhry Aslam Gill had suggested the formation of the committee, they revealed.

It is worth-mentioning here that Gill has resigned over Bilawal's defeat in NA-127 to the PML-N's Attaullah Tarar on the party's Central Executive Committee's (CEC) demand.

According to unofficial results, Tarar had received 98,210 votes followed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed independent candidate Malik Zaheer Abbas Khokhar with 82,230 votes and Bilawal standing third with 15,005 votes.

## Caretaker Minister Health announces to abolish BoGs of BINUQ; seeks details of financial matters

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi has announced to abolish the Board of Governors (BoGs) of Balochistan Institute of Nephro-Urology Quetta (BINUQ) immediately.

He also sought the details of financial matters of the BINUQ for the years 2021, 2022 and 2023 directing to conduct inquiry into the alleged irregularities in them (financial matters).

He also postponed the agenda of meeting of BoGs owing to lack of quorum.

The caretaker Minister Health, who also happens to be the Chairman BoGs of BINUQ, was chairing the meeting of BoGs of the Institute here on Saturday.

While chairing the meeting, Dr Jozgezi took notice of the presence of unauthorized persons in the meeting of BoGs of BINUQ and asked them to leave the meeting room.

He also asked the concerned to present the notification of appointment of

Dr Karim Zarkoon as the CEO, BINUQ.

He inquired that how the CEO of BINUQ is posted temporarily or on deputation for long?

He announced that new BoGs of BINUQ would be formed after posting of its new Chief Executive.

In the end, the caretaker Minister Health directed to conduct inquiry into the matter of sending empty cartons of the dialysis machines in Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Sanjavi.

## Jl central council not accept Siraj's resignation

LAHORE (INP): The Jamaat-e-Islami central council, in a meeting chaired by Deputy Amir Liaquat Baloch, firmly rejected the resignation tendered by Siraj-ul-Haq. The gathering, held at the Emergency Central Majlis Shura in Mansoor, echoed with resolute voices urging Haq to continue leading the party as Amir, reinstating their trust in his leadership.

The committee members of the Majlis Shura, alongside prominent figures Liaquat Baloch, Ameerul Azim, Rashid Naseem, Professor Ibrahim, and Asadullah Bhutto, convened with Siraj-ul-Haq to convey their unwavering support. Jamaat-e-Islami spokesperson Qaiser Sharif affirmed the unanimous decision of the Central Majlis Shura, emphasizing their full confidence in Haq's capabilities.

Sharif further disclosed that Siraj-ul-Haq would deliver a special address to the Central Majlis-e-Shura imminently, signaling his intent to fulfill his duties as Amir in accordance with the party's constitution. The announcement comes in the wake of Haq's resignation following the party's setback in the general elections, wherein he publicly declared, "I resign as the Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami."

He further stated that an important person in the government machinery was saying that the elections were rigged.

Hamid Khan said that it was a matter of satisfaction that his conscience on a key figure has been awakened, I hope others will also be awakened, not only one commissioner but the whole world was saying that historical fraud has taken place, a judicial inquiry should be conducted into these allegations.

It was worth to mention here that the Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chhatta regarding rigging in general elections.

In a statement issued on Saturday, he said that it was ridiculous to say that the commissioner does not have a role in election process as the deputy commissioner was subordinate to the commissioner, so why does he not have a role.

Hamid Khan said that if the commissioner wants to impede, there are powers to stop the deputy commissioner.

## Hamid Khan calls for judicial inquiry into Chattha's allegations

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Hamid Khan has said that a judicial inquiry should be conducted into the allegations of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chhatta regarding rigging in general elections.

In a statement issued on Saturday, he said that it was ridiculous to say that the commissioner does not have a role in election process as the deputy commissioner was subordinate to the commissioner, so why does he not have a role.

Hamid Khan said that if the commissioner wants to impede, there are powers to stop the deputy commissioner.

He further stated that an important person in the government machinery was saying that the elections were rigged.

Hamid Khan said that it was a matter of satisfaction that his conscience on a key figure has been awakened, I hope others will also be awakened, not only one commissioner but the whole world was saying that historical fraud has taken place, a judicial inquiry should be conducted into these allegations.

It was worth to mention here that the Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chhatta after announcing his resignation over election irregularities handed himself over to the police.

## Mustafa Kamal says MQM-P to table LG constitutional amend in Parliament's first session

KARACHI (INP): MQM-P leader Mustafa Kamal said on Saturday that the election instead of bringing stability increasing chaos.

MNA-elect Mustafa Kamal in a conversation with said that political parties leveling allegations, which could create an untoward situation in country. He said that the MQM-P will table the constitutional amendment draft in the first session of the parliament with support and vote from the PML-N.

Kamal said, "We will hold dialogue with all parties of the parliament including the PTI and the

## Malik Riaz says: I never met or contacted Liaquat Chhatta

ISLAMABAD (Online): Business magnate Malik Riaz has said he has never met or contacted Liaquat Chhatta and he has nothing to do with this matter.

He said in his statement on social media website X whenever there is chaos in Pakistan then fingers are raised on him or his institution.

He went on to say every one points fingers without argument, logic or evidence. It is very regrettable. I have never met or contacted Liaquat.

## Gwadar's land record computerization reached 82%

QUETTA (INP): Gwadar's land record computerization has reached 82% due to continuous efforts of the revenue staff and computerization teams while the land settlement is also in progress, said Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Aurangzeb Badini.

Talking to Gwadar Pro, he said the Board of Revenue has been approached to give its final verdict in a technical matter so that 100% progress is achieved. Residents of Gwadar can now get all digitized land record-related services of 32 Mouzas/Wards from Markaz-e-Sahooliat Centre at Tehsil Office Gwadar, he added.

He stressed that the computerized land record would be immune to forgery, fraud, and corruption, as well as malfunction-free.

This measure will enhance transparency, efficiency, and security, thereby supporting sustainable development and economic growth.

Highlighting the significance of land settlement for equitable and unrestricted ownership, the

Deputy Commissioner of Gwadar stated that once the settlement process concludes, residents of Gwadar City will have the freedom to buy, sell, and utilize their land for both personal and commercial purposes.

In Baluchistan, a significant portion of land remains unclaimed and is held collectively by tribes rather than individual ownership.

Once proper settlement occurs, individuals will have the opportunity to acquire land in their names, facilitating straightforward transactions for personal residences, commercial purposes, or agricultural ventures.

In 2013, the government revoked an ongoing land settlement process for Gwadar district's Pansi subdivision. The decision created confusion regarding state-owned versus privately held land. The abrupt halt to the settlement process raised questions about transparency and fairness. The land settlement process in Gwadar remained a complex and contentious issue, marked by various challenges and controversies.

## Envoy says: Pak doctors in UK proved their mettle by hardwork, dedication

LONDON (APP): High Commissioner of Pakistan to London Dr. Mohammad Faisal has said that the Pakistani doctors and medical professionals had proven their mettle by sheer hard work, dedication and excellence in their respective fields.

The high commissioner said this in a meeting with a group of British-Pakistani doctors and medical practitioners at the high commission, said a press release on Saturday.

The envoy applauded their dedication to their profession and recognised their services and the philanthropic contribution to the communities in Pakistan and the UK.

"The Pakistani professionals in UK are the real ambassadors. Proud of their excellent performance and services," the high commissioner remarked.

He said that the Pakistani doctors had been serving the community during COVID-19 pandemic beyond their call of duty.



QUETTA: General Secretary Pakistan Tehreek Insaaf Balochistan Women's Wing Mehwish Janju and others speak during a press conference on the occasion of the joining of Baloch women in PTI.

## Properties of Moonis Elahi freed in money laundering case

ISLAMABAD (Online): FIA has freed properties of former federal minister Chaudhry Moonis Elahi in money laundering case.

Big headway has been made in FIA money laundering case as FIA has freed the properties of Moonis Elahi.

The case came up for hearing in special central court Lahore and the court stopped concerned authorities from transferring the properties of Moonis Elahi which have been freed by the FIA.

Judge Tanvir Ahmad Sheikh of special central court issued written order of the previous hearing of money laundering case.

It has been said in the written order FIA presented the report in the court. As per report Moonis Elahi has been declared proclaimed offender by this court. Red notice have been issued to international police to arrest Moonis Elahi. The court has sought progress report from police in regard to red notices of Moonis Elahi.

It has been learnt from written order that as per report 4 kanal property of Moonis Elahi in New Garden town has been freed. ME Capital company of Moonis Elahi and Toyota Motors Gujarat have also been freed. SECP is directed not to transfer the shares of the respective company to others.

The court adjourned the hearing of the case till March 14.

Moonis Elahi son of former chief minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervez Elahi has said he would return to Pakistan in the morning if he give guarantee I will not be made invisible.

There is no problem of NAB, Anti Corruption, FIA or police but I should be given guarantee to this extent that I will be kept visible. Issue is not of arrest.

## PTA cracks down on illegal SIMs activation, unlicensed ISPs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Offices in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) conducted several raids against franchises involved in the illegal activation of SIMs and illegal Internet Service Provider (ISPs) on Saturday. 56 suspicious SIMs were confiscated in the Sukkar, and during the raid in Kasur, 26 active SIMs were confiscated. The accused individuals have been apprehended by the FIA and First Investigation Reports (FIRs) have been lodged against them, said a news release.

Moreover, two raids were conducted to target illegal ISP setups in Chichawatni. During the raids, a significant amount of equipment was recovered at different locations in Chichawatni which included 12 Optical line terminals (OLT), 04 dish antennas, 01 UPS, 2 batteries, 350 meter OFC cable, 01 Optical Network Terminal, 01 OLT charger, and a manual billing book.

Additionally, an illegally erected tower carrying numerous dish antennas was dismantled by the FIA team.

## Bushra files appeal against her conviction

ISLAMABAD (Online): Bushra Bibi wife of PTI founder has filed appeal pleas against her conviction in two cases. Petitions have been filed in Islamabad High Court (IHC) against conviction in NAB Toshakhana case and Nikah during iddat case.

The petitioner has taken plea in the petition that sentence awarded by AC in Toshakhana case.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Health Abdullah Khan presiding over a meeting at BMC Hospital.