

Independent

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Have to obtain at least 33 votes in today's session for election: Sarfraz Bugti named new Chief Minister Balochistan unopposed; likely to be elected today

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Member Provincial Assembly from Dera Bugti, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has been named unopposed as the Chief Minister Balochistan on Friday.

The nomination of Sarfraz Bugti as Chief Minister was made by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) central leadership after consultation with the parliamentary members and coalition partners, as confirmed by the sources.

No other candidate submitted nomination papers except him, confirmed the Secretary Balochistan

Assembly, Tahir Shah Kakar on Friday evening.

The Secretary Assembly said that Mr. Bugti has to secure at least 33 votes in the today's session to be elected as Chief Minister.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti was elected as MPA on February 8, 2024 from PB-10, Dera Bugti. He would be formally elected as Chief Minister in the session of provincial assembly summoned at 11:00 AM today (Saturday).

Earlier, he submitted his nomination papers for the Chief Minister-ship in the provincial assembly secretariat the same afternoon.

At the outset, four nomination papers were submitted in the assembly for CM-ship of Sarfraz Bugti. The members of assembly belonging to PPP and PML-N were included in the proposers and seconders in the nomination papers.

They were included: Nawab Sanaulah Zehri, Nawab Changez Marri, Sardar Sarfraz Chakar Domki, Mir Asim Kurd, Mir Zahoor Buledi, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, S.M Patrick.

As per the agenda issued by the Provincial As-

sembly secretariat, the members of provincial assembly would elect any of the members as Chief Minister.

It may be mentioned here that Mir Sarfraz Bugti has served as the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs after his election from Dera Bugti in 2013.

Sarfraz Bugti also served as a senator of Pakistan from March 2015 to March 2021.

On 17 August 2023, he took oath as caretaker Interior Minister and resigned from the position on 15 December 2023.



QUETTA: Unopposed elected Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti talking to media persons. PPP Provincial President, Changez Jamali, Nawab Sanaulah Zehri, Ali Madad Jatak and others are also present.



ISLAMABAD: Raja Pervez Ashraf administered the oath from Sardar Ayaz Sadiq as Speaker National Assembly.

Governor asks concerned authorities to pay much focus on draining out of rain water from affected areas

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has asked the concerned authorities including Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and administration to pay much focus on draining and pumping out of the rain water from affected areas in Gwadar, Turbat and other areas of the province.

The Governor expressed concern over the critical situation in Gwadar, Turbat and other areas due to torrential rains.

He said that the situa-

tion has turned worse in Gwadar, Turbat and adjoining areas, therefore, there is a dire need to drain out the rain water from affected areas at the earliest.

He said that we could be able to shift the affected people to the safer places and provide relief to them after ensuring draining out of the rain water from rain affected areas.

The Governor expressed satisfaction over performance of PDMA, district administration as well as other federal and provincial government departments so far, and add-

ing he stressed to expedite the relief activities further.

He praised the cooperation of Sindh government for provision of necessary machinery and other relief goods, and said that it is appreciable.

The Governor directed the concerned departments to ensure presence of medical and paramedical staff in the rain affected parts of the province.

He also exhorted the volunteers and social activists to play their wholehearted part for safety of the women and children in the affected parts.

Ayaz elected NA Speaker, Mustafa Dy Speaker

ISLAMABAD (Online): Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has been sworn-in as the Speaker of National Assembly.

Outgoing Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf administered the oath to him.

Ghulam Mustafa Shah won the election for Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly on Friday, defeating Junaid Khan.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq won the election to the office of National Assembly by securing 199 votes.

The candidate of Sunni Ittehad Council Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar bagged 91 votes.

After assuming the seat, Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed his gratitude to the leaders and members of PML-N, PPP, MQM, PML (Q), IPP and Balochistan Awami Party for reposing confidence in him.

He assured he will take forward the proceedings of the house in accordance

with the rules and regulations.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the members will be given full opportunity to express their opinion on the floor of the house.

He said the doors of his office will always remain open to all the members.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said difference of opinion and criticism is essence of democracy, stressing, however, that it should be directed towards reforms and betterment of the country.

The Speaker noted that the current political tension is not in the interest of the country, emphasizing the need for building national consensus and a joint strategy to address the problems faced by the country.

He said both the treasury and opposition members are part of this house and it will be his effort to take them along.

Bugti pledges to resolve all issues of Balochistan through dialogue

Chief Minister-candidate thanks PPP's central and provincial leadership; vows to take all coalition partners along

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) nominated Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has made a pledge to resolve all issues being confronted by the province through dialogue justice because the PPP believes in dialogue.

He also pledged to take all coalition partners in the future provincial government along, and so the opposition. He said that the concept of democratic is not possible without opposition.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti was speaking to the media persons as he reached along with the provincial president of PPP Balochistan, Mir Changez Khan Jamali and other party leaders including former Chief Minister, Nawab Sanaulah Zehri, Mir Ali Madad Jatak and others, for submission of the nomination papers in provincial assembly on Friday afternoon.

Sarfraz Bugti thanked the provincial and central leadership of PPP for nominating him for slot of Chief Minister.

He particularly thanked the central leaders Asif Ali Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Faryal Talpur and others in this regard.

He said that he is going to submit his nomination papers for the CM-ship.

To a query, he said that his party believes in resolving issues through dialogue and as such any of the issues being confronted would be resolved through dialogue.

He also said that the employment and livelihood would be provided to the unemployed youth of the province. It would be our responsibility to stop violence in the province, he added.

Sarfraz Bugti also said that we would also go for reconciliation.

Earlier, the PPP's provincial president said that party leadership has nominated Mir Sarfraz Bugti for CM-ship of Balochistan for he and other leaders are thankful to them.

He said that we are bound to the party's decision, and would serve the province like "Jiala".

ECP fixes March 9 for presidential election

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday announced the schedule for the presidential election to be held on March 9.

According to the schedule, the candidates may submit their nomination papers for the presidential election, until Saturday noon in Islamabad and four provincial capitals—Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta.

Nomination papers will undergo scrutiny by the Returning Officer in Islamabad by 10 am on

Monday (March 4). Candidates have the option to withdraw their nomination papers before the Returning Officer in Islamabad until noon on Tuesday, (March 5).

On the same day, the list of candidates will be made public.

Candidates can opt out of the contest by March 6, and polling is scheduled to take place from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on March 9 at Parliament House in Islamabad and the provincial Assembly buildings in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta.

Nawaz seeks Maulana Fazl's support for election of PM, President

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Nawaz Sharif on Friday visited the house of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazalur Rehman to seek his support for the election of the prime minister and the President.

He also requested Maulana Fazalur Rehman to join the government.

Some seasoned politicians of the PML-N and JUI including Ahsan Iqbal, Ishaq Dar, Rana Sanaulah, Khawaja Saad Rafiq and Maulana Ghaffoor Hydari also participated in the meeting.

Apart from this, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali and Noor Alam Khan also attended the meeting.

IHC awards jail sentence to DC, SSP ICT in contempt case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday awarded six month imprisonment sentence to Deputy Commissioner ICT Irfan Nawaz Memon while four month to SSP Operations Malik Jameel Zafran in a contempt of court case for issuance of MPO orders against Shahryar Khan Afridi.

The court also announced two month jail sentence to SHO Margalla Police Station Nasir Mehmood in the same case and, however, discharged SP Farooq Buttari from the charges.

The court suspended the sentences of the accused for one month and said that they would be sent to Adiala Jail if they failed to file the appeals against their convictions within the said time.

IHC's Justice Babar

Three killed in rain-related incidents in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): At least three children were killed and one other sustained injuries as the roof of a house collapsed due to torrential rains in Kharan district of Balochistan.

According to PTV, the teams of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority, in coordination with the National Highway Authority, are fully operationalized on highways and at different points and sites to keep roads open with heavy machinery.

The Pakistan Army, FC Balochistan, and other departments are engaged in rescue and relief operations in the rain-hit areas and the dewatering of urban flood water from houses in Gwadar, Jiwan, Surbandar, and Ormara.

Pakistan Army and FC Balochistan, in collaboration with local administration, have been continuing relief operations in flood-affected areas of Gwadar, Jiwan, and Subandar.

Teams of doctors have been deployed in free medical camps to provide immediate health facilities to the affected.

Ali Amin Gandapur elected 16th KP CM by two-third majority

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on Friday completed proceedings in Justice (retired) Mazhar Ali Naqvi's 'misconduct' case.

SJC headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Qazi Faez Isa recorded statements of all the witnesses in the case. The SJC will forward its recommendations to the President of Pakistan.

My lord statements of all the witnesses have been recorded, the additional attorney general of Pakistan said in the hearing. After the confirmation from the AAGP, the CJ said a letter was received from the former SC judge regarding skipping the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) proceedings.

PESHAWAR (APP): Ali Amin Gandapur, an independent member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, backed by Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) on Friday elected the 19th Chief Minister of the province by a two-thirds majority. Ali Amin Gandapur bagged 90 votes, while opposition nominee Ibadullah secured 16 votes under an open division of MPAs. JUIF boycotted the election process. The meeting of the provincial assembly, which started one-and-a-half hours late on Friday, was held under the chairmanship of the newly elected Speaker Babar Saleem Swati.

The speaker told the House that four MPs Ali Amin Gandapur, Hisham Inamullah, Zariq Khan and Ibadullah had submitted their nomination papers for

the election of the Chief Minister yesterday, which were found to be valid, but the incumbents, Zariq Khan and Hisham Inamullah, later withdrew their nomination papers.

The speaker announced the results and declared that a total 108 members participated in the election of the Chief Minister. Ibadullah had the support of five members of the PPP, two of the PTIP and nine members of the PMLN, securing a total of sixteen votes. The number of members supported by PTI was 92, but Ali Amin Gandapur got 90 votes. In an unanticipated move, ANP member of assembly Arbab Usman participated in the voting process by refusing to accept the party president's decision and went to the lobby with the opposition and voted for Ibadullah.

ECP announces Senate seat voting in Balochistan for March 14

QUETTA (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday declared that the voting for the three vacant Senate seats from Balochistan will take place on March 14, 2024, within the premises of the Balochistan Assembly. The Senate seats from Balochistan have become vacant due to the resignation of Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Prince Ahmad Umar Ahmadzai and Maulana Abdul Ghaffoor Haidari.

Muhammad Farid

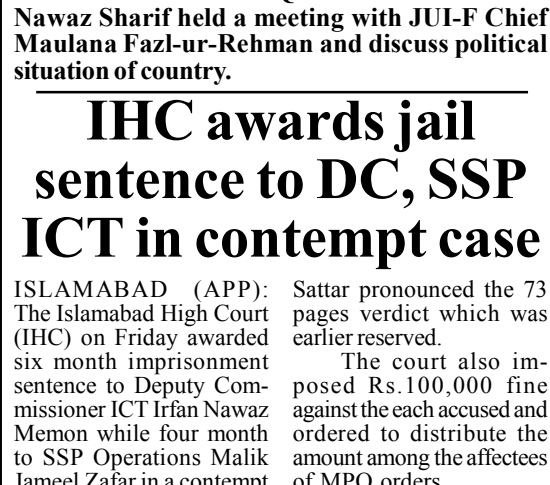
Afridi, serving as the Provincial Election Commissioner of Balochistan, has been designated as the returning officer for the Senate elections slated for March 14th. As per the timetable, the Returning Officer issued a public notice on March 1, with candidates scheduled to submit their nomination papers on March 2 and 3, from 08:30 am to 04:30 pm.

As outlined in the schedule, the list of nominees will be released on March 3.

BA session to be held today

QUETTA: The session of Balochistan Assembly is scheduled to be held at 11:00 AM today (Saturday).

The newly elected Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai would preside over the session. As per the agenda of proceedings issued by the provincial assembly's secretariat on Friday, the newly elected members of assembly (if any) would take oath of the membership. Moreover, the provincial assembly would elect the Chief Minister from any of the members under the constitution's article 130(3)94 may be read along with the rule No. 15 of the Rules and Regulations of Balochistan Provincial Assembly 1974.



ISLAMABAD: PML-N Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif held a meeting with JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur-Rehman and discuss political situation of country.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai and Provincial Secretary for Information Imran Khan presenting appreciation certificate to Director General Public Relation Muhammad Noor Khetran.



PESHAWAR: Ali Amin Gandapur speaks on the assembly floor after being elected as Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, at KPK Assembly in Peshawar.

Rescue & relief activities continues: Situation in Gwadar critical due to torrential rains: DG PDMA

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Director General Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Jahanzaib Khan has stated that situation is critical in Gwadar due to torrential rains.

However, the rescue and relief activities are continued in the rain hit areas of Gwadar, maintained Director General PDMA while speaking to the media persons on Friday.

He said that 187 mil-

Daily Voice of Masses **Independent**

Starting over

The four provincial assemblies and the National Assembly have not been so sworn in.
Though rigging allegations and various election-related irregularities and illegalities have cast a dark shadow, these assemblies will represent the people as they oversee the next chapter of this country's governance. There is no sugar-coating the fact that there are immense challenges before them, the realities of which will begin to dawn as the dust from the post-election chaos begins to settle.
The country is socially and politically fractured, its institutions in crisis, its coffers nearly empty, and its economy in a tailspin. The compact between its people and the state appears broken, its administrative apparatus seems to be malfunctioning, and its judiciary has never seemed as helpless as before.
Dependent on liquidity and capital injections from foreign lenders, Pakistan is in the unenviable position of being just a few missteps away from catastrophe. Yet if there is one thing the country has demonstrated time and again, it is that its people's will to endure is unconquerable. The citizenry will continue to hope that the men and women sworn in over the past week can steer the country back to stability and, hopefully, prosperity. Having taken their seats in their respective assemblies, they must now demonstrate that they are ready for the responsibility entrusted to them. The fate of millions depends on what path they take forward.
Given the difficult situation, both the government and opposition must resolve that their decisions will prioritise the public good over anything else. The government benches must realise that the public mood is extremely sensitive due to the unprecedented hardships the nation has suffered over the past two years. It must get to work at once on ameliorating economic conditions. The opposition benches must realise that they will need to constructively guide the government, especially towards achieving common goals. The question of legitimacy cannot be abandoned. Those who feel they were robbed of their mandate must continue their fight. They owe it not just to their voters but also to Pakistan's struggling democracy that they pursue the righting of the wrongs committed against it.
However, the focus of all stakeholders should remain on what future they want for the people of Pakistan. Lawmakers should use their presence in the assemblies to advance their legislative agenda and ensure that present and past mistakes are not repeated in the future. Much has been learned from political misjudgements of the past decade.
The time has come for the political leadership to demonstrate it is ready to move on. Parliament remains the most important forum through which a political negotiation on what tomorrow should look like for the millions who call Pakistan home can be held. Let the politicians figure out a way forward.

Resolving conflicts

Nikhath Sattar

More battles are fought within and between kith and kin, than between states and sworn enemies. It is a fact that the harmony that should ideally exist in families is often wrecked, mostly by petty but also major issues such as inheritance, financial and marriage-related matters. Frequently, it is a mere difference of opinion that leads to family disputes, with parties refusing to understand and tolerate the diversity of views.
Disputes within families almost always lead to unhappiness, a disturbed life and grief over time. While matrimonial disputes occur frequently in our society, fights between siblings, children (mainly sons) and parents and close relatives too are common. Brothers have been known to break off ties with each other, and others either stop communication or play out a cold war that is both unhealthy and painful, especially if the children of the warring parties are involved. Battles of ego, perceived slights and third-party gossip abound. Friends are prone to fighting over minor issues and too often a blossoming or fruitful relationship is laid to rest, because of minor misunderstandings. Conflicts among people, including loved ones, are natural. Humans need to recognise their cause and manage them accordingly. If families are too often ripped apart by internal fighting, the angst and resentment of unresolved conflicts spills over to the larger society. Families are the building blocks of society and each is reflective of the other. Families need to develop the insight, wisdom and willingness to address internal issues as they arise, before letting them

become major battles. In both cases, it is important for an individual or a group of individuals to be able to play the part of mediator and settle controversies as they arise.
The ideal situation should be that the parties themselves recognise that their current relationship is unsound and harmful to themselves and their families and resolve their differences through dialogue and compassionate discussion. But where they feel that support of a third party is required, they may request a friend or an outsider to mediate. Mediation is highly recommended in Islam, as a desirable means of creating a peaceful environment and harmony among people.
The Quran and various ahadith underscore the necessity of making peace between people, particularly within families. "If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of God; but if it complies then make peace between them with justice and be fair: for God loves those who are fair (and just)" (49:9). Note the stress on justice and fairness. If anyone of the parties is the aggressor, it would be unjust to make a compromise in his favour: indeed, he must be brought to understand the consequences of his transgression. And once he has realised his error, peace must be established in a fair manner. The parties must be reconciled in a way that yields a win-win situation for all, with no one having to give up his legitimate right. If the weaker party is

forced to give in, this would merely incite the aggressor to become even more intolerant and could lead to continued arguments.
Breaking off relationships between families is considered by God to be a deplorable act. Kinship is to be revered and upheld. Increasing intolerance in society, however, is causing families to split up, with close relatives unwilling even to face each other. Such a situation requires intervention by others who might be sensitive to the issues at hand and whom the parties trust.
Various strategies can be used effectively to resolve familial conflicts. The mediators should be patient, neutral, tactful and diplomatic and willing to facilitate dialogue as long as necessary. Reconciliation (sulh) is of prime importance and the parties concerned need to be reminded of the desirability in God's eyes of forgiveness and brother/sisterhood.
Even if a major injury has been caused, it is best, in God's eyes, to forgive and give up one's right to fight back (42:40). Similarly, avoiding a quarrel is best. According to a hadith (Sunan Daud), the Prophet (PBUH) said that a house in paradise is assured for one who avoids quarrelling even if he is in the right.
On the other hand, renouncing one's rights continuously in order to establish peace would go against the principles of justice, equity and fairness, qualities that the Quran has insisted upon. Such an attitude will merely increase the unjust acts of the aggressor who will become more emboldened. As Hazrat Ali has said: "The disservice to Ihsan (goodness) is exercising it in the wrong place." - Courtesy Dawn

Ruling class normal

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Pakistan is on fire, and not in a good way. Interrelated demographic, ecological and economic crises are escalating. The incoming government owes its 'success' to the establishment and is considered illegitimate by large segments of the population, especially young people and the ethnic peripheries.
The PML-N and PPP will claim otherwise, but the widespread perception that the 'new' dispensation is effectively PDM 2.0 speaks for itself. The 'new' ruling coalition only symbolises the depth of our political crisis.
Given our own house is on fire, it is unsurprising that we have largely ignored the heroic political act by a US Air Force officer, Aaron Bushnell, who set himself ablaze in front of the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C. to protest the genocide in Palestine.
Bushnell's last words before his act of self-immolation were: "This is what our ruling class has decided is normal." Indeed, gruesome state-sponsored violence against oppressed peoples is routine in our world, from Palestine to Senegal, and Burma to Yemen. The corporate media obliterates the histories of such peoples; state terror is called 'self-defence' while everything is legitimated if it happens in the name of 'national security'.
It is not just acute cases of systemic oppression that get muted. In Pakistan, even a hopelessly rigged election can metamorphose into a 'national security threat'.
After Feb 8, the caretaker government (read: establishment) has imposed a blanket ban on the social media site X. The post-poll rigging carried out to bring PDM 2.0 into existence was being exposed with so much irrefutable evi-

dence that our holy guardians decided it was time to do away with the niceties entirely.
This has been followed by dire warnings to journalists who transgress the boundaries of what is considered acceptable reporting, culminating in the arrest of Asad Toor by the FIA. In a nutshell, this is what, in paraphrase Bushnell's immortal words, Pakistan's militarised ruling class has decided is normal.
The PPP and PML-N continue to call themselves principled defenders of democratic principles but have remained mum about all of this. We should not be surprised. Long before Imran Khan and the PTI came to power in 2018, it was a PML-N government with Nawaz Sharif in the prime minister's office that introduced a parliamentary bill which made the notorious Peca into law. That was in 2015.
The very term 'ruling class' demands a reckoning with the fact that our predicament is beyond singular regimes, that things will not just get better because one segment of the bourgeoisie has replaced another in government. This is particularly true in our own context where virtually all bourgeois parties compete with one another for the establishment's favour — look no further than the PPP putting up Sarfaraz Bugti and Jamal Raisani in Balochistan. Speaking of which, has anyone in government bothered to provide relief to Gwadar, which is currently drowning due to torrential rain?
For those who still think that PDM 2.0 is an unqualified improvement upon Imran Khan and the PTI, it is worth noting that Joe Biden — who so many celebrated when he defeated Donald Trump in the 2020 US presidential election —

is, by current estimates, expected to lose to Trump in the election this year. Simply put, the evidence does not prove that the supposedly more 'liberal' (read: centre-right) segments of the ruling class resolve the inherent contradictions of contemporary capitalism and thereby red-uc-e the appeal of their far-right competitors.
Anyone who actually cares about the mass of people in whose name all ruling classes act would be focusing on creating a post-political narrative that does not leave us to 'choose' bet-w-eeen the centre and far right. One can and should condemn the way the PTI has politicised young people in the digital age, but armchair criticism leads back only to the status quo of establishment-dominated musical chairs. Refusal to acknowledge even the possibility that those who have experienced state repression since April 2022 may coalesce around a new politics means, in effect, reinforcing the ruling class normal.
Bushnell chose his sensational act of sacrifice because the Israeli war machine and its backers, including Genocide Joe, continue to act unimpeded, even in the face of online dissent at a global scale. For now, Trump is likely to be the major beneficiary of the disjoint between popular sentiment and the established institutional order. Unless there is a wilful commitment to creating a substantive alternative on the left of the political spectrum, however far down the line, those who seek to draw attention to the fires engulfing humanity and nature will have only one option: to literally set themselves on fire. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Pakistan's pearls, precious stones see 47% increase in China's Market in 2023

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's pearls and precious stones saw a 47% increase in exports from Pakistan to China in 2023, signaling not only the growing demand for these natural beauties in the Chinese market but also the potential of Pakistan's mining and gemstone industry.
Karim Jan, a Pakistani gem and jewelry exporter to China, told China Economic Net that Pakistan's northern and northwestern areas were rich in mineral resources, boasting gems like vibrant topaz, deep red rubies, green emeralds, and sapphires.
Extracting these gems is a delicate process, relying on the skilled hands and age-old techniques of local miners and artisans. Pakistan can further improve by utilizing Chinese skills.
"As Chinese consumers increasingly seek out rare and high-quality gemstones, Pakistani gems, known for their unparalleled beauty and craftsmanship, are

finding a prominent place in this competitive landscape.
The reciprocal nature of this growing trade relationship promises a mutually beneficial future for both nations, with Pakistani gems shining brightly in the vast Chinese market," he stated.
According to sources from Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan's Pearls and Precious Stones exported to China crossed \$4.34 million in 2023, whereas last year it was \$2.95 million.



SARGODHA: Vice Chancellor University of Sargodha Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas visiting different stalls during Research Arena Exhibition held at University of Sargodha.

OGDCL rolls out its ESG policy to promote sustainable practices

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has taken a significant stride towards sustainability by announcing its Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) policy.
In response to the growing demand from investors and stakeholders for transparency and accountability in ESG factors, OGDCL's Board of Directors released its comprehensive ESG policy statement on February 27, 2024, said a news release.
The OGDCL ESG policy underscores the company's commitment to environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and effective corporate governance practices.
By embracing these principles, OGDCL aims to create shared value for sustainable development. The policy outlines OGDCL's strategic approach to managing environmental impacts, fostering social inclusivity, and upholding high standards of corporate governance. OGDCL views the ESG Policy as a crucial first step in embracing more sustainable practices and becoming a responsible, adaptable, and resilient organization.

PSX stay bullish, gains 747.16 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with a bullish trend on Friday, gaining 747.16 points, a positive change of 1.16 percent, closing at 65,325.69 points against 64,578.52 points the previous trading day.
A total of 344,227,410 shares valuing Rs13.385 billion were traded during the day as compared to 424,043,562 shares valuing Rs 17,053 billion the last day.
Some 348 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 172 of them recorded gains and 156 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 20 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 71,357,500 shares at Rs.5.36 per share, K-Electric 194,237,56 shares with 4.87 per share and Treet Crop 17,473,574 shares at Rs 18.02 per share.
Rafhan Maize Products witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 450.00 per share price, closing at Rs 8,850, whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum Company Limited with a Rs113.50 rise in its per share price to Rs2,462.05.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi inaugurating the building Materials Exhibition and Conference organized by the Institute of Architects Pakistan at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Pakistan needs to tap into \$4.92 trillion D-8 market: Atif

Independent Report KARACHI: Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has represented Pakistan in the all-influential General Assembly meeting of the D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (D-8 CCI). He apprised that the meeting was also attended by Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Nigeria.
Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh expressed his vision that Pakistan must tap into the export market of D-8 countries with a combined GDP of \$4.92 billion; and, tapping into these markets has the potential to correct Pakistan's regional trade deficit for a number of reasons: (i) Pakistan has friendly ties with the D-8 members (ii) we have geographical contiguity or land-based access with some member countries (iii) land-based routes can be used for transshipment (iv) shipment to these countries takes lesser time and costs (v) with intra D-8 trade at merely 5 percent, there are low-hanging fruits to be grabbed in a short-span of time.

Weekly inflation up by 1.27 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.27 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on February 29, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 319.30 points as compared to 315.31 points during the past week.
As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the

1st Pakistan Financial Literacy Week from March 4

KARACHI (APP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will organize 1st edition of Pakistan Financial Literacy Week 2024 under the theme of "Digital Bankari- fori aur aasaan" from March 04 to 08, 2024.
Governor State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmad will inaugurate Pakistan Financial Literacy Week (PFLW) 2024 on Monday, March 04, 2024 at SBP Karachi, said a statement issued here.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, Clemens Schulte, APL Qingdao, Maritime Gisela, Al-Fuwairit and African Baza, carrying Containers, Palm oil, LNG and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Elengy Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Friday.
Meanwhile another ship 'Eagle' scheduled to load/offload Rice is also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day. A total of twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, APL Qingdao, Clemens Schulte, Sunny Bay, Chemroad Aqua and Dravin left the Port on today morning.

Pak welcomes resumption of CASA-1000 activities in Afghanistan by WB

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Government of Pakistan has welcomed the recent announcement by the World Bank that, among other initiatives in support of the people of Afghanistan related to its "Approach 3.0", the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project ("CASA-1000") in Afghanistan will be resumed.
The request was made in December by all three neighboring countries participating in the project.
"This announcement marks a significant step forward in the region's commitment to energy collaboration," said a news release issued here on Friday.
As a result, the Government of Pakistan is pleased to announce it has joined the other neighboring countries — the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan — in signing a Joint Declaration to thank the World Bank for its timely response in approving the "ring-fenced" resumption of construction in Afghanistan.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor hold umbrella as displaying fruits on his pushcart attraction for customers at a road during rain.

CPI inflation decelerates to 23.1 % in February

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation came down to 23.1 percent during the month of February 2024 as compared to 28.3 percent recorded during January 2023, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Friday.
According to PBS data, the CPI based inflation during the same month of last year was recorded at 31.5%.
On month-on-month basis, no change observed in February 2024 as compared to an increase of 25.7% in the previous month and 35.6% in February 2023. On month-on-month basis, it decreased to 0.3% in February 2024 as compared to an increase of 1.9% in the previous month and an increase of 4.0% in February 2023.
According to the data, CPI inflation Urban, increased to 24.9% on year-on-year (YoY) basis in

Punjab Governor says: Auditor General's Dept vital role in improving transparency, governance

Independent Report
LAHORE: A delegation led by Deputy Auditor General (Central) Tariq Bashir Chatha met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore.

During the meeting, the Deputy Auditor General (Central) presented the Accounts and Audit Report of the Punjab Government for the year 2023-24 to the Governor of Punjab. The delegation comprised Director General Audit Punjab, Muhammad Naseem Rashed, Director of Audits, Ikram Haq,

Faryal Magsi and Audit Officer (Admin) Syed Nafees Ahmed.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab, Muhammad Balighur Rehman, said that the Auditor General's Department has an important role in improving transparency and governance in government departments. He said those departments that are not being audited for any reason should be made part of the audit system. Governor Punjab said that the use of modern technology including management information system is indispensable for

increasing the efficiency of the institution.

Deputy Auditor General (Central), Tariq Bashir Chatha, told Punjab Governor in detail about the steps taken to improve the institution.

He said that Auditor General's organization will review the legal organization requirements and make a strategy to include those departments in the audit system which are not being audited for any reason. He told the Punjab Governor that staff trainings are being conducted in the institution on a regular basis.



Baba Ali Rehman, a retired Naib Qasid of Lahore High Court, award a certificate to a trainee the Federal Judicial Academy.

Four more matches decided in senior Inter- district cricket tourney

KARACHI (APP): Four more matches were decided in the Khansortium Karachi Region Senior Inter-District Cricket Tournament at various cricket grounds.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi. Brilliant centuries by Jehangir Javed 124, Ubais Ullah 124 and Waqar Ahmed 103 were made, a communique said on Friday. Scores in Brief: In the first match of

the day at TMC Ground Zone-IV Greens defeated Zone-VII Blues by 5 Wickets. Zone-VII Blues 216/6 in allotted 45 overs. Waqar Ahmed 103 3x6 1x6, Hammad Bhatti 41, Rizwan Abbasi 22, Abdur Rehman 20. Muhammad Owais 3/27.

Zone-IV Greens 220/5 in 29.2 Overs. Muhammad Maaz 68 9x4, Afnan Khan 54 5x4 3x6, Rameez Shahid 43, Mudasar 27. Afroz Hasan 2/28.

ATC grants bail to 16 accused in Jinnah House attack case

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday granted bail to 16 accused involved in a case of attacking Jinnah House.

The court ordered the accused to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each for availing the relief of bail. ATC Judge Muhammad Naveed Iqbal heard the post-arrest bail petitions of accused and allowed them on completion of arguments by the parties.

Muhammad Danish, Farhan Ahmad, Mukhtar Khan, Saqib Munir, Mian Abdul Rehman, Hassan Ijaz, Yasir Abbas, Muhammad Kashif, Mian Bilal, Suleman Ilyas, Adnan Ashraf, Muhammad Shan, Raheemullah, Hafiz Muhammad Nauman and Muhammad Rayan were included among the accused who were granted bail.

The Sarwar Road police had registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders and workers on charges of attacking Jinnah House.



PESHAWAR: Director General Audit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahzad Naeem presenting annual Audit Report of 34 Department for the year 2023-24 to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

KPIC, TIP joins hands to promote good governance

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) and Transparency International-Pakistan (TIP) on Friday joined hands to promote good governance.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Transparency International-Pakistan to extend collaborative efforts in ensuring merit and openness in public affairs performed by public entities.

The MoU was signed by Farah Hamid Khan,

Chief Information Commissioner KPIC and Kashif Ali Sheikh, Executive Director, TIP-Pakistan in presence of other senior officers of the organizations.

Under the MoU, both the organizations will collaboratively work in mass awareness regarding Right to Information Act (RTI) and training of Public Information Officers (PIOs) for the smooth flow of public information.

Both the institutions look forward to a fruitful partnership that will promote citizen integration into public affairs.

CM seeks report on murder of domestic worker

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has taken notice of the murder following alleged torture of a domestic worker in Sargodha.

She immediately sought a report from the Inspector General of Police regarding the incident.

According to the initial report, the accused has been identified, and raids are underway to apprehend him. Maryam Nawaz Sharif emphasized the need for a thorough investigation into the incident and urged that the perpetrator be brought to justice swiftly. She stated that violence of any kind has no place in Punjab.

IGP discusses admin, professional steps about police working

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar chaired a meeting of the police executive board at Central Police Office here on Friday and discussed administrative and professional matters related to working of the police field formations.

Senior officers presented suggestions and recommendations regarding administrative and policy issues. In the executive board meeting, various issues including Punjab Mounted Police Force,

inclusion of Band Staff in Telecommunication Wing and Welfare initiatives were discussed.

The meeting also reviewed progress of various development projects, welfare measures of the force. The IGP ordered that proposals should be finalised and presented in the next meeting for taking a decision. He said the supervisory officers should complete all ongoing projects within the stipulated time line under personal supervision.



LAHORE: Deputy Auditor General (Central) Tariq Bashir Chatha presenting the Accounts and Audit Report of the Punjab Government for the year 2023-24 to the Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

'Eat Safe Kids Campaign' launched across Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority, in collaboration with the School Education Department and Special Education Department, Friday launched a province-wide 'Eat Safe Kids Campaign' in private and public schools to promote nutritious eating habits from childhood.

In this connection, the inaugural ceremony was organised at the Government Boys High School in Kareem Block and the Government Central High School for the Deaf in Gulberg. The programme was attended by PFA Director General Muhammad Asim

Javaid, Secretary School Education Muhammad Ahsan Waheed, Additional Secretary School Saba Adil, Additional Secretary Special Education Khadija-tul-Kubra, Additional Secretary Amna Munir and Additional Director Generals of PFA.

The 'Eat Safe Kids Campaign' consisted of various interactive activities, workshops, and educational materials to engage children and make learning about healthy eating fun. Children will learn about the importance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins in their diet.

Diplomats from various countries appreciates business opportunities with Pakistan

KARACHI (APP): Diplomats of Germany, China and Oman while crediting the performance of the caretaker government and security agencies for holding peaceful election, expressed hope that democracy will strengthen in Pakistan, the future of Pakistan is, however, in the hands of the youth.

They were talking to journalists at a dinner

hosted by prominent businessman and Honorary Consul of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire Fazal Karim Dadabhoj in honor of Dr. Rudiger Lotz, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany at Dadabhoj residence and was attended by former caretaker provincial information minister Ahmed Shah, Mohammad Iqbal Memon, Home Secretary.

3 injured in jubilant firing, 2 held after CPO notice

FAISALABAD (APP): Three people including two minor children sustained multiple injuries due to jubilant firing while the police arrested two accused after the City Police Officer (CPO) took notice.

A police spokesman said here on Friday that Muhammad Iqbal of Jameel Town, Ghulam Muhammad Abad, 5-year-old Ibrahim of Tariq Town, Kikianwala.

International News

More than 100 killed while seeking aid in Gaza, overall death toll passes 30,000

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Gaza health authorities said Israeli forces on Thursday (Feb 29) shot dead more than 100 Palestinians as they waited for an aid delivery, but Israel blamed the deaths on crowds that surrounded aid trucks, saying victims had been trampled or run over.

At least 112 people were killed and more than 280 wounded in the incident near Gaza City, Palestinian health officials said.

The loss of civilian lives was the biggest in weeks. Hamas said the trucks were operated by private contractors as part of an aid operation that it had been overseeing for the past four nights.

One Israeli official said there had been two incidents, hundreds of

metres apart, in the first of which dozens were killed or injured as they tried to take aid from the trucks and were trampled or run over.

He said there was a second, subsequent incident as the trucks moved off. Some people in the crowd approached troops who felt under threat and opened fire, killing an unknown number in a "limited response", he said. He dismissed the casualty toll given by Gaza authorities but gave no figure himself. In a later briefing, Israel Defense Forces spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari also said dozens had been trampled to death or injured in a fight to take supplies off the trucks.

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Palestinians transport casualties following Israeli fire on people waiting for aid in Gaza City.

Five countries pledge personnel for Haiti security mission, UN says

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin and Chad have formally notified the United Nations of their intent to contribute personnel to an international force to help Haitian national police fight armed gangs, a UN spokesman said on Thursday.

Contributions of \$10.8 million have also been deposited into a trust fund to support the multinational security support mission, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters, adding that further pledges of \$78 million had also been made.

The United Nations Security Council

authorised in October a foreign security mission to Haiti, a year after the Caribbean country asked for help to fight violent gangs that have largely overrun its capital Port-au-Prince.

The 15-member council's resolution requires countries to inform UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres of their participation in the security mission. While approved by the Security Council, the mission is not a UN operation.

The response to Haiti's request for help was delayed due to a struggle to find a country willing to lead a security assistance mission.

Russia ready to hand over crash victims' bodies to Ukraine, RIA says

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia is ready to hand over to Ukraine the bodies of the victims of a January military plane crash, the RIA news agency cited Russian human rights official Tatyana Moskalkova as saying on Friday.

Moscow accuses Kyiv of downing the Il-76 plane in Russia's Belgorod region and killing 74 people on board, including 65 captured Ukrainian soldiers en route to be swapped for Russian prisoners of war.

It has not presented evidence.

Bangladesh building fire kills 46, injures dozens

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: A massive fire in Bangladesh that raged through a six-storey building home to restaurants where many families with children were dining has killed at least 46 people and injured dozens, the health minister said on Friday.

Fire authorities said a gas leak or a stove could have caused Thursday's blaze in the capital, which spread quickly after breaking out in a biryani restaurant, and was only brought under control following two hours of effort by 13 units of firefighters.

Hospitals were treating 22 people with burns, Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen told reporters. "All 22 people [...] are in critical condition," Sen, himself a well-known physician, said after a visit to the

Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"We are trying our best to save their lives," he said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed shock and sorrow at the incident, ordering swift treatment for the injured.

She urged adherence to construction rules and regulations, including requirements for essential safety features such as fire exits and ventilation systems to prevent such tragedies in the future. One survivor, Mohammad Altaf, recounted his narrow escape from the blaze that killed two colleagues. "I went to the kitchen, broke a window and jumped to save myself," he told reporters, adding that a cashier and server who urged people to leave during the first moments had died later.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte attend a ceremony of signing an agreement on security cooperation and long-term support between Ukraine and Netherlands, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

US Supreme Court to hear Trump's immunity claim

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court agreed on Wednesday to hear Donald Trump's claim that as a former president he is immune from prosecution, further delaying his trial on charges of conspiring to overturn the 2020 election.

Trump had been scheduled to go on trial in Washington on March 4, but the nation's highest court scheduled arguments in the high-stakes case for the week of April 22 and said Trump's federal election interference trial would remain on hold for now.

On the same day, a judge in the state of Illinois ordered the former president stricken off the state's primary ballot for his role in the January 6 Capitol riot.

Today, both Trump and incumbent President Joe Biden are due to pay dueling visits to the US-Mexico border Thursday as they try to win over voters on immigration.

Bangladeshi leader says a shopping mall that caught fire had no emergency exits

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: A six-story shopping mall that caught fire in the Bangladeshi capital had no fire exits, the country's prime minister said Friday, as the death toll climbed to at least 46 and rescuers continued to search for more victims.

The fire started late

Thursday in a restaurant on the first floor of the Green Cozy Cottage Shopping Mall in downtown Dhaka. More than a dozen firefighting units were deployed.

Firefighters rescued survivors and pulled out bodies, and by early Friday, at least 43 people were confirmed dead.

Three shot dead at US dental clinic

CALIFORNIA (INP): A manhunt was launched by police in the California city of El Cajon on Thursday after a shooting at a dentist's office left one dead and two injured, local media reported. Police in the town, about 20 miles (30 kilometers) outside of San Diego, said on social media they were searching for an "armed and dangerous" 29-year-old suspect who fled the scene after the attack.

South Korea's Yoon says better Japan ties helping deter North Korea threat

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said on Friday improved ties with Japan were helping to combat threats from Pyongyang's weapons developments and called for help from the international community to bring about unification with North Korea. Under Yoon's conservative administration, Seoul has sought better ties with Tokyo which have been fraught with historical baggage for years at a time of China's growing influence and North Korea's growing missile and nuclear programs. During a ceremony to mark an independence holiday, Yoon said next year would be the 60th anniversary of normalised diplomatic relations with Japan and he hoped it could be a chance for the bilateral relationship to reach a "higher level."

"Now, South Korea and Japan are working to

gether to overcome the painful past and moving toward a 'new world,'" he said in a speech to commemorate the formation of an independence movement against Japan's 1910-1945 occupation of Korea. "The security cooperation between the two countries against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats has been strengthened further," he added.

During his speech, Yoon said that Seoul would need international help for any prospect of unification with North Korea.

"Unification is a challenging task that we cannot accomplish alone. The international community must pool its strength in a responsible manner," he said. Yoon's comments come after the North's leader Kim Jong Un in January called South Korea a "primary foe" and said unification was no longer possible.

