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Becomes 24th PM in rucks-hit session Mounds of socio-economic challenges exist; but surmountable: PM-elect Shehbaz in victory speech

Obtains 201 votes; rival PTI-SIC candidate Omar Ayub Khan bags 92 votes; Shehbaz thanks Nawaz for nominating him for PM slot; Says his party never indulged in political victimisation.

ISLAMABAD (AFP/APP): Shehbaz Sharif was voted in on Sunday as Pakistan's prime minister for a second time, presiding over a shaky alliance that has shut out followers of jailed opposition leader Imran Khan.

Newly sworn-in lawmakers in Pakistan's National Assembly elected Sharif with 201 votes, more than three weeks after national elections marred by widespread allegations of rigging.

"No one has won a majority. It is a split mandate. And it is the democratic way that if it's a split mandate, then the like-minded parties may form a coalition government," Sharif told parliament, referring to the February 8 election.

The Sharif family's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party allied with their historic ri-

vals the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), as well as several smaller factions, to keep Khan's candidates out.

In return, the PPP—a dynastic party ruled by the family of slain ex-premier Benazir Bhutto—has been promised the office of president for Bhutto's widow, Asif Ali Zardari.

Ex-prime minister Khan was jailed in the run-up to the election and barred from running, while his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party was targeted by a crackdown of arrests and censorship.

PTI candidates were forced to run as independents but nonetheless secured more seats than any other party.

However, they fell short of the figures needed to form a government, paving the way for Sharif's return.

Omar Ayub Khan stood against Sharif as the



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif address in the National Assembly after electing Prime Minister.

candidate of choice for MPs loyal to Imran Khan, gaining 92 votes.

"They put our leaders in jail, took our election symbol, rigged the elections, but we kept standing, and we will stand our ground," Omar Ayub Khan told parliament.

Sharif, 72, first served as prime minister in 2022 at the head of a strikingly similar alliance which ousted Imran Khan, a former cricket star.

Meanwhile Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the newly-elected prime minister, on Sunday spelled out a number of initiatives to net the runaway inflation, high cost of living, price hike, circular debt in the energy sector and foreign debts, and expressed the optimism that though the mounds of challenges existed, but were not insurmountable.

In his maiden speech

Sindh CM Murad, Balochistan CM Bugti exchange views on presidential elections

Both chief ministers resolve to launch crackdown against smuggling, drug mafia

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti exchanged views on the presidential elections on Sunday.

According to details, CM Bugti called on CM Murad in Karachi. On this occasion, both leaders discussed matters in line with the welfare projects in Gwadar and the law and order situation.

CM Bugti said that the process of

water drainage and other rehabilitation measures were underway in Gwadar.

Both leaders expressed optimism that Asif Ali Zardari will be elected as the country's president again with the majority.

Moreover, both the chief ministers had agreed to launch a crackdown against the smuggling and drug mafia.

Khurshid Shah felicitates Sarfraz Bugti on becoming

Balochistan CM — PPP senior leader Syed Khurshid Shah on Saturday felicitated Sarfraz Bugti on becoming the Balochistan chief minister.

Expressing his thoughts, Shah rallied behind Bugti, saying, "Sarfraz Bugti will play an anchoring role in terms of uplifting the province."

"We pray that the province will witness peace, development, and prosperity," Shah stated.



KARACHI: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti meeting Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah.

Presidential elections: Parliament's joint session summoned on March 9

ISLAMABAD (INP): The joint session of Parliament summoned on March 9 for the presidential elections with National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq in chair.

According to details, the joint session was summoned by NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Saturday, March 9 at 10:00 am.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) earlier announced the schedule for the presidential elections.

According to the ECP schedule, polling for the presidential election will be held on March 9 from 10 am to 4 pm.

The electoral college for indirect presidential election comprises of the members of the Senate, National Assembly and four provincial assemblies. In the election, the Senate and National Assembly's members votes are counted as

Shehbaz Sharif to take oath as PM today

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif to take oath as Pakistan's 24th Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan today March 4 (Monday).

President Arif Alvi will administer oath to the newly elected Prime Minister in a ceremony held at President's House at 3 pm.

Invitation letters were sent to guests, whereas Army Chief General Asim Munir, caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar, Chief Ministers and governors of all provinces will also participate in the oath-taking ceremony.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz President Shehbaz Sharif was elected as Pakistan's 24th Prime Minister (PM).

CM Sindh congratulates newly elected PM Shehbaz

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Sunday has congratulated the newly elected Prime Minister Mohammed Shehbaz Sharif. He said that Shehbaz Sharif was a senior parliamentarian and seasoned politician. He hoped that the country would progress in his tenure.

Iran greets PM Sharif

ISLAMABAD (Online): Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran in Islamabad, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, has felicitated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on assuming the charge of 24th PM of Pakistan on Sunday.

"I would like to express my warmest congratulations on the election of H.E. Mr Shehbaz Sharif, as the 24th Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan following a successful nationwide election. Islamic Republic of Iran expresses readiness to expand all-out mutual relations, ties & cooperation with the brotherly."

Teacher throws acid on girl student for rejecting friendship proposal

KARACHI (INP): A pitiless teacher threw acid on a girl student over rejecting his friendship proposal, police said on Sunday.

According to details, the incident took place in Nipa Chowringi where a teacher identified as Ifthikhar asked a girl student visiting coaching centre for IT certificate to enter in friendship with him.

The girl used harsh language with teacher over friendship proposal and along with maternal uncle reached coaching centre to lodge a complaint with administration.

Elections 2024 shattered record of rigging set in 2018: Fazal

JUI-F chief alleges establishment 'succumbed' to international pressure

KARACHI (INP): Expressing dismay over the dwindling significance of the Parliament, Fazl remarked, "The Parliament, where we see a mockery of democracy, is no longer representative of the people. The Parliament, which we witness, will have some individuals calling themselves rulers. They may govern bodies but cannot govern the hearts of the nation."

Despite his inclination to support Mahmood Achakzai, the candidate backed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-supported Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), Fazl indicated that his party's stance compels them to act otherwise.

He dismissed the prospect of forming alliances with allied parties, citing an inadequate environment for a grand alliance.

Fazl made these assertions during a press conference in Karachi, where he claimed that mounting international pressure forced Pakistan's military establishment to yield, thus influencing the election outcome.

"The establishment's coercion will indeed be labelled as coercion. The establishment has divided its own ranks, accommodating some at one place and others elsewhere," he stated, addressing the alleged interference in the electoral process.



JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman addressing a press conference in Karachi.

Omar Ayub demands release of PTI's political detainees

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Omar Ayub called for an impartial inquiry into the events of May 9, and also demanded release of the PTI's political detainees.

Addressing the post-PM voting session of the National Assembly, Ayub stressed the need for justice, stating that founding chairman Imran Khan Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi, and other leaders have been unjustly detained as political prisoners.

He also urged for adequate facilities to be extended to Bushra Bibi. PTI not responsible for May 9 mayhem Ayub vehemently denied PTI's involvement in the May 9 incidents, instead placing blame on what he characterized as the unconstitutional actions of caretaker governments in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He alleged widespread arrests of PTI supporters and called for accountability under Article 6 of the Constitution, demanding an impartial inquiry into the events. Expressing dissatisfaction with the coverage of his speech on state television, Ayub slammed the delay in broadcasting, despite the Speaker National Assembly's directive for live transmission.

Ayub continued his address by recounting instances of alleged persecution faced by PTI members, including repeated police raids on his residence and harassment of his family.

He condemned the reported torture of PTI workers in custody, highlighting the suffering endured by youths and their families.

Calling for the rule of law to prevail, Ayub squarely blamed Shehbaz Sharif for past tragedies, such as the Wazirabad attack in November 2022, where a PTI worker was martyred. He demanded justice for the victim and urged authorities to apprehend the attackers.

PPP calls for political unity, consensus

LAHORE (APP): In a bid for political stability, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) urges unity across party lines as Asif Ali Zardari prepares for presidency.

In a joint statement issued by PPP leaders Usman Malik and Rao Khalid on Sunday, the importance of cooperation among political parties was emphasised to uphold constitutional values and parliamentary supremacy.

The PPP leaders asserted the party's commitment to consensus-building, citing its adherence to constitutional knowledge, law, and democracy. As the government formation nears completion, the PPP anticipates Zardari's presidency with a significant majority on March 9.

Governor felicitates newly elected PM

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori has congratulated Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on being elected as the Prime Minister here on Sunday.

He said that his election was a proof of the progress of the democratic process in the country.

He hoped that the country would develop and progress in the leadership of the PM-elect Mohammed Shehbaz Sharif.

Quetta winds sweep through Karachi, Sindh shivers in cold wave

KARACHI (INP): The heart of Sindh, continues to shiver under the cold spell brought by the winds from Quetta for the second consecutive day. The Pakistan Meteorological Department's Early Warning Center recorded wind speeds of 27 kilometers per hour. While the wind intensity is expected to weaken by tonight, the cold wave is forecast to persist for the next 2-3 days. Temperatures are expected to drop by 8-10 degrees Celsius compared to normal levels. Sea breezes, which typically moderate Karachi's climate, will remain inactive for the coming days, allowing north-easterly and easterly winds from Balochistan to prevail.

The minimum temperature in Karachi is expected to be between 10-12 degrees Celsius on Monday, March 4th, and 12-14 degrees Celsius on Tuesday.

President Xi, Premier Li congratulate newly-elected PM Shehbaz Sharif

BEIJING (APP): Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang on Sunday congratulated Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on his election as Prime Minister of Pakistan.

President Xi Jinping expressed the confidence that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Pakistan's new government, and under the united efforts of all sectors of Pakistan, Pakistan would be able to make new and greater achievements in the cause of national development and progress, according to the state-run news agency Xinhua.

He stressed that China and Pakistan should continue their traditional friendship, strengthen exchanges and cooperation in various fields, jointly build an upgraded version of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, continue to deepen their all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, build a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era, and create more well-being for the two peoples.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang of the State Council also sent a congratulatory message to the newly-elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz President Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the prime minister for the second time after bagging 201 votes in the National Assembly.

Barrister Gohar elected PTI chairman unopposed for second time

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has released the results of its intra-party election. Raouf Hassan, PTI's information secretary, announced the intra-party election results.

Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has been elected as the chairman of PTI without facing any opposition in the intra-party elections. Omar Ayub secured the central general secretary position, while Dr. Yasmin Rashid clinched the presidency of Punjab unopposed.

Ali Amin Gandapur has been elected as PTI president for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Noorul Haq Qadri was elected as vice president, and Arbab Jahandad Khan as vice president of PTI in KP.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa election commissioner Qazi Anwar Advocate announced the victory notification of Ali Amin Gandapur. The panel of Ali Amin Gandapur was elected unopposed, as no other panel submitted nomination papers.

Ali Asghar Khan and Irfan Saleem won the roles of general secretary and additional general secretary, respectively. On the other hand, Fakhar Zaman won the position of deputy general secretary.

Daniyal Khan Jadoon, Khaista Mehmood, and Taimoor Khalid have been elected as joint secretaries.



HYDERABAD: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President, Halem Adil Sheikh addresses to party workers during his visit, at Badin Stop in Hyderabad.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hand shakes with PPP Leader Asif Ali Zardari after electing prime minister.

PN deploys helicopters in flood hit Gwadar to expedite rescue & relief operations

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Navy continues to extended relief and rescue operations to various small coastal villages of Balochistan affected by recent flash flooding.

To expedite rescue and relief operations in flood affected areas of district Gwadar, Pakistan Navy has stationed helicopters there. Pakistan Navy helicopters undertook multiple hops from Gwadar to the flood affected villages of Pishukan and Kappar. Relief teams delivered ration bags, clean drinking water and food items near people stranded in their villages.

Moreover, ration and relief goods distribution conducted by Pakistan Navy personnel amongst flood affectees of Gwadar city. In addition, large numbers of medical supplies and ration bags have also been dispatched to different other flood-affected villages through road where land connectivity was restored.

Further, in assistance to civil administration, Pakistan Navy troops were wholeheartedly undertaking rescue and relief operations utilizing all available equipment and resources. In this regard, de-flooding operations were being conducted on various localities of Gwadar city to clear flood water.

Pakistan Navy was resolutely committed to supporting our flood-affected brethren during this difficult time.



Pakistan Navy helicopter loading ration for distribution amongst flood affectees of Gwadar district.

CM KP announces relief package for rains affected families in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Sunday announced compensation package for the affected families due to rains in the province.

The Chief Minister directed the Relief Secretary to compile reports on the affected and the damages incurred due to rains.

Detailed information about the life and property losses across the province should be collected, the Chief Minister instructed.

He announced relief

checks of Rs1 million for the killed, Rs 300,000 for severely injured and Rs 50,000 for those who received moderate injuries.

Financial compensation will also be provided for property damages caused by the rains.

The Chief Minister has instructed the concerned Divisional Commissioners to coordinate efforts and promptly provide relief to the affected.

Immediate relief measures are to be taken on an emergency basis, focusing on essential needs

such as temporary shelter, food, and other necessities for owners of damaged homes.

Ali Amin Gandapur directed urgent provision of medical assistance to the injured.

He also directed to restore the closed roads due to heavy snowfall and rain.

The Chief Minister has stressed the utilization of all available resources for this purpose. In light of any emergency situations, preparedness measures should be in place to tackle the challenges effectively, Ali Amin Gandapur asserts.



FAISALABAD: A speaker addressing an Annual General meeting of Faisalabad Union of Journalist (FUJ).

Free medical, dental camp held at LPC

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Press Club on Sunday organised a free medical camp for members and their families with the support of Private Nursing Colleges Federation.

In the medical camp, general check-up, gynecological problems, dental diseases, eye examination, nutrition issues, free sugar check, and free blood pressure was checked. Specialist General Physician Dr. Jameel Baloch, Dr. Shumaila, Dr. Saba, Dr. Osama Asif, Dr. Abdul Rahman, Dr. Ayman and paramedical staff participated in the medical camp and examined the patients, participating in the medical camp for

prescribed treatment and provided medicines.

LPC President Arshad Ansari, Vice President Amjad Usmani, Secretary Zahid Abid, Member Governing Body Imran Sheikh, Rana Shehzad, Fatima Mukhtar welcomed doctors, members of Lahore Press Club and their families who participated in the camp.

The LPC members and their families expressed their satisfaction over the conduct of the camp and expressed hope that the elected governing body would continue to take such measures so that the members of the LPC can benefit more.

Azma Bokhari greets Shehbaz

LAHORE (APP): PML-N Punjab spokesperson Azma Bokhari, congratulating Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif on being elected as Prime Minister, stated that the era of progress and prosperity will continue again under his leadership.

Azma Bokhari in her felicitation message outlined that PM Shehbaz Sharif had saved Pakistan from default and it was his biggest credit. "PM Shehbaz Sharif would steer Pakistan out of the economic vortex and vicious circle as his first and foremost priority is to ensure the revival of the national economy and elimination of the price hike. Those who are destined to wait will continue to do so for the next five years. The PML-N government under the dynamic leadership of Nawaz Sharif will work with the same spirit of rendering public service in the federation and in Punjab as well. The able leadership of Nawaz Sharif is a matter of great pride for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz," she added.



LAHORE: The brave Superintendent of Police (SP) Syeda Sheherbano Naqvi heading a walk in liberty Chowk organized by Punjab Police.

27 persons killed, 38 injured due to rains in KP: PDMA

PESHAWAR (APP): At least 27 persons were killed and 38 were reported injured due rains for the last 48 hours, said DG Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA).

33 houses were reported completely destroyed while 129 partially.

The Chief Minister has directed to provide relief and compensation cheques to the affected families. He also directed for opening of closed road and provide facilities to

people stuck in rains and landsliding.

The Chief Minister also directed PDMA, Rescue 1122, district administrations to be alert and facilitate people.

Six tourists have been rescued in Malamjabba, said DG PDMA Muhammad Qaiser Khan.

He said that directives have been issued to all DCs in this regard.

Apart from humans, reports about perishing of livestock has also been received from authorities of Rescue 1122 KP.

2 people killed in different incidents in Attock

ATTOCK (APP): Two people, among them a teenage teacher of a private school were killed in two different incidents in various parts of Attock on Sunday, police and rescue sources said.

In the first incident, a teenage teacher of a private school was going to her house when she reached Mohallah Subalan, she slipped and drowned in a drainage line in the limits of Fatehjang Police Station. Later, Rescue 1122 retrieved her body and shifted to the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in Fatehjang, where she was declared dead. Separately, an employee of the Municipal Committee, Hassanabdal, lost his life while repairing a street light in Mohallah Shaheedabad.

'Never Again' walk held to create awareness about violence against women

LAHORE (APP): A walk under the theme of 'Violence against women no more, never again' was organised by the Punjab Police here on Sunday to create awareness among citizens.

The walk participants were told the Punjab Police were determined to prevent violence against women and protect their rights. The walk started from Liberty Roundabout, and IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar and ASP Gulberg Syeda Sheherbano led the

walk. Senior officers including DIG Operations Lahore Ali Nasir Rizvi, COO Safe Cities Authority Mustansar Feroze, CTO Lahore Amara Athar, SSP Operations, SPS, Supervisory officers of different divisions of Lahore, hundreds of male and female officials of all police units, a large number of students, famous personalities from various walks of life, civil society and citizens participated in the awareness walk.

Govt to take measures to protect wildlife: Maryam Nawaz

Maryam congratulates Shehbaz Sharif on being elected as PM

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has said that the provincial government would take comprehensive and effective measures to protect wildlife in Punjab.

In her message on World Wildlife Day 2024 on Sunday, the CM said the importance of wildlife in maintaining ecological balance cannot be underestimated. Realizing the importance of biodiversity, the Punjab government would take effective measures to bring environmental balance. Conservation of all kinds of wildlife from wild sheep found in Salt Range to 'talurs' of Cholistan and to the dolphins, is our top priority. Like entire

Pakistan, nature has blessed Punjab with beautiful wildlife, the protection and promotion of which is our responsibility.

"On World Wildlife Day, I pay tribute to the workers and organizations serving in this field" she concluded.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif congratulated Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif on being elected Prime Minister of Pakistan for the second time.

In her message issued on Sunday, the CM said, "I also congratulate the people of Pakistan as they have got a Khadim."



SARGODHA: Student giving final touch to painting during Punjab painting competitions organized by Sargodha Arts Council.

KPCTA arranges Safari Train trip to Takhtbhai

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) arranged first ever safari train trip to Takht Bahi relics on Sunday.

It was aimed of informing people about the rich history of Buddha-era heritage sites declared by UNESCO as world heritage site.

A large number of people enjoyed the train safari, which commenced from Saddar Railway

Station. The visitors were warmly welcomed at the station with traditional Pipe band. A total of 140 passengers visited the site through the train safari, during which they were briefed about the historic places of KP, its culture, traditions and the history of Takht Bahi relics.

The train safari departed from Saddar Cantt Railway Station at 9:00 AM and reached Takht Bahi Railway Station after sightseeing stops at City.

International News

Many aid distribution victims were shot in Gaza: UN

Monitoring Desk GAZA CITY: A UN team has reported seeing "a large number" of gunshot wounds among Gazans after Israeli troops opened fire on Palestinian civilians scrambling for food supplies near an aid convoy, killing 115 people and wounded more than 750.

The aid convoy deaths pushed the number of Palestinian dead in Gaza since Oct 7 to 30,320, mostly women and children. Hossam Abu Safiya, director of Gaza City's Kamal Adwan Hospital, said all the casualties it admitted were hit by "bullets and shrapnel from (Israeli) occupation forces".

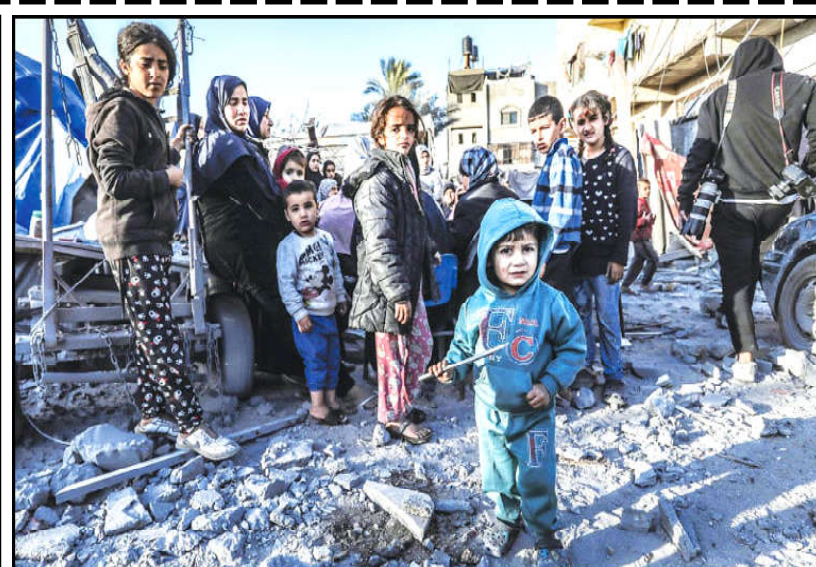
There are contradictions within the Israeli claims; BBC News reported that officials first

claimed that "dozens of Gazans were injured as a result of pushing and trampling" during looting, then saying that tanks in the area "tried to disperse the mob with a few warning shots".

In a video statement posted on X, the Israeli armed forces spokesman, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari claimed: "Hundreds became thousands and things got out of hand."

A UN team visited some of the wounded from the aid incident, in Gaza City's Al Shifa Hospital, on Friday and saw a "large number of gunshot wounds", a spokesperson for UN chief Antonio Guterres said.

The hospital received 70 of the dead, and around 200 wounded were still there during the team's



Children stand amid the rubble of a mosque and makeshift shelters that were destroyed in Israeli strikes in Deir El-Balah in central Gaza.

Zelensky seeks Western air defence systems as Russian attacks kill 10

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday urged the West to deliver more air defence systems as a wave of Russian missile, drone and artillery strikes killed at least ten people.

Seven were confirmed dead, including a three-month-old baby and a two-year-old child, after an overnight drone strike on the southern port city of Odesa. Separate shelling attacks on the frontline Kharkiv, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions killed another three, Ukrainian officials said.

"Russia continues to hit civilians," Zelensky said in a post on social media.

"We need more air defences from our partners. We need to strengthen the Ukrainian air shield to add

more protection for our people from Russian terror. More air defence systems and more missiles for air defence systems save lives," he said.

Ukraine is currently on the back foot in the two-year war as a crucial \$60-billion aid package is held up in the United States congress.

In Odesa, "a nine-storey building was destroyed as a result of an attack by Russian terrorists," Interior Minister Igor Klymenko said on Saturday in a post on Telegram.

The attack killed at least seven people, including a three-month-old baby, Klymenko said. Another child, aged two, was also among the dead, Odesa region Governor Oleg Kiper said on state TV.

Malaysia says MH370 search must go on, 10 years after plane vanished

Monitoring Desk SUBANG JAYA: Malaysia is pushing for a renewed search for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, the transport minister said on Sunday, as the 10th anniversary of its disappearance in one of the world's greatest aviation mysteries approaches.

Flight MH370, a Boeing 777 carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew, vanished en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8, 2014.

Malaysian investigators initially did not rule out the possibility that the aircraft had been deliberately taken off course, and debris, some confirmed and some believed to be from

the aircraft, has washed up along the coast of Africa and on islands in the Indian Ocean.

Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke said US seabed exploration firm Ocean Infinity had been invited to discuss its latest search proposal after two previous failed attempts.

"The Malaysian government is committed to the search (for MH370) and the search must go on," Loke said at a remembrance event on Sunday.

Malaysia engaged Ocean Infinity in 2018 to search the southern Indian Ocean, offering to pay up to \$70 million if it found the plane.

Around 9000 women killed by Israeli forces in Gaza since October last year

GAZA (Online): Around 9000 women were killed by Israeli forces in Gaza since October last year. This was reported by UN Women, a United Nations agency dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

It called the war in besieged Gaza as a war on women. The agency said that roughly thirty seven mothers are killed every day, leaving their families devastated and their children with diminished protection. According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, at least 50 people were injured in drone attack.

UK PM Sunak rails against 'extremism' after Galloway's win

Monitoring Desk LONDON: For the first time since he became prime minister 16 months earlier, Rishi Sunak made an impromptu speech from outside his office, not to call a general election but to rail against extremist groups, which, according to him, are trying to tear the nation apart.

Standing in the rain, his back to 10 Downing Street, PM Sunak in speech to the nation on Friday night said: "There is no 'context' in which it can be acceptable to beam antisemitic tropes onto Big Ben in the middle of a vote on Israel/Gaza. And there can be no cause you can use to justify the support of a proscribed terrorist group, like Hamas. Yes, you can freely criticise the actions of this government, or indeed any government: that is a fundamental democratic right. But no, you cannot

use that as an excuse to call for the eradication of a state — or any kind of hatred or antisemitism."

After months of pro-Gaza public demonstrations and growing pressure on both the government and Labour party to take a tougher stance on Israel, it appears that the victory of George Galloway in a by-election in the erstwhile Labour stronghold of Rochdale is the straw that broke the camel's back.

He won with overwhelming numbers that night, beating both the Labour and Tory candidate by wide margins.

A much-loathed figure in British politics for his populist rhetoric, pro-Gaza Galloway lured Rochdale's Muslim voters through a targeted campaign centering on Gaza and the British government's silence on Israel's continued bombardment.



Rescuers work at the site of a heavily damaged apartment building in Odesa, following a Russian drone attack.

Europe battles powder shortage to supply shells for Ukraine

Monitoring Desk PARIS: Hard-to-find gunpowder is hindering Europe's scramble to provide hundreds of thousands of shells for Ukraine's defensive effort against Russian invaders, with solutions only starting to emerge.

"We have all become aware of the need to face up to the scarcity of some components, especially gunpowders," French President Emmanuel Macron said Monday after a gathering of Kyiv's allies in Paris. "Powder is really what's lacking today," he

added.

Gunpowder goes into propellant charges that hurl artillery shells—such as the NATO-standard 155-millimetre projectiles used in many guns sent to Ukraine—over distances of tens of kilometres.

"A simple explosive artillery shell has three parts. It has a steel casing, a high-explosive main charge and a detonator" usually set to trigger the blast on impact, said Johann Hoecherl, a munitions expert at the German armed forces university in Munich.

Spanish tourist gang-raped in India

Monitoring Desk MUMBAI: Three men were arrested on Saturday after the gang rape of a Spanish tourist on a motorbike trip through India's remote east with her husband, local media reports said. The attack took place on Friday night in the Dumka district of Jharkhand, where the couple had stopped to camp the night in a tent. The woman was able to reach a police patrol van at around 11pm and was taken to hospital for treatment, police officer Pitamber Singh Kherwar told The Times of India newspaper. Kherwar said police had detained three people in connection with the attack and were on the hunt for more suspects.

The Spanish woman is being treated at a local hospital in Dumka and an investigation is underway, reports said. An average of nearly 90 rapes were reported in India every day in 2022, according to data by the National Crime Records Bureau.

Australia PM defends action on cost of living amid by-election

Monitoring Desk SYDNEY: Voters went to the polls on Saturday in a by-election in Australia's Victoria state seen as a referendum on Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's handling of cost of living pressures across the country.

Australian households have been under broad financial pressure from high

inflation, which although recently easing has prompted the nation's central bank to hike interest rates by 425 basis points since May 2022 to a 12-year top of 4.35%.

"We know people have done it tough through cost of living pressures, but we've been prepared to take action, decisive action."

India navy to open strategic base near Maldives

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: India's navy has said it is bolstering forces on "strategically important" islands close to the Maldives, with a new base set to open just days before Male starts sending home Indian forces. Relations between India and the Maldives have soured since pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu won elections last year after promising to expel Indian forces.

