Simultaneously published from Quetta, Gwadar, Hub, Karachi, Islamabad

nachenach

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

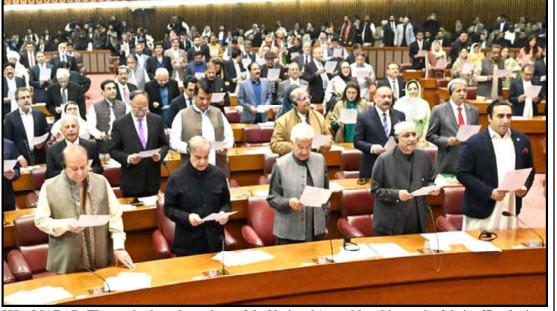
www.dailyindependent.com.pk

Newly elected MNAs take

oath amid loud sloganeering

Election of PM to be held on March 3; Nomination papers of

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vd: XXV No. 191, Shaban 19, 1445 AH Friday March 01, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs. 15



ISLAMABAD: The newly elected members of the National Assembly taking oath of their office during the inaugural session of the 16th National Assembly at the Parliament House.

Routine life paralysed in port city, adjoining areas: Gwadar declared calamity-hit due to critical situation of torrential rains

Caretaker CM says extraordinary situation emerged because of continuous rains in Gwadar, directs to concerned authorities to mobilize all available resources in difficult time

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial government has declared Gwadar as calam-

ity-hit district. This was announced by caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai here on Thurs-

Jan Achakzai said that Gwadar has been declared calamity-hit owing to critical situation emerged following torrential rains for last few days.

According to the Minister Information, the care-taker Chief Minister has already signed the summary regarding declaring the port city as calamity-hit.

caretaker Chief Minister sistance of Pak Army in Gwadar and adjoining areas.

Mir Ali Mardan Domki has been personally monitoring the situation in the rain hit areas of the province including Gwadar.

He said that the basic infrastructure has been damaged due to the rains in the district.

However, rescue activities are being carried out by the Pak Army along with other concerned departments and local administra-

He commended the role and spirit of personnel of Pak Army and other institutions in this regard.

Meanwhile, the caretaker Chief Minister said He informed that the ties are continued with as- the continuous rains in

He mentioned that the extraordinary situation was emerged due to the continuous rains.

He said that steps are being taken to mitigate the sufferings of affected people in emergent basis. He commended Pak

Army for carrying out relief activities together with civil administration in critical time. The Chief Minister di-

rected the concerned authorities to mobilize all available resources in the critical time.

Needless to mention here is that the routine life that effective rescue activi- has been paralysed due to

Khaliq Achakzai sworn in as 17th Speaker **Balochistan Assembly**

Ghazala Gola becomes 1st female Deputy Speaker

PML-N and PPP's parliamentarians elected unopposed as Speaker and Deputy Speaker of BA respectively

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) nominated Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai and Pakistan

Peoples' Party (PPP)'s nominated Ms. Ghazal Gola were sworn in as Speaker and Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly respectively here on

Thursday. While the Presiding Officer nominated for the first session of assembly, Engineer Zamarak Khan Achakzai administered oath to the newly elected Speaker Abdul Khaliq

Achakzai, later, Mr Achakzai administered oath to Ms. Ghazala Gola at session of the assembly the same afternoon.

ISLAMABAD (INP): The inaugural session of the newly elected National As-

sembly commenced with

Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf in the chair to in-

duct a fresh batch of law-

makers, who started arriv-

ing in the Parliament House

before the scheduled time.

The newly elected MNAs were administered

the oath by the speaker after which they all also

signed on the registration

rolls. Moreover, the elec-

tion for the Lower House

Earlier, both were elected unopposed as Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Balochistan Assembly respectively on Thursday.

Secretary The Balochistan Assembly, Tahir Shah Kakar announced that no other candidate submitted their nomination papers for the slots of Speaker and Deputy Speaker provincial

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: MPA Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai taking oath from Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) candidate Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai as Speaker Balochistan Assembly

Governor directs to expedite

relief operation in rain-hit areas

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor

Balochistan, Malik Abdul

Wali Khan Kakar has ex-

pressed sorrow over the damages caused due to the

devastating rains and storms in different areas of

Makran including Gwadar,

the relief activities are con-

tinued by all concerned in-

stitutions, still there is a

need to expedite these ac-

tivities further and provide

the affected people neces-

sary relief by shifting them

The Governor also

The Governor said that

Jiwani and Turbat.

to the safer places.

Writing letter to IMF is anti state act: Nawaz Sharif

Letter proof Imran wants country's destruction: Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif has said writing letter to IMF is tantamount to commit anti state act.

'Writing to letter to IMF is tantamount to indulge in anti state act. he said this in an informal talks with the media men on his arrival in parliament house to attend inaugural session of National Assembly (NA) here Thursday.

Talking on matter of writing letter by PTI to IMF on polls rigging he

write letter this way. Only they can write such letter. This is their routine norm. Writing this letter is anti state act. You can deduce result from this

Like wise Shehbaz Sharif nominated Prime Minister said while talking to media men after his arrival in NA that PTI has proved by writing letter to wants to annihîlate country. We condemn this act on the the inaugural National As-

He held PTI wrote this



ISLAMABAD: Leader of Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, Mahmood Khan Achakzai, arriving before the start of the inaugural session of the National Assembly, at the parliament house building in the Federal Čapital.

Demand Gwadar be declared calamity-hit district: **Newly elected MPAs vow to** work for betterment of country and province forgetting bitterness of elections

Independent Report

QUETTA: The newly elected members of provincial assembly have vowed to work for betterment of the country and province besides resolving the issues of masses just forgetting the bitterness of elections.

They also vowed to play role for bringing peace and development of Balochistan with sincerity.

Some parliamentarians pleaded to declare Gwadar as calamity hit owing to the situation emerged due to torrential rains there.

They were expressing their views while speaking at the assembly forum that met with newly elected speaker Abdul Khaliq Achakzai in the chair on

Those who spoke on the occasion were included: Mir Sadiq Umrani, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran. Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Ali Madad Jatak, Mir Zabid Reki, Farah Azeem Shah. Barkat Baloch, Abdul Majeed Badini, Zahoor Buledi, Younas Aziz Zehri, Mir Asadullah Baloch and

Speaking on the occasion, the members of assembly said that we have to resolve the issues of

asses of Balochistan. They also insisted that the new speaker would run

impartiality. They also as-Continued on page 2

the assembly affairs with

letter to sabotage IMF pro-

INP adds: PML-N President and prime minister in waiting, Shehbaz Sharif, has called the letter written by the PTI to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) another antinational move of the party.

"After the cipher, this letter is another proof of the PTI's anti-state interests,' IMF after cipher that it he remarked while arriving at the Parliament House for sembly session on Thursday morning.

Heavy rainfall: **Education deptt** decides to close all schools till March 7

Independent Report QUETTA: The Education Department (Schools) Government of Balochistan has decided to close all schools till March 7, due to heavy rainfall through the province. According to an official notification issued here by the Education Department, all public and private schools across the province shall remain closed from February 29 to March 7, 2024.

It was directed to all District Education Officers as well as Heads and Principals of all public and private schools to ensure compliance of the orders in this

MQM rejects offer to join federal cabinet

SLAMABAD (INP) MQM Pakistan rejected the offer to be part of the federal cabinet.

MQM decided to give Prime Minister vote to PML-N candidate but refused to join the federal cabinet. PML-N had offered federal ministries to MQM at the centre.

According to sources the party wanted support on the constitutional amendment to give financial and administrative autonomy to the local bodies across the country.

tending cooperation to the government, he added. NP decides to sit in opposition in BA, says Dr. Malik Baloch

Independent Report OUETTA: The President National Party and member of Balochistan Assembly, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch has stated that the party has decided to sit in opposition in the provincial assembly. Speaking to the media persons after his walk out from the assembly session on Thursday, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch said that

the February 8, 2024's elec-

tions were the worst in his-

tory of the country and so of Balochistan. He said that the party's

sought the details of ongo-

agement Authority.

He said that he is in

relief activities and rehabili-

tation of the affected

knowledged that the

present interim government

is taking steps for compen-

sation of the losses and pro-

eral government has also ex-

In this regard, the fed-

vision of relief.

The Governor ac-

central committee discussed the situation following recent elections in detail.

He said that after discussion, it was decided that party would sit on opposition benches. He also said that as a mark of protest we also boycotted the assembly session and election proceedings for the speaker and deputy speaker.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Muhammad Zubair Khan Jamali in a meeting with Caretaker Provincial Minister Mehmoodul Hassan

Ayaz Sadiq, Amir Dogar for NA Speaker accepted speaker and deputy Council's MNAs-elect ing the former prime minis-speaker will be held today, gathered in front of the ter. March 1. After the oath, the

speaker first asked the candidates for speaker and deputy speaker to sign on the roll of members, which included PML-N Ayaz Sadiq and Awais Leghari. As per the official agenda, the session commenced with a recitation of the naat, the holy Quran and the national anthem

Following the national anthem, the Sunni Ittehad

speaker's dais and created a commotion with a strong protest with slogans and chants. As a result, the PML-N members also responded with counter slogans of "Ghari chor (watch thief)" against the PTI and

its leadership.
The Sunni Ittehad Council members were carrying posters of Imran Khan, while several leaders, including Barrister Gohar, were clad in masks depict-

consistent sloganeering by PTI members, the speaker warned they would be evicted from the House.

The National Assembly Secretariat has also issued the procedure for polling for the speaker and deputy speaker, which is set to take place on March

In order to avoid any Continued on page 2



Chief of the Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir addressing the closing ceremony of the Seventh Pakistan Army Team Spirit Exercise-2024 at Kharian.

Balochistan CM's election on Saturday

QUETTA (APP): The election for the new Chief Minister of Balochistan will be held on Saturday (March

Chairing the session of Balochistan Assembly on Thursday, the newly elected Speaker Abdul Khaliq Achakzai announced the schedule for the election of the Leader of the House (Chief Minis-

He said that the candi-

dates for the slot of chief minister could submit their nomination form till 5 p.m. on Friday, while the elec-tion would take place on Saturday.

The session was ad ourned to meet again on 1 a.m. on Saturday.

Later talking to media persons, the Speaker said that he would run the House impartially and would treat both treasury and opposition benches equally. He would endeayour to ensure the rule of law and supremacy of the Constitu-

Achakzai urged the assembly members to rise ing relief activities from the above their political affilia-Provincial Disaster Mantions and work together for strengthening of democracy contact with the heads of and welfare of the people. He thanked the MPAs the institutions regarding

Umar, Ali Khan vow to bring PTI founder as

for electing him as Speaker

of the Balochistan Assem-

prime minister ISLAMABAD (INP): Pa kistan Tehreek-e-Insaf lead ers Umar Ayub and Ali Muhammad Khan said on Thursday that the PTI founder will be in the assembly as prime minister.

He was talking to media outside the National Assembly here before attending the session of the

newly-elected house. He vowed that the PTI would resolve people' problems. Ayub said that the international financial institutions want proper use of the debt as the gov ernment does not have the ability to do so. He said that the members of the Sunni Unity Council (SIC) would attend the assembly session en masse, take oath and stage protest.

The PTI founder has directed the members-elect to ensure their presence in the assembly session. Ali Muhammad Khan

said that their leader would return to the highest office with a two-thirds majority. He said that the party

had won 180 seats but deprived of its mandate by tampering with Form 47 "We have pointed this out to the IMF," he added.

Attends 7th Pak Army Team Spirit Exercise-2024 PATS, right forum fostering team spirit in evolving character of war

Pakistan Army Team Spirit age and competence which (PATS) was the right forum, have amply been displayed which appropriately combined professional military skills and tactical acumen of all participating soldiers, fostering much-needed team spirit in the face of evolving

character of war. The Army Chief was addressing the participants of the 7th Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Exercise-2024 as chief guest that concluded at Kharian Garrison with an impressive Closing Ceremony, an Inter Services Public Relations

(ISPR) news release said. The COAS appreciated the participating teams for their professionalism, physical & mental endurance and high morale displayed during various stages of the

exercise. He reiterated mutual

RAWALPINDI (APP): learning during such exer-Chief of Army Staff cises and said: "Pakistan (COAS) General Syed Asim Army upholds rich soldierly Munir on Thursday said attributes of character, courby our men in the face of fight against terrorism.

The 60 hours rigorous "Patrolling Exercise" aimed at enhancing combat skills through sharing of innovative ideas and experiences by the participants of the fo-

Seven teams from Pakistan Army and fifteen teams from friendly countries including Bahrain, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Srilanka, Thailand and Turkiye participated in the exercise. Azerbaijan, China, Germany, Indonesia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and

Myanmar witnessed the



ISLAMABAD: Newly elected Members of National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan and Barrister Gohar Khan arrives to attend 1st session of 16th National Assembly at Parliament House.

JUI-F to sit on opposition benches: Fazlur Rehman

Will not to take part in PM, president, speaker elections, says JUI Chief

ISLAMABAD (INP): Rehman remained ambigu-Jamiat Ulema Islam (JUÍ) leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman has announced that his party will not participate in the upcoming elections for the Speaker, Prime Minister, and President of Pakistan. This decision signifies JUI's intention to function as an opposition party in the newly formed parliament.

Speaking to the media in Islamabad on Thursday, Maulana Rehman stated that JUI will "not use the right to vote" and will instead "sit in the opposition." He further emphasized that JUI will not be involved in the selection of the Prime Minister, Speaker, and Deputy

Speaker. When questioned about the future of their protest movement, Maulana

ous, stating, "wait, God willing, we will represent the people."
He also revealed details

of a meeting with representatives of other political parties, including the Muslim League-N, Pakistan Peoples Party, Balochistan Awami Party, and the Independent Parliamentary Group. While describing the discussions as positive and highlighting his party's sincerity, Maulana Rehman reiterated JUI's refusal to participate in a parliament that, in his view, does not represent the will of the

JUI's decision to remain in opposition reflects its continued disagreement with the outcome of the recent elections and its intention to hold the current gov-

ernment accountable.

ISSI hosts seminar on "Pakistan's Space Policy, Tapping into the space potential"

The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on Thursday hosted a seminar entitled "Pakistan's Space Policy: Tapping into the

Space Potential".

Maj. Gen. ® Amer Nadeem, former Chairman of Pakistan Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), delivered the keynote address. Eminent discussants from academia and thinktanks presented their per-

The seminar provided valuable insights into Pakistan's National Space Policy (NSP) and its space potential to accelerate

socio-economic development. The key challenges, as well as options available for Pakistan, were dis-

Maj. Gen. ® Amer Nadeem, in his keynote address, highlighted the importance of international collaboration and emphasized its role in reducing costs and time in space mis-

He advocated for strategic partnerships to leverage expertise and resources from other nations, enabling Pakistan to advance its space capabilities more ef-

Looking ahead, he outlined the National Space Program (NSP) 2047, underscoring its pragmatic

Pakistan's current technological landscape. He stressed the neces-

sity for strict prioritization of technologies that align with the country's immediate needs and capabilities.

He expressed optimism about Pakistan's space program, citing the government's steadfast commitment and determination as key drivers of progress. He highlighted the need to emphasize the regulatory sector and the public-private partnerships.

He suggested that joining regional platforms will also help Pakistan develop its space program. He emphasized that with continued support and owner-

approach tailored to ship, Pakistan is poised to achieve significant milestones in space exploration. In his welcome re-

marks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood underscored the salience of Pakistan's first-ever Space Policy, emphasizing that it provided a comprehensive framework for the future development of the space sector in line with emerging global trends and catering to Pakistan's crucial national needs. Noting the pivotal role of space technology in modern societies, he underscored the imperative for Pakistan to harness the technology's potential for

socio-economic develop-

ment and security



QUETTA: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Abdul Khaliq Achakzai presiding Balochistan Assembly

Sarfraz Bugti takes oath as MPA Balochistan



Independent Report

QUETTA: The newly elected Member of Provincial Assembly, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti took oath of his membership in the Balochistan Assembly here on Thursday. The Presiding Officer, Engineer Zamarak Khan

Achakzai administered oath to Mir Sarfraz Bugti. It may be mentioned here that Mir Sarfraz Bugti could not take oath of the membership due to sickness the other day.

Shehbaz Sharif's bureaucracy team back in PM Office

process of redeployment of former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's bureaucratic team in the Prime Minister's Office has started through appoint-ment and transfer in the fed-

eral bureaucracy. Before Shehbaz Sharif becomes the Prime Minister, an important appointment has been made in the Prime Minister's Office and Sameer Ahmed Syed has of Overseas Pakistanis has been transferred from the been appointed while the Puniab Government to Federal Government as Joint Secretary in the Prime

Minister's Office. Sameer Ahmad Syed was appointed as Principal Staff Officer of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Secretary to Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin

(PSO) to Prime Minister. Meanwhile, Grade 22 Officer Pervez Ahmed

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Naqvi, he will also perform the duties of Principal Staff Officer

> Junejo and Grade 20 Officer Ayesha Zareen Siddique, awaiting appointment in Establishment Division, have been made Officer on Special Duty (OSD) Establishment Division. Additionally, OSD Muhammad Saleem Deputy Secretary Ministry services of Deputy Secretary Ministry of Religious Affairs Muhammad Razi National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Deputy Secretary Finance Division Military Finance Wing Kashif Rasheed have been

Newly elected MPAs yow to...

Continued from page 1 sured their full support to the newly elected speaker, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti expressed the hope that new speaker would run the assembly with total impartiality. He also pleaded to run the House as a Jirga as per the province's traditions.

Mir Asadullah Baloch said that the issues of Balochistan are to be resolved by the House. He appreciated the services of former Speaker Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali and former deputy Speaker Sadar Babar Musakhail saying they run the House in an excellent manner.

Mir Zahoor Buledi hoped that the members of assembly would play their part to resolve issues of the province.

He asked those making criticism on elections to work hard instead of criticism. He said that the recent elections may not be made controversial. He said that our leaders have accepted results of the elections, therefore, others should also do so.

Farah Azeem Shah said that heavy responsibilities rest with our shoulders, so we have to make struggle for resolving public issues

returned to Auditor General Pakistan. Mir Zabid Reki also pledged that we have to

work for development of the province. He said that development Balochistan is actually development of Pakistan.

Ali Madad Jatak said that we would have to bring peace and development in the province. He also criticized National Party chief. Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch saying his party could not secure even a single seat in 2008 elections Still his party secured four seats in the recent elections, adding he mentioned.

He said that Dr. Malik Baloch should have boycotted the assembly session on the issue of Gwadar.

He said that the people of Gwadar have been crying for help these days. Sadiq Umrani said that

the PPP and PML-N decided to work together for rehabilitation and stability of economy of the country. He also demanded investigation into the alleged

made during the past ten-He stressed that a commission should be formed to probe into the alleged ir-

embezzlement of funds

regularities in the funds. MPAs Barkat Baloch and Abdul Majeed Badini asked to declare Gwadar as

Empowering EC to give date for election LHC summons

advocate general, attorney general for assistance on petition

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has summoned Advocate General and Attorney General for assistance on petition filed against Election Commission (EC) powers for giving date or general election.

Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan of LHC took up for hearing the petition filed by Mian Shabbir Ismail Thursday.

Azhar Siddique advocate gave argu-ments on behalf of petitioner.

Federal government, EC and others have been made respondents in the petition.

The counsel for he petitioner took the plea that the powers for giving date for election rest with president or provincial governor as per constitution. By making amendment in section 57 of Election ACT powers for giving date for holding election were given to EC. The amendment in section 57 of election act runs contrary to the constitution.

The petitioner requested the court to nullify section 57 of election act.

The court while summoning advocate general and attorney general for assistance adjourned the hearing of the case till March 5.

Khaliq Achakzai sworn in ...

Continued from page 1

Assembly except Abdul Khaliq Achakzai and Ms. Ghazala Gola till the given time on Thursday.

The PML-N-nominated candidate Abdul Khaliq Achakzai and PPPnominated candidate Ms. Ghazala Gola submitted their nomination papers with the Secretary Provincial Assembly, Tahir Shah

cial assembly, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran and Ms. Rubaba Khan Buledi were the proposer and seconders in the papers submitted by Abdul Khaliq Achakzai. They were also present on the occasion of submission of nomination papers by Abdul Khaliq

bers of assembly and others greeted Abdul Khaliq Achakzai on his election as the Speaker of provincial assembly. Sweets were also distributed among those present in the as-

calamity hit district

SEHWAN: Devotees arriving to attend annual Urs of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar at shrine of Sufi saint Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, at Sehwan Sharif.

US urges new Pak govt. to prioritize economy, continue engagements with IMF

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The United States supports Pakistan's efforts to "break free" from the vicious cycle of debt and financing, a State Department Spokesperson has said, urging the new government to continue working with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other global financial institutions.

"Pakistan's new government must immediately prioritize the economic situation because the policies over the next several months will be crucial to maintaining economic sta-bility for Pakistanis," Spokesperson Mathew Miller told his daily news briefing on Wednesday.

The spokesperson was

the daily State Department briefing about a letter sent by ex-PTI's Chairman Imran Khan's to the IMF, suggesting to link the next loan facility to an audit of the Feb 8 general elections in the country.

"I'll just say with respect to the IMF that we support Pakistan's efforts to break free from the vicious cycle of debt and international financing," the Spokesperson added.

'The long-term health of Pakistan's government or economy is crucial to its stability," Miller added. Pakistan has been fac-

ing financial challenges in recent years, with dwindling foreign exchange re-The spokesperson was responding to a question at of its national currency.

Australian Cameron's century takes team to 279-9 in 1st test against New Zealand

WELLINGTON (INP): Century scored by Australian Cameron Green took his team to 279-9 against Zealand on openingday of the first test here at Basin Reserve.

Earlier, four wickets of Australia fell for only 89 runs after which Cameron was put into bat with rescue mission who supported the team along with Mitchell scored 40. Cameron Green 24,

brought up three figures with his 16th four in the final over to end unbeaten on 103 with Josh Hazlewood vet to score.

"Obviously it feels really good, mainly with where we were as a team," Green said.

"It was a pretty tough wicket out there ... someone just needed to bat through so glad it was me. Was nice to stick it out, and hopefully put a semi-competitive total on the board." Green, batting at number four, fought back after New Zealand seamer Matt Henry took the key wickets of Steve Smith, Usman Khawaja and Marsh to end with 4-43 on a green pitch.

Henry dismissed Smith for 31 before lunch, bowled Khawaja for 33 after the break then snagged Marsh and Nathan Lyon, for five.

Scott Kuggeleijn, restored to the side, also grabbed two wickets, reout-of-form moving Marnus Labuschagne for one and Alex Carey for 10.

Black Caps rising star Will O'Rourke, who took nine wickets on his debut this month, bagged two more in the shape of Travis Head (1) and Mitchell Starc

Green said the wicket would still offer plenty for the Australian quick bowlers on Friday.

Eating ultra processed food can make you prone to 32 diseases: Study

ISLAMABAD (APP): Regular consumption of ultra-processed foods may increase your risk of 32 diseases including cancer heart and lung conditions, mental health disorders, and even early death, according to a large study.

Ultra-processed foods. including packaged baked goods and snacks, fizzy drinks, sugary cereals, and ready-to-eat or heat products, undergo multiple industrial processes and often contain colours, emulsifiers, flavours, and other additives. These products also tend to be high in added sugar, fat, and/or salt, but are low in vitamins and fi-

An international team of researchers from Australia, the US, France and Ireland found convincing evidence that higher ultra-processed food intake was associated with around a 50 per cent increased risk of cardiovascular diseaserelated death, a 48-53 per cent higher risk of anxiety and common mental disorders, and a 12 per cent greater risk of type 2 diabetes, Medical Daily reported.

Fly Jinnah introduces daily non-stop flights connecting Lahore to Sharjah

launch of its latest international service, connecting Lahore city to Sharjah city in United Arab Emirates (UAE). This exciting addition to Fly Jinnah's expanding network marks a significant milestone in the airline's commitment to providing affordable and convenient travel options for passengers. The new service will connect both cities with daily non-stop flights starting from March 27, 2024.

The spokesperson of Fly Jinnah said, "We are delighted to introduce our newest addition to our expanding network, reaffirming Fly Jinnah's commitment to continually providing diverse travel options supported by affordability, reliability, and convenience. We are looking forward to welcoming our passengers aboard our new flights"

Following the recent launch of Islamabad -Sharjah route, Fly Jinnah is extending its reach in the UAE with a new service that will connect another third-largest city in the United Arab Emirates and rectly to their devices.

ISLAMABAD (INP): Fly a vibrant hub in the Gulf region, Sharjah. This stracarrier, announces the tegic step will further strengthen the ties between the two nations, creating more opportunities for business and leisure travelers. Fly Jinnah remains steadfast in offering convenient and affordable service to its passengers. With its modern fleet of five Airbus A320 aircraft, the airline currently connects five major cities in Pakistan, namely Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, and Quetta, in addition to the newly launched international destination to Sharjah in the UAE from both Islamabad and Lahore.

In addition to the extra comfort provided by the most generous seat-pitch of any economy cabin, the carrier offers affordable and value-driven travel experiences through "SkyCafe' onboard menu where passengers can enjoy a wide variety of delicacies between snacks, sandwiches, and meals at affordable prices. The aircraft is also equipped with "SkyTime". a free in-flight streaming service that allows passen-Pakistani city with the gers to stream a wide selection of entertainment di-

elected by the votes of the

majority of the total mem-

bership of the National As-

sembly: Provided that, if no

member secures such a ma-

jority in the first poll, a sec-

ond poll shall be held be-

tween the members who

secure the two highest num-

bers of votes in the first poll

and the member who se-

cures a majority of votes of

the members present and

voting shall be declared to

have been elected as Prime

Minister: Provided further

that, if the number of votes

secured by two or more

members securing the high-

est number of votes is

equal, further poll shall be

held between them until one

of them secures a majority

of votes of the members

National Assembly on

Thursday accepted the

sembly Speaker and

the Pakistan Muslim

League-N submitted his

nomination papers for the

Speaker of the National

Assembly slot, while the

Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC)

nominated Amir Dogar for

Speaker of the National

Assembly slot, Ghulam

For the Deputy

the same position.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq from

The Secretariat of the

present and voting.'

Deputy Speaker.



tanning on sensitization and mobilization of media workshop on "citywide inclusive sanitation(CWIS)" organized by HOPE and FANSA.

Newly elected MNAs take oath...

Continued from page 1 mismanagement, the entry of political workers into parliament has been banned.

party leader Attaullah

Tarar, Istehkam-e-Pakistan

Party President Aleem

Khan along with party lead-

ers Aun Chaudhry and

Munazza Hassan have

Moreover, PPP's Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari,

Hina Rabbani Khar and sis-

ter Aseefa Bhutto, Naz

Baloch, Sunni Ittehad

Council's Ali Muhammad

Khan, Zain Qureshi and

Shehryar Afridi also

reached the assembly, as

well as PML-N's Tariq

Fazal Chaudhry and Hanif

Abbasi. JUÍ-F chief

Maulana Fazlur Rehman

and MQM leader Khalid

Maqbool Siddiqui and

Farooq Sattar are also in

Maryam Nawaz, MPA

Marriyum Aurangzeb and

Senator Ishaq Dar are also

in Parliament House to at-

tend the assembly session.

Ayub confirmed that the

PTI-backed independent

winners would be taking

oaths as MNAs and also

raise their voices against the

alleged electoral rigging. He

also called the inaugural

National Assembly session

unconstitutional, saying the

first members must be

elected to the reserved seats

loyalty towards the PTI,

explaining that some politi-

Zartaj Gul stressed her

in the House.

Speaking to the media,

Punjab Chief Minister

attendance.

reached the assembly.

Arrivals Among those arriving early were PML-N leader Khawaja Asif, Kheel Das Kohistani, and PTI-backed independent candidates Omar Ayub, Zartaj Gul and Sher Afzal Marwat. PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif,

Kakar the same morning. The Members provin-

Achakzai. Meanwhile, the memcal alliances had to be made keeping in view the current circumstances. She expressed gratitude to the Sunni Ittehad Council and MWM, expressing confidence in them.

She remarked that she rise her voice in parliament for the public, political prisoners, and the party leadership, adding that she had been solely voted in the name of the PTI. Moreover, JUI-F's

Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri and PML-N Senator Nuzhat Sadiq have stepped down from their respective seats as senators. They tendered their resignations to Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani. Both are set to take oaths as MNAs today. PPP's Yousaf Raza

Gilani also announced to vacate his Senate seat to take oath as an MNA. "The party will decide what role I will get in the new government," he told the me-

'PTI letter anti-national?

Arriving at the Parliament House, PML-N President and prime minister in waiting, Shehbaz Sharif, called the letter written by the PTI to the International Monetary Fund another anti-national move. "After the cipher, this letter is another proof of the PTI's anti-state interests," he re-

marked. Shehbaz further insisted that there should be no doubt now that PTI Founder Imran Khan wants destruction of the country. He regretted and condemned the letter written to the IMF. "No Pakistani, despite political differences, will resort to anti-national

activities," he asserted. PML-N leader Hamza

Shehbaz remarked that democracy had emerged victorious, while those setting up obstacles in the way ve been defeated. He further claimed that

the economy is also being set ablaze just like the incidents of May 9, 2023. However, he said these attempts will also fail.

'Fifth generation rig-PTI leader Barrister

Gohar Ali Khan, reaching the National Assembly, told the media that only those people who have been given a mandate should go to parliament. "Fifth generation rigging has taken place this time," he alleged, stressing that the objective is to strengthen parliament. One should not enter

parliament on a stolen mante, he insisted. Speaking to the media upon his arrival, IPP President Aleem Khan said he would try to meet the

people's expectations. The masses are facing difficulties, we will try to provide them relief. We will try to play our roles for the country's development," he remarked, adding that the PTI had just one provincial assembly and suggested the party work for improving the lives of the people of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. APP adds: The National Assembly Secretariat on Thursday announced that election of the Leader of House (Prime Minister) in the National Assembly would he held on March 3 (Sunday).

According to the schedule issued by the NA Secretariat, the nomination papers for the slot of Prime Minister could be obtained from the Legislation Branch of the National

Assembly and would be submitted till 2 p.m. on Saturday (March 2).

The scrutiny of nomi-

nation papers would be completed by 3 p.m. on the same day (Saturday). The election for the Prime Minister would be conducted through division

of members in the House. As per the Constitution, before the voting process begins for the slot of Prime Minister, "bells" will ring for five minutes inside the Parliament House to inform every member — in case they are not present in the chamber at the moment — to gather inside. Once the process begins, the doors will be locked, and no one will be allowed to enter or leave the hall till the PM's elec-

tion is concluded.

Under the supervision nomination papers from of the Speaker, voting will candidates contesting for the slots of National Asbe held through division. For example, if there are two candidates, the Speaker will say that whoever wants to vote for candidate A can go to lobby A' and 'whoever wants to vote for candidate B, can go to lobby B'. If there are three candidates then there can be a lobby C as well.

At the entrance of the said lobbies, there will be a member of the Assembly Secretariat staff who will record name of every Member of the National Assembly in the register. The whole process will be open and people sitting in the galleries will be able to who votes for whom.

The political parties have to vote collectively and every member has to vote for the candidate that their party is voting for.

Section 91(4) of the

Constitution states, "The

Prime Minister shall be

Mustafa Shah from the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and Junaid Akbar Khan from the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) submitted their nomination papers. The proposers for

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq included Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Abdul Aleem Khan, Sved Naveed Qamar, and Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari.

Nationwide training of Hujjaj continues at tehsil and district levels

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony commenced the first phase of training for intending pilgrims nationwide at the tehsil and district lev-

Launched on February 12, this comprehensive programme is set to continue until March 10, in a bid to equip pilgrims with essential knowledge and skills vital for their pilgrimage journey, informed ministry's spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt in an exclusive talk with APP.

He said the training sessions encompass a wide array of topics crucial for the spiritual and logistical preparedness of pilgrims undertaking the sacred journey of Hajj and Umrah. These sessions are designed to provide comprehensive guidance on various aspects, including rituals, safety measures, health precautions, and logistical

Umar said with meticulous planning and coordination, officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony are conducting these training sessions across different regions, ensuring accessibility for intending pilgrims from all corners of the country. He said the training is being held at the grassroots level, in tehsils and districts, ensuring that even those in remote areas receive the necessary infor-

mation and guidance. Umar said this initiative is to enhance the pilgrims' understanding of the religious rituals associated with them to perform these sacred duties with reverence and adherence to tradition. emphasizes the importance of adhering to safety protocols and health guidelines

to ensure a safe and secure pilgrimage experience for all participants, he maintained.

Moreover, Umar said this programme underscores the significance of interfaith harmony and mutual respect among pilgrims from diverse backgrounds, fostering a spirit of unity and solidarity within the pilgrimage community.

By empowering in-

tending pilgrims with comprehensive training and nowledge, he said the Ministry of Religious Af-Highlighting one of fairs and Interfaith Harthe primary objectives, mony wants to facilitate a meaningful and fulfilling pilgrimage experience while ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and spiritual growth Hajj and Umrah, enabling of all participants. He said this initiative reflects the government's commitment to promoting religious har-Additionally, the training mony, facilitating religious practices, and upholding the sanctity of the pilgrimage



ISLAMABAD: Students of Model College F-7/2 performing in Annual Drama

India has made IIOJK people hostage for last 7 decades: APHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): In 2019 to subdue the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir added the Modi regime has UIOJK), the All Parties broken all records of bru-Hurriyet (APHC) has deplored that India has made Kashmiris hostage and deprived them sis. of all basic rights and freedoms for the past seven Delhi's iron-fist policy and

Media Service, the APHC leaders Bashir Andrabi, Muhammad Yosuf Naqash, Farooq Ahmed, Ghulam Nabi War, Attaullah, Javed Ahmed, Imtiyaz Ahmed Shaikh, in their separate statements issued in Srinagar said that India was resorting to every kind of brutal tactics in the occupied territory to suppress the Kashmiris' legitimate dispute in line with the UN struggle for securing their right to self-determination.

of the territory in August Asian region.

Kashmiri people. They added the Modi regime has Conference talities in IIOJK where people are killed, detained and tortured on a daily ba-

> They said that New its militaristic approach in resolving the lingering Kashmir dispute peacefully

The APHC leaders maintained that it was the responsibility of the international community to resolve the Kashmir dispute as per the resolutions of the United Nations Security

They maintained that settlement of the Kashmir resolutions was imperative to bring an end to Indian They said the atrocities in IIOJK, create Narendra Modi-led Indian cordial relations between regime has stepped up its repression in IIOJK after tablish permanent peace revoking the special status and stability in the South

PM&DC **President** meets CEO **ACCME**

ISLAMABAD (Online): The President of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), Prof Dr Rizwan Taj, met with the President and CEO of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME). Dr Graham McMahon, to discuss the international systems and standards for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in medical education within Pakistan. President

PM&DC. expressed Pakistan's dedication to aligning its professional development practices with global benchmarks and standards. and to initiate a collaborative program with ACCME.

This strategic move aims to enhance the skills, knowledge, and competencies of medical professionals within the country, ensuring they remain competitive and competent internationally while creating opportunities for Pakistani educational organizations to attain global recognition.

Global summit urges gender-inclusive approaches to climate change, beyond

Participants from Pakistan and around the world completed a four-day conference with the aim of finding inclusive solutions to major issues such as climate change, entrepreneurship, and sustainable water man-

agement. groundbreaking event, organized by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in partnership with the National Rural Support Program (NRSP), was a beacon of innovation and inclusivity in alignment with this year's International Women's Day campaign theme, 'Inspire

hosted by NRSP, led by the All Pakistan Women Universities Consortium (APWUC), and composed of 18 women's universities together approximately 250 participants.

This diverse assembly included representatives from U.S. Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), high-level Pakistani government officials, international donors, private sector entities, and civic organizations. The conference aimed to resolve local development challenges by applying localized research and approaches, aligning with Under the banner of the "Green Alliance" frame-

emony, U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schofer said, "May our shared commitfrom Pakistan - brought ment to 'Inspire Inclusion' propel us toward a future where the contributions of each individual, community, and partner are duly recog-

nized and celebrated." Throughout the event, series of keynote speeches, interactive workshops, and networking opportunities allowed participants to share insights, forge partnerships, and contribute to a collective effort aimed at creating a more sustainable and inclu-



ISLAMABAD: Children hold kites after catching as running on Railway track at sector H-10 in the Federal Capital, which may cause any incident any time as needs to attention for concern authority.



ISLAMABAD: Newly elected Members of National Assembly Sardar Muhammad Latif Khan Khosa arrives to attend 1st session of 16th National Assembly at Parliament House.

Govt to utilize all available resources for polio-free country: Shahzad Baig

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Coordinator for Pakistan's Polio Programme, Dr Shahzad Baig said the government is determined to make the country polio-free very soon through effective vaccination to every child throughout the country.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the polio eradication campaign is a part of the efforts of the government towards omplete eradication of the

He requested all parents to allow polio teams to administer polio drops to their children, adding that we are confident that we together with our people and international partners will achieve our target goals of making a safer, healthier and polio-free Pakistan for

can provide lifelong protec-

"I urge parents and caregivers to realize how important this vaccine is for their children's health and make sure that they open their doors to vaccinators and get children immunized", he added.

Pakistan has made incredible progress against polio, and we are working hard every day to make the country polio-free, he men-

"Polio eradication is and will remain a top priority for the Government of Pakistan," he said

The Health Ministry has conducted the second nationwide polio vaccination of the year to vaccinate more than 45.8 million children under five across the nation to protect them

no cure, only the vaccine ing, which will successfully continue until March 9. Polio workers are vis-

iting door to door to administer anti-polio drops to children below the age of five, he added. Replying to a question, he said that 99% we

overcome the burden of Polio disease in the country with continuous polio

He said more than four lakh polio teams working in the field, adding that Dera Ismail and Banu, Quetta, Chaman and Peshawar are the main risky areas where environmental samples were being identi

He said that at the same time, Afghanistan and Pakistan had initiated this present polio drive to eliminate the virus, adding that citizens asked to cooperate

He said that polio has from paralytic polio, add- with polio teams. **ICP** strengthens security measures in Fed Capital

Independent Report SLAMABAD: Following

the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir, the security of the federal capital Islamabad has been strengthened in order to deal with any untoward situa-

cal activities are allowed in ters is being carried out from the Federal Capital, and only individuals with invitations were permitted to go towards Parliament

rected to verify their invitations for the National

the Safe City. Legal action will be taken against those engaging in any unlawful

Islamabad Capital Po Invitees were also di- lice is taking all possible measures to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and Assembly session before property. Citizens are



tion and Section 144 has been imposed, prohibiting demonstrations and any gatherings within Islamabad, a public rela-

tions officer said. Moreover, no politi-

Federal Investigation Agency's Cyber Crime

sought 2-day physical re-

mand of the accused in-

volved in the illegal issu-

ance of mobile phone SIMs.

Cybercrime Rawalpindi in

a major operation on the

instructions of Additional

Director Cybercrime

Rawalpindi Chaudhry

Abdul Rauf crackdown

against those doing illegal

business of mobile phone

Inspector Badar Shahzad arrested 3 sus-

Capital Development Authority (CDA), Water

Management Wing has ex-

pedited work on several

projects to meet the water

shortage in the capital city.

In this regard, the Water Management Wing has

been completely resolved all

the repair work and com-

plaints like leakages, includ-

ng replacement of old and

rotten pipes in the Simli

Water Filtration Plant and

Mai Line. It should be

noted that the timely action

of the Water Supply Wing

Spokesperson

According to the FIA

arrival, as some invitations have been canceled. Additionally, SSP

Operations need to be requested for any activity in the High-Security Zone. Strict monitoring of all mat-

Gibran and Jafar Hussain.

bile phones, laptops, 5 BVS

devices, 770 silicone thumb

prints, 285 thumb prints

were recovered from the

accused. 11 thousand digi-

tal thumb prints and 3246

illegal active mobile phone

SIMs were also recovered

gallons of water per day but

also increased the water

like leakages in water supply

lines have been addressed in

Sector G-7/3. The water

level in other dams includ-

ing Khanpur dam has de-

creased due to lack of re-

quired rains in monsoon.

Therefore, before the arrival

of summer, the water supply

department is busy around

the clock to meet the short-

age of water so that the citi-

zens get adequate water sup-

Similarly, complaints

pressure in the pipelines.

from the accused.

CDA taking steps

for unintrepted water

supply in capital city

ISLAMABAD (APP): has not only saved 800,000

During the raid, 8 mo-

call "Pucar-15" or at ICT-15 app. FIA cybercrime seeks 2-day 14 drug peddlers netted, physical remand of accused huge cache of involved illegal SIMs issuance narcotics seized

police and report any infor-mation about suspicious

items or activities to the

relevant police station or

Independent Report pects from Rawalpindi in a ISLAMABAD: Islamabad raid on the recommendation of Pakistan Telecommuni-Capital Police (ICP) teams arrested 14 members of cation Authority (PTA). drug peddler gangs and re-During the raid, a large covered 2,095 gram heroin, number of illegal mobile 3,962 gram hashish, 60 liphone SIMs were recovters liquor and 18 gram Ice ered from the accused included Fahad Khan, Khalil

from their possession. A public relations officer said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ÎCCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elethe crime from the city.

Meanwhile, the Kohsar, Margalla, Noon, Khanna, Koral, Kirpa, Humak, Phulgran, Nilore, Shahzad Town and Bani Gala police stations team arrested 14 drug peddlers and recovered 2,095 gram heroin,3,962 gram hashish 60 liters liquor and 18 gram Ice from their possession Cases have been registered against the accused and further investigation is under-

Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in drug peddling activities.

He emphasized that Islamabad Ĉapital Police will not leave any stone unturned to curb the menace of drugs

Imran Khan's letter to IMF detrimental to national economy: Tarar

Member National Assembly (MNA) and Deputy Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Attaullah Tarar on Thursday said the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and ex-premier Imran Khan's letter to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was detrimental to the national economy. The former Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Law while talking to media outside the Parliament House before taking his oath to the newly elected National Assembly said that in what capacity did the PTI founder wrote let-ter to the IMF, question-ing, "Was he the FBR or an economist?'

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Tarar said, "Imran Khan must have told the IMF that he was a prisoner

and detained under corruption charges. He added that this at- you lose.

titude would not be allowed further as Khan did not want to end inflation in the Secretary General, Pakistan national economy as the PML-N regime left inflation at 4% at the conclusion of its term

He also thanked the ally parties especially, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)'s Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari. Tarar mentioned that the ally parties had sup-

ported the candidature of PML-N President Mian Shehbaz Sharif for the Prime Minister. We have to work to restore Pakistan's image and its economy, whereas a

good and coherent strategy will be adopted," he added. Attaullah Tarar chided Imran Khan for raising rigging allegations in the gen-

eral elections and said, "In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there is no rigging if you win, and rigging is done if



ISLAMABAD: Co-Chairman Pakistan People's Party Asif Ali Zardari arriving before the start of the inaugural session of the National Assembly, at the parliament house building in the Federal Capital.

BISP to save 2bln through new payment system

ISLAMABAD (APP): The internationally acclaimed Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has introduced a new payment system for its beneficiaries through hiring the services of six banks which would help facilitate the beneficiaries and save Rs 2

The agreement, in this regard, was signed by the BISP and six banks recently for the disbursement of funds among its 9.3 million beneficiary households.

program was utilizing the services of only two banks and the contracts of the same had expired some vears back.

tion of wider service pro-

ducing this new payment system is to reduce the difficulties of the end users and facilitate them to withdraw their quarterly stipends without any hassle.
The BISP will annu-

ally save Rs 2 billion on account of competition introduced through this new payment system.

As a consequence there will be 15 clusters and six banks providing service to BISP beneficiaries now with broader partnership service being provided by According to an offiBank Al Falah, Bank of Microfinance, Telenor

Microfinance Bank, Habib Bank Limited, and HBL Microfinance. BISP is poised to over-However, this expan- come challenges and achieve

sion signifies the introduc- a more responsive system through beneficiary awarevider banks thus leading to ness and a grievance greater transparency. redressal system created i collaboration with banks. redressal system created in

Nafeesa urges opposition to play a positive role in parliament

ISLAMABAD (INP): Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Nafeesa Shah, from the Pakistan Peoples Party Thursday stressed the need for joint efforts to overcome the challenges confronting the country at present and urged the opposition to play a positive role in resolving national issues through Parliament forum. In an exclusive inter-

that matters related to the public would be resolved through mutual consensus in the National Assembly sessions, adding, that there is a need for active legislation to provide relief to the masses. The legislation on important national issues will be carried out with the consultation of leaders of all Parliamentary Parties in the House, she added. She also assured us that we will foview with PTV news chan- cus on quality discussion



IFA provides training in oil fortification to boost health efforts ISLAMABAD (APP): tended by the representa-

The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has organized a comprehensive training session on oil fortification for the capacity building of Nutrition International, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Food Authority, and oil mill owners here to enhance nutritional standards.

The initiative aimed to educate key stakeholders on the vital inclusion of vitamin A and D in cooking oils and ghee, emphasizing their significant health benefits, said the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Spokesman, Abdullah Tabassum. The training was atKashmir Food Authority, and local oil mill owners, and the training delved into the importance of fortification in combating nutritional deficiencies prevalent in the region. Highlighting the collaborative effort, the ICT spokesman revealed that Nutrition International generously provided iCheck Chroma equipment to bolster the operational capacity of the IFA. This state-of-theart equipment is poised to revolutionize the monitoring and enforcement of food fortification standards.

tives from Nutrition Inter-

national, Azad Jammu and

Daily Soice of Masse, Independent

Friday March 01, 2024

Unchanged rating

International ratings agency Moody's decision to keep Pakistan's long-term credit rating unchanged at Caa3, with stable outlook, is reflective of the poor standing of a cash-strapped nation in global financial markets. The rating indicates a higher probability of default and a greater degree of investment amid weak affordability. It also takes into account Pakistan's low growth rate and high exposure to extreme weather events, which can increase economic and social costs, with high debt-servicing the business environment. requirements reducing the fiscal flexibility to undertake key expenditures on infrastructure and social initiatives. Global rating agencies have long ranked the country among 'speculative grade' economies, with very high credit risk owing to the liquidity crisis and external vulnerability challenges. A year ago, Moody's had downgraded Pakistan from Caa2 to Caa3, relegating it to almost the bottom of the riskiest markets, shortly after the IMF suspended its funding support due to the authorities' failure to meet the goals of the previous Fund programme.

That had seen Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves plunge and had raised concerns over the country's weakening ability to pay its foreign debt. The agency kept the sovereign rating unchanged last summer, even after the IMF agreed to provide a short-term \$3bn loan to help Islamabad stabilise the economy and avert default. Moody's latest decision once again underscores that the fears of default, of cameras and surrounded exacerbated by political uncertainty in the aftermath of the Feb 8 poll, will continue, unless a new, larger loan agreement is reached with the IMF. "Political risks are high," it says, "following ... controversial elections."

It says that there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding the new government's inclination and ability to quickly enter a new IMF programme, which is needed to attract additional financing from other multilateral and bilateral partners in order weekend the Lahore to reduce default risks.

It also maintains that the thought, they were an irrecoalition forthcoming government's decision-making capacity will be severely constrained as its electoral mandate may not be sufficiently strong to pursue difficult reforms that will likely be required by a new IMF programme. Thanks to the current IMF facility and some other multilateral inflows, as well as strict controls on imports and profit repatriation in the last several months, Pakistan has successfully accumulated a small stock of foreign exchange. That means the new set-up will likely meet its remaining external debt obligations for the present fiscal. However, as Moody's has said, there is "limited visibility" regarding the sovereign's sources of financing to meet its "very high external needs" after the current IMF Stand-By Arrangement ends in a few weeks. That concern will remain until Pakistan enters a new programme with the Fund.

However, the likelihood of Pakistan graduating from highrisk to investment-grade category will depend on the government's undertaking durable structural reforms, and political and policy stability.

Acclimatising in 100 days

Ali Taugeer Sheikh

The fragility of the political system has made Pakistan extremely averse to reforms. There is universal consensus that the system needs a thorough overhaul.

Any hint of change is checkmated by entrenched interest groups. Result: successive governments have avoided clear decisions and the necessary speed for transformative actions. The formation of new governments in Islamabad and the provinces has provided a long-awaited opportunity for coordinated, speedy, and decisive institutional reforms for climate resilience that can help bridge the trust gap between the state and

In fact, at one level, the country is already committed to IMF-supported reforms for tight monetary policy and accelerating structural reforms to build climate resilience, strengthen governance, and improve This is both necessary and unavoidable, but not a substitute for internally driven consensus on structural reforms for an inclusive, lowcarbon and climate-resilient

development.
Announcing targets for the first 100 days in office is a common practice in both the parliamentary and presidential systems. The first

100 days provide leaders a crucial opportunity to set the tone for their tenure and build national and international credibility, outline priorities, and create a roadmap for future initia-This tradition is aimed

at demonstrating leadership capacity to create consensus, optimism, and momentum. These early decisions help them self-define success, establish clear priorities, ensure quick wins, solidify their coalitions, and generate public support for their programmes.

The concept of the 'first 100-days' originated in Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency in the US to fix a broken financial system. He initiated significant changes in a short period of time after taking office, including the New Deal that took his country out of the economic downturn

Since then, the first 100 days of the new government have assumed importance in setting specific targets in the American presidential sys-

tem. This practice has since helped several administrations create priorities for action. American presidents now often use executive orders to set their agendas and influence congressional legislation and the country's power politics.

In the British parliamentary democracy, on the other hand, the new prime minister typically uses the first 100 days to set the policy direction, instead of setting specific targets like his American counterparts. Cabinet members announce their sectoral policies and priorities.

In both instances, the incumbents use the first 100 days to draw the fault lines of their politics and politicoideological alignments. In Pakistan's hybrid political system there is probably something in each system to draw upon by setting targets as well as policy direc-

The goals of the first-100-days plan can vary depending on a leader's priorities. Imran Khan was the first prime minister in Pakistan who committed to ambitious targets for his first 100 days in office. He did not fully grasp the political

system. There were several additional contextual reasons for his failure, including a cluttered agenda, conflicting messages, lack of acumen and coordination among his cabinet colleagues, and difficulties in implementation in an otherwise lethargic system marked by poor political and economic man-

There are several lessons that the current political leaders can draw from Imran Khan's experience for their 100-day agendas. The Sehat Card was Imran Khan's signature initiative that captured the imagination of the poor. But he failed to build a national consensus. His opponents in the PML-N and PPP saw it as flawed and were quick to undo it rather than refining and continuing with it as they had done with the Benazir Income Support Programme.

Analyses have shown how, in comparison, Narendra Modi's first 100 days as prime minister in India demonstrated caution and a combination of bold economic strategies, foreign policy, and social welfare initiatives. Unlike his Pakiproach to governance.

The economic strategy was based on three elements: i) kick-starting mining and manufacturing, ii) expediting project approvals by dismantling the planning commission, and iii) Jan Dhan Yojana — his signature people's wealth scheme. The last one was aimed at providing access to such financial services as banking, remittances, credit. insurance, and pensions.

Modi's expanded affordable access to financial services included opening bank accounts with zero balance, providing debit cards with built-in accident insurance, offering an overdraft facility for Aadhaarlinked (Indian equivalent of CNIC) accounts and providing life insurance cover to

It is estimated that over 518 million users benefited, that is more than twice the total population of Pakistan. Collectively, they generated several billions in beneficiary accounts. This is a stunning example of how the 100-day agenda can unleash financial inclusion and empower men and women across urban and rural landstani counterparts, he scapes who were previously economy of reforming the adopted a strategic ap- excluded from the main-

stream financial system. Slow economic

growth, a dire financial situation, frequent climate disasters, and ambiguities on the respective roles and responsibilities of the federation and provinces have all increased the need to bring structural reforms forward on the political agenda

Finally, efforts to build up climate change adaptation capacity and resilience are critical. This includes, as already agreed with the IMF, implementation of the National Adaptation Plan that focuses on six priority sectors; realigning the existing PSDP portfolio with NAP objectives; carrying out a costing exercise for new projects: and embedding climate considerations in policy planning documents. Additionally, Pakistan has already committed to implementing institutional reforms under the IMF's Climate-Public Investment Management Assessment.

While the country is expecting a New Deal, the new government leaders cannot bury their heads in the sand like ostriches for more than 100 days. This would lead to political asphyxiation. -- Courtesy

A nation of angry people

Kamila Hyat

Anger, unfortunately, is deeply entrenched in Pakistan. In its worst form, it surfaced in the crowded Ichhra Bazaar last week when a young woman wearing a shirt with some Arabic text walked through the bazaar with her husband.

Initially, two men obiected to her clothes. Later. an entire mob gathered outside the shop she was in and alleged that verses of the Holy Ouran were inscribed on the shirt. This of course was untrue: the words written on the shirt simply meant 'beautiful' or 'good' in Arabic

It is worth mentioning that putting text on clothes is a fashion trend these days. Fortunately, the young woman was rescued by some people in the shopping area and later by a female ASP who took her into protective custody. However, the young woman was forced to make an apology by clerics although she had made no mistake and committed no offence, which could be held against her or would have angered any sane person.

we have lost rationality. We have seen this happen before in the cases of Salmaan Taseer and Mashal Khan and in other cases where members of minority communities were burnt alive. We also see it in the case of university teacher Junaid Hafiz who has been in a Multan jail for 11 years now, facing blasphemy charges; he is in solitary

confinement Junaid had returned to teaching in his country from overseas and was regarded as an extremely competent educator. His lawyer was murdered for taking on his case some years ago. And even after this, the young man remains in prison as do thousands of others, including those who are not mentally fit, who have been accused

`blasphemy. The terrible Ichhra incident and other similar ones show that the men ply wanted publicity or a chance to stir up some kind of frenzy. The mob that gathered simply wanted what has come to be seen as 'entertainment' in our

Apparently humiliating or killing people is a

The problem is that form of 'fun' in a nation that much anger cannot live a They can work to improve lence. seems to have lost all sense of connection with what is good and what is bad in the land and how we should be

treating people.

We should try to decioher from where so much hatred arises and how voice is expressed in these ways. The young woman was forced to turn to the religious standing of her family to defend herself. She should not have been required to do so. And anger, it seems, has been created simply because there is very little else for people to do, and too many zealots or socalled zealots wish to gain publicity for themselves or for other members of their group. It was fortunate that in this case, two men who were watching the action

stepped in. Credit goes to them and to the ASP. The concerned ASP is being viciously targeted on Twitter, leaving behind less and less hope about the fu- any person is believed to making the accusation sim- ture of Pakistan and its have committed a crime unever, it is important to understand all that has happened in the nation over the last few decades in order to find a better path for the future for us.

A nation living with so

healthy or productive life. Instead, we should be encouraging people to go out and work for the sake of communities so badly in need of help. There are plenty of them in the country. They include people displaced by floods or those who are being chased out of the country for reasons connected with geopolitics. It is on these issues and so many others like them that we need to take a stand.

Once again Pakistan has gone viral around the world with journals and newspapers as well as social media everywhere picking up the now-viral video and projecting it further. Once again we have

come across as a nation of people unable to control their emotions and unable to move forward towards any direction that constitutes good sense and respect for the law. Quite evidently if lice station and then taken to court.

But the most important message of all is that we need to get our youth organized in other activities.

Tabarak Rehman

facilities in both urban centres and rural outbacks where roads need to be built and schools put right. They can also be encouraged to take up activities such as learning how to operate tech given that this will become more and more important in the coming years. Even participation in sport, with the discipline and dedication attached to this, can be very important. In Karachi, a civil rights worker campaigning as an independent during the recent election was able to hold a highly successful football tournament for young people in his constituency. Such examples need to be emulated everywhere across the country. Such events give an opportunity to young people to express energy and emotion in a form that doesn't do so much damage to others or

We need to create such opportunities at every level. At the same time, we need and hurt more people across people as we go from one der the law of the land, s/he to try and see why the the country as they go about insane act to the other. How- can be brought before a po- present mindset exists. This has quite obviously been not (and must not) be tolermost notably since the mediately to stop such 1980s. There is a need for events from taking place far more tolerance, far more every few weeks, as is curunderstanding of each other rently the case. -- Cour-There is a lot they can do. and far less resort to vio- tesy TheNews

humiliate them in any way.

Pakistan, after all, is the only country in the world which has laws against so many persons and so many categories of citizens and uses them in violent form. This must be stopped; we need to find ways in which people can use their time in a more fruitful fashion and not wait to sensationalize any incident which falls along their path of life on a day-to-day basis. For this purpose, we need to re-examine our education system. Education after all is not just about learning letters or numerals. It should also be about creative thinking and giving people the right to argue over issues – sensibly and without violence – while learning to accept the views of others. Creating such an environment has now become essential. If we do not work towards it, more incidents, such as the Ichhra Bazaar one, will take place their daily lives. This cancreated over some decades. ated, and we must act im-

Cultural summits

F.S. Aijazuddin

The advent of spring was celebrated each year with the Basant festival. Now, its arrival is heralded by cultural festivals — this spring in quick succession by the ThinkFest, the Faiz Festival and over the last LitFest. All three provided more than food for sistible invitation to intellectual gluttony.

It is the irony in which Pakistan specialises that some years ago, the Lahore LitFest was denied the Lahore Arts Council complex as a venue. Today, the chairmanship of the LAC is occupied by Razi Ahmed — the prime mover behind the same Lahore LitFest. Sic transit poten-

Since its debut in 2013, the Lahore LitFest has grown into a cultural octopus that can perform separate functions simultaneously. To demonstrate its flexibility, it spreads itself over five covered halls and numerous open-air lawns in the Al Hamra complex.

If one has reason to cavil about LitFests, it is that too many programmes are cram-med within too few days, with sessions of interest competing unfairly with each other. At the Lahore LitFest, for example, a visitor had to choose between discussions during the same hour on 'Museums in the West and Pakistan', 'Plants of the Quran', 'Sufi Litera-ture', and 'Industrial Sustain-ability'. Oh, for the magical powers of replication! And yet therein lies the strength of these LitFests. They offer diver-

sity in scarcity.

LLF 2024 opened with a qawwali and then a film (Songs of the Sufi) about the origins and growth of qawwali in the subcontinent, made by Kamran Anwar, a banker-

turned-film producer. The following morning, four novelists discussed their individual approach to character formulation -Monica Ali of Brick Lane fame, Portuguese author José Luís Peixoto, H.M. Naqvi and our own homegrown Hemingway Mohsin Hamid.

A small hall overflowed to hear Alejan-dro Vergara of the Museo del Prado, Mad-rid. His informed discourse on European art compensated those whom visa restrictions deny the chance of seeing the originals.

The plight of Pakistani womanhood had three articulate proponents gender equality -Roshaneh Zafar of Kashf, Momina Saeed of IFC, and Sadaffe Abid. They spoke from personal experience of helping thousands of Pakistani women squirm out of poverty. Millions more could benefit, they said, from the use smartphones to expand home-based e-commerce. Remember: it took two world wars in the West and two revolutions in Russia and China for their women to become emancipated. Women in Pakistan are

gaining — slowly, too slowly — their innate rights in a battle against suffocating patriarchy. Politicians have provided poor role models. A woman prime minister (Benazir Bhutto) and now a female chief minister Punjab (Maryam Nawaz) both had to rely upon their maiden names to advance their careers. No Margaret Roberts (later Mrs Thatcher) here, just as a President Mrs X has yet to occupy the White

For those who could not attend the LitFest, technology offers a virtual substitute. They can download the recordings of the sessions. Particularly recommended is one on the 'Future of the Written Word in an age of AI'. Four writers assessed their vulnerability to AI. Each of Mohsin Hamid, the novelist Hannah Dubgen and the American humorist David Sedaris — read out AI-generated texts which, at the press of a cursor, produced a pastiche of their indi-

vidual writing styles.

Sedaris read out an AI

version of a fictitious story involving a man trapped in a latrine, and then his own description of the same incident. The contrast could not have been shar-per insipid chalk vs a tangy, mature cheese. All four arg-ued that AI does not produce literature — culled after centuries of learning, fuelled by inspiration. It is most probably the byproduct of three or four unseen minds, expressing themselves through words, spawned from binary codes. Sedaris dismissed an AI-produced text as one composed by an eightyear-old, relying for op-

tions on a thesaurus. But even eight-yearolds grow up. Man-made technology is maturing faster than God's humankind. Who knows how soon AI will replace live authors? Sooner than we fear. Authors (and especially university professors) are all too aware that attentive readership is waning, being replaced by bytes and sound-bites and fabricated prose. Many attendees found the most inspirational session to be a film Above the Sleeping Giants, produced by the DARD foundation on the achievement of a young Pakistani mountaineer Shehroze Kashif. He has planted his country's flag on 13 of the highest mountain peaks in the world. Recently, an ageing Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan with a plan to scale the same PM-ship, for the fourth time. Shehroze, not yet 22, waits to conquer his 14th summit. It is a generational thing. -- Cour-

Striving in uncertainty Nadeem Hussain

Pakistan's youth dominated the discourse on the Feb 8 general elections and has stayed at the centre of the debate pre- and postballot counts. Some analysts attribute the poll upset to the new voters. However, rhetoric often outstrips tangible solutions when it comes to Gen Z driving national development. As a result, the millennials find themselves marginalised in the grand scheme of growth plans, struggling for recognition and space to contribute

The young in this country are often considered to be one of the greatest national assets, but how do we channel this energy and develop this resource to bring prosperity to our struggling nation of 240 million? This question mostly remains unan-

Some propose vocational training, while others think providing employment opportunities should be the priority. Successive governments in the past two decades have come up with programmes like the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme, E-Rozgar, Ehsaas Scholarship Pakistan, Prime Minister's Youth Business & Agriculture Loan Scheme, Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme, etc.

But despite such initiatives, Pakistan has not witnessed a significant growth in national productivity. Where is the magic then? Let's look at our neighbour, India (yes, let's compete outside the cricket ground and battlefield). From 2003 to 2016, India was busy establishing 1,000 colleges annually, ie, on an average three colleges a day, or one every eight hours! American higher education institutes are at least considered to be

among the top, if not the

best, places for creativity and advancement. The US has led with the unicorns (start-ups valued at over \$1 billion) for many years, owing to its top-quality higher education, robust venture capital ecosystem, entrepreneurial culture, and strong innovation hubs.

In 2023 alone, India

sent a total of 131,338 young men and women to American colleges and universities on F-1 student visas, while Pakistan managed to send only 3,353 students in the same year. F-1 visas issued to Pakistanis account for less than one per cent of all F-1 visas, whereas for Indians, the figure is roughly 30pc. The result at the highest level? The heads of two of the world's top five tech companies — Microsoft and Google — came to the US after completing their undergraduate studies in Satya

Microsoft's executive chairman and CEO, completed his Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the Manipal Institute of Technology in Karnataka before coming to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and subsequently joined the Windows-maker in 1992. Sundar Pichai, the CEO of Alphabet and Google, graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, with a B.Tech degree, and went on to complete a Master's degree from Stanford University. Following a short spell at McKinsey & Co, a management consulting firm, ichai joined Google in

Most American schools standardised tests for admission in undergraduate and graduate programmes. Last year, 137,884 Indian college graduates took the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) and the Graduate Management

(GMAT), compared to 3,485 Pakistani graduate school applicants who took the test in 2023. Similarly, a large number of Indian students take Scholastic

Assess-ment Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) compared to a relatively small number of Pakistani test-tak-

The Higher Education Commission recognises close to 350 universities and degreeawarding institutions across Pak-istan, with an en--rolment of close to 1m students and virtually no public university schedules for gra--duate school admissions in the US Single-digit private academic institutions do have some awa-r-eness series to help their graduates secure admissions in American higher education institutes. Most of the HEC's study-abroad programmes are flawed in design and are not bringing the intellectual capital that could drive the knowledge economy at home.

For Pakistan to come out of its current (and future) financial crisis, it needs to logically invest in top-quality higher education by fielding our young in the global grounds of innovation and knowledge. Some Pakistanis — mostly US business school graduates — are working hard to help fellow Pakistani men and women navigate their academic and professional journeys to the US Their initiative, Sarzameen Pakistan, is being run and managed by volunteers at a very small scale. However, a larger programme to increase the number of Pakistani students in universities in the US, and hence the number of professionals in the American market, would provide a strong foundation for the nation to prepare for future crises and global challenges. -- Courtesy Dawn



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting to review the progress of the projects launched for the rehabilitation of flood-affected infrastructure in the province, held at CM House in Karachi.

CM reviews uplift progress of flood-devastated infrastructures

Murad Ali Shah presided over a meeting and reviewed the progress made in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of floodaffected infrastructure and directed his team to expedite the ongoing works and pursue donors for funding where it is still

The meeting was held at CM House and was attended by Chief secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, Chairman P&D Shakil Mangejo, Principal Secretary to CM Agha Wasif, Secretary School Education Dr Shireen Narejo, Secretary Health Dr Mansoor, Secretary Irrigation Niaz Abbasi Secretary Works

Shaikh, and other officers concerned.

Secretary School Education Dr Shireen Narejo briefed the CM that 19,808 schools were damaged in the floods 2022, of them 7,503 were fully damaged and needed to be reconstructed. Out of ,503 fully damaged school buildings construction of 2020 was committed by friendly countries like the European Union, China and donor agencies ADB, Federal PSDP and Provincial ADP for Rs 60.972 billion.

She said the Sindh government has started construction of 431 schools for Rs 4.428 billion

donors agencies were in the pipeline. Some of the projects are in the approval

approval for the projects from CDWP and other agencies and then pursue for release of funds. He also directed the P&D department to prepare a plan to reconstruct the remaining 5483 fully damaged schools. The Secretary Health

Dr. Mansoor Rizvi told the CM that the 1000 Days – Integrated Health and Population Program has been started for Rs 61,600 million with the help of the World Bank. Isamic

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Nawaz Sohoo, CEO but the funds committed Development Bank with a Chief Minister, Syed Peoples Housing Khalid by friendly countries are Sindh government share of Sindh government share of \$30 million. The project would be completed in

He said the project's

The CM directed the scope encompasses the chairman P&D to get refurbishment of 392 dispensaries, including equipment provision. It involves reconstruction of 121 Basic Health Units (BHUs), 97 Rural Healthcare Centers (RHCs), and 39 Taluka Headquarters (THQ) Hospitals that have been completely damaged. Additionally, the project will establish hospital-based blood banks at four DHQ hospitals i-e Kashmore-Kandhkot, Sujawal, Tando-

Allahyar, and Tando

Mohammad Khan.

Punjab Governor says: Role of ombudsman is commendable in redressal of people's complaints

Independent Report Ombudsman Punjab, Major present in the ceremony. (Rtd) Azam Suleman Khan, presented the annual performance report of the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab for the year 2023 to the Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur of people's complaints Rehman in a ceremony held here today at Governor institutions. He said that

of provincial ombudsman is commendable in redressal public

House Lahore. Additional Chief Secretary Punjab Ahmad Raza Sarwar and administrative heads of the company of th administrative heads of the technology and facilitating Punjab government along people. The Punjab any lawyer for it. Gowith advisors and Governor lauded the Punjab further said

Augaf Munawar Ali

Mahesar, Commissioner

Hyderabad Syed Khalid

Hyder Shah, Deputy

Commissioner Jamshoro

Ali Zulfiqar Memon and

the district administration

direction. He asked the

independent candidates

He said that after

taking the oath, all elected

Waris Shah Chair, Faiz

Chair, Pakistan Studies/

History/ Anthropology/

Psychology and degrees of

Fine Arts and Art and

who had joined the Sunni

ort consultants of the initiatives like complete
The Ombudsman Office were digitalization of the
Major present in the ceremony. Ombudsman Punjab Speaking on this office. He said that occasion, Governor Punjab extending the the offices of Muhammad Balighur the Punjab Ombudsman to Rehman said that the role various districts and providing maximum relief to the people was commendable. Governor Punjab said that the decisions of the provincial

ombudsman are written in Urdu which is easy for people to understand and they do not need to hire any lawyer for it. Governor

declares rain emergency Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Management Authority (PDMA) has issued an alert about rains and snowfall in different parts of the province from today till

Rain alert issued

in KP, CM Sindh

Babar, Surayya take

oath as KPAssembly

Speaker, Deputy Speaker

According to PDMA, all Deputy Commissioners have been advised to take precautionary measures to avoid any human and material losses during the forecast period.

The control room of PDMA is operational round the clock and people Karachi tomorrow.

in case of any emergency. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has also declared a rain emergency in the

Chairing a meeting in Karachi today, provincial Chief Minister directed the alert in wake of heavy rain forecast in the province.

It was decided in the meeting that there will be half day duty in all public private sector educational institutions in

CM directs authorities to complete Rwp Ring Road project by December

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz being briefed about the

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI: Chief removed for speedy
Minister (CM) Punjab, construction work while here on Thursday visited Rawalpindi Ring Road and directed the authorities to complete the project by December.

Rawalpindi Ring Road Project.

NESPAK and FWO officials briefed the chief minister on the progress of Rawalpindi Ring Road Project at Tehraiya site.

The CM was briefed that the project started in September 2023 and all the construction work would be completed by February 2025. All the structures on the way of 38.3 kms long

3 including 2

real brothers

die, 2 injured,

car plunges

into canal

MANANWALA (Online):

As many as 3 persons were

killed and 2 were critically

injured after a speedy car

plunged into canal on

Sheikhupura-Hafizabad

Those killed in the

Maryam Nawaz Sharif removal of the utility services in the right of the way was underway. 24 percent work on

Rawalpindi Ring Road project has completed. Five interchanges, 11

overpasses, bridges on 2 rivers, 6 canals and a railway bridge would be constructed under the project while 15 subways and 53 small bridges would be constructed on the Rawalpindi Ring Road.

constructed on the Ring deadline, the CM said.

Independent Report

KARACHI: In recognition

The project was indispensable for ease of transportation of the citizens, Maryam Nawaz said adding, industrial zones would also be built

on the project.
The CM said that the project would be a game changer for Rawalpindi, adding creation of the industrial zones would provide employment opportunities to the local people. Two years were fixed for the completion of the project and all-out efforts would be made to A rest area would be complete it before the

Governor Sindh advocates coalition govt formation to lead country forward

HYDERABAD (APP): and praised Secretary Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori on Thursday advocated the formation of a coalition government and urged all the parties to work together to lead the country out of the crisis.

He expressed these for their hard work. views while speaking to the media during the inauguration of the 772nd the need to steer the annual Urs celebration of economy in the right Hazrat Qalandar Lal Shahbaz (RA). Speaking on the

occasion he said that Sindh Ittehad that they should all is land of saints and people make efforts to improve of this land are fortunate the livelihood of the to be custodians of such country. rich heritage. He said that the progress of Sindh and

Pakistan interlinked.
Governor Sindh appreciated the arrangements for the Urs

Range Strict and the representatives should play their role in ensuring the country's security and prosperity.

Education Commission

(HEC) Dr Mukhtar

Ahmad inaugurated the

new Faculty of Arts and

Humanities at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) in order

to strengthen arts and

said here on Thursday that

the newly established

Studies, Department of

faculty comprised of the halls,

Department of Islamic halls,

Chairman

HEC chairman

inaugurates new

Faculty at UAF

FAISALABAD (APP): English and Linguistics

Higher

PDA launches tree plantation campaign in Hayatabad, RMT

PESHAWAR (APP): The Director General (DG) Peshawar Development Authority (PDA), Captain (Retd) Khalid Mehmood launched a tree plantation campaign here on

Under the campaign PDA in collaboration with Rather than attacking | IMSciences University will PESHAWAR (Online): Babar Saleem Swati and

Surayya Bibi of Sunni Ittehad Council took oath as new Speaker and Deputy Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly in Peshawar Thursday.

Outgoing Speaker, Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani administered the oath to newly elected speaker of provincial assembly, while Saleem Swati administered tenure.

oath to the newly elected Deputy Speaker.

During the election at provincial assembly, Babar Swati secured eighty-nine votes while his opponent Ihsan Ullah Mian Khel obtained seventeen votes. Earlier, in his last

address as speaker, Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani thanked the assembly staff and members for their the new Speaker Babar cooperation during his

SEHWAN: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori laying wreath on the grave of Hazrat Lala Shahbaz Qalandar on the occasion of 772nd Urs celebration.

Mav-9 violence: **ATC** grants interim bail to PTI leader in 9 cases

The proposed building of the Faculty of strengthen arts and ary works.

A UAF spokesman months at a cost of here are Thursday that Rs.469.64 million. It bail till March 7 to absconding Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) would include exhibition multipurpose classrooms, leader Hafiz Farhat Abbas waiting rooms, offices. in cases related to May-9

> The court granted bail to the PTI leader in nine cases including attack on Jinnah House and Askari Tower and ordered him to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 for availing the

ATC Judge Arshad Javed conducted the proceedings on the bail petition of the PTI leader, who also appeared in the

DC for early construction of flyovers in Dera city

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): Commissioner Mansoor Arshad Khan has underlined the need to start construction work of

flyovers at the earliest to overcome the traffic congestion in the city. Chairing a meeting here, the commissioner said that two flyovers were being constructed in the city

including one at Tank Adda and the other at Sabzi Mandi where snarl-ups had become a routine matter.

PPP leader stresses constitutional limits for

Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood has reiterated the party's longstanding stance on the importance adherence

constitutional limits by all institutions of the country. He emphasised that such adherence was crucial for democracy, economy, federation, and overall stability of the country. In a recent gathering at Makhdoom House on

Thursday, Ahmed Mahmood stressed the significance of politicians understanding and respecting their political boundaries, asserting that the approach could prevent constitutional crisis like those witnessed on May 9. He highlighted the need for mutual respect among politicians, media,

resolving personal animosities and ego clashes could contribute to addressing the nation's challenges. Ahmed Mahmood also shed light on PPP's decision to support the government despite lacking sufficient numbers, attributing the move to perilous state of the country's economy, democracy, stability, and federalism. He clarified that while the Sunni Ittehad Council did not seek PPP's support, the party extended its assistance to ensure smooth formation

Acknowledging the roles of various political parties, Ahmed Mahmood expressed gratitude to the Sunni Ittehad Council and the PTI for facilitating uncontested elections of chief ministers in their respective provinces including Punjab.



LAHORE: Ombudsman Punjab, Major (Rtd) Azam Suleman Khan presenting annual performance report of the Office to Governor Punjab

accident included 2 real brothers. The injured are stated to be in precarious condition. A car on its way from

motorwav.

Peshawar to Lahore fell into canal on Sheikhupura. Chapa Meenara Hafiz Abad road motorway. Resultantly 3 persons seated in car died and two were seriously injured. Two among those

who were killed have been identified as Fayyaz and Abdullah. The third person has not been identified so far.

On information the Rescue 1122 teams rushed to the scene and shifted the injured to district hospital besides handing over the bodies to police.

15 dead, 1,359 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 15 persons were killed and 1,359 others injured in 1,271 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24

As many as 604 seriously injured people were shifted to different hospitals, while 755 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The analysis showed that 731 drivers, 44 underage drivers, 185 pedestrians, and 458 passengers were among the victims of road accidents. The statistics show that 249 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 275 people, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Faisalabad with 95 accidents and 97 victims, and at third Multan with 75 accidents and 82 victims.

According to the data, 1,090 motorbikes, 86 auto-rickshaws, motorcars, 26 vans

difficult to bear. Rare of Rare Disease Day, Roche Pakistan Limited diseases sufferers are the held a panel discussion and neglected outliers in press briefing to raise awareness about rare Pakistan's healthcare diseases in Pakistan, and to emphasize the unmet needs of patients patients by bringing especially when it comes innovative treatments that to awareness, funding and government support. The

Rare diseases need

government attention

system. Roche is a company that is committed can help patients live a fully normal life or at least panel comprised MD a much better quality of Roche Pakistan, Ms. Hafsa Shamsie, Roche's Head of life. But, treatment is one side of the picture. Medical, Dr. Yasir Adnan Ensuring that patients have

treatment burden for rare

diseases even more



well paeds neurologist Dr. Raman Kumar and hematologist Dr. Munira Borhany and Mr. Muhammad Ali Shaikh, Special Secretary Health, Govt of Sindh.

Ms. Hafsa Shamsie, MD Roche highlighted the fact that even for those who have been diagnosed, the lack of government healthcare spends and support makes the Sclerosis.

diseases, and access to these standard of care treatments is the other side of the picture. She shared that since 2017, Roche has run a Patient Support Program that has helped almost 25,000 patients with free of cost treatment for a number of diseases including Spinal Muscular Atrophy and Multiple

awareness about rare

Necessary arrangements made regarding expected rains in city: Mayor Karachi

Wahab Thursday said that necessary arrangements had been made regarding the expected rains in the city and decisions had been made regarding clearing choking points in the

All concerned staff would be present on the roads during the rains, KMC, Sindh Solid Waste Management Board and Water Corporation had made a strategy for the expected rains, he said this

in a video message. the people and where is a problem.

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Wahab said that there was Karachi Barrister Murtaza no such example in the past that such rains were expected in the month of March in Karachi.

This is the effect of climate change that is being talked about all over the world. He said that the leaves of the relevant officers and other staff in KMC and other related institutions had been canceled and all the officers and staff would remain on the ground. "InshAllah, we are trying our best to minimize the problems of the people and wherever



Ghani administers oath to newly elected speaker Babar Saleem Swati.

PDMA initiates development of disaster risk reduction policy

PESHAWAR (APP): The Community Resilience Provincial Disaster Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, under the guidance of Relief Department, has initiated efforts to make Khyber Pakhtunkhwa resilient against potential disasters. In a momentous step,

PDMA commenced development of Khyber the support of the forthcoming policy

Activity-North (CRA-N). A workshop was convened in Peshawar, chaired by Secretary Relief, Inayat Ullah Wasim, and Director General PDMA, Muhammad Qaisar Khan.

CRA-N, Academia and other organizations were also present. The forum, the comprising stakeholders and disaster Pakhtunkhwa's Disaster management experts, Risk Reduction Policy with unanimously greed that the

institutions' functioning

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) South Punjab President

judiciary, and other institutions, stating that

of its government in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.



Muhammad Balighur Rehman during a ceremony.



HYDERABAD: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), Asif Mahmood Jah addresses to members of business community during meeting held at Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) in Hyderabad.

Identifying agro-ecological zones crucial for maximizing output of agriculture

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr Kauser Abdulla Malik on Thursday said that identifying agro-ecological zones was crucial for maximizing output of agriculture products as well as to achieve sustainable economic growth in the country

Addressing the launching ceremony of the updated "Agro-Ecological Zones

OGDCL, ISGS

agree to collaborate

FPCCI rejected

Implementation of

Cess tax in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa

Chambers of Commerce & the bureaucracy, which

Business

of Pakistan", he commended the efforts of Pakistan Agriculture Research (PARC) scientists and also emphasized the importance establishing dissemination mechanism to engage all

The report offered a comprehensive overview of Pakistan's updated agro-ecological zones, considering changing environmenta

stakeholders.

conditions, he said adding that it was prepared under the directive of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, categorizing Pakistan's ecology into various zones and subzones with a specialized database.

Chairman PARC, Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali highlighted significance updated agro-ecological zones in identifying appropriate

PESHAWAR: A delegation of Association of Small Medium Enterprises

(BVMW) Germany meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Governor Haji

ecological conditions nationwide, which would help tailor agricultural practices to specific en viron mental conditions, maximizing crop productivity.

He said that understanding these zones could lead to more sustainable and profitable farming methods, better resource allocation, contributing to food security and economic growth in the

WAPDA reviews land issues of Diamer Basha, **Mohmand Dams**

MIRPUR-AJK (APP): for the affectees and valued The Implementation Committee on Diamer Basha and Mohmand Dams, formed by the Supreme Court of Pakistan held a meeting on Thursday to discuss the status of land and resettlement of the affected people of the two mega

projects. WAPDA Chairman appreciated the progress made by the Sub-Committee and hoped that the remaining issues of household and missing Committee in its previous chulha cases would be resolved soon, APP Correspondent Said.

their sacrifices.

The Commissioner Diamer-Astore Division being built on River Swat, briefed the meeting about the status of household and missing chulha cases and the terms of reference for the Grievances Redressal Committee and the Missing Chulha Committee.

The meeting was also informed about the compliance status of the decisions taken by the Implementation meeting. The meeting was told that the Diamer Basha Dam, being built on River He said that WAPDA Indus will store 8.1 MAF was very compassionate water and generate 4500

MW hydel electricity. It is expected to be completed by 2028. Mohmand Dam, will store 1.2 MAF water and generate 800 MW hydel electricity. It is expected to be completed

The meeting chaired by WAPDA Chairman Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd), was attended by senior officials from Gilgit Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Finance Division, PM Office and WAPDA. The meeting was convened on the request of the Sub-Committee on

Land Acquisition and Resettlement for Diamer Basha Dam. **Delegation of** small, medium

delegation

the country during the million against US \$6464.217 million last year, showing an increase of 7.66 per cent in July-January (2023-24). On a year-on-year

basis, the imports for China witnessed an increase of 91.49 per cent from US \$614.835 million in January 2023, against the imports of US \$1177.398 million in by 4.96 per cent during January 2024.

for SUGS project The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) and Inter-State Gas Systems

(Private) Limited (ISGS) have agreed to collaborate for the development of the Strategic Underground Gas Storage (SUGS) project to address the challenge of surplus gas management in Pakistan.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between OGDCL and ISGS on Thursday, said a news release issued here on Thursday.

The parties will evaluate potential opportunities developing SUGS at OGDCL fields to enhance the country's energy infrastructure and ensure efficient utilization of gas The SUGS Project is of gas.

Independent Report

Ikram Sheikh President

Federation Of Pakistan

Industry (FPCCI) said that

Community rejects the imposition of 2% Cess on

import on all imports into

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is

totally unjustified and

unacceptable to business community of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa. This will

result in price hike of

essential commodities and

that instead of giving relief

Atif Ikram further said

hyperinflation.

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif elected

to establish storage facilities for surplus gas, particularly during offpeak seasons when demand is low relative to supply in the Pakistani market.

Through the SUGS Project, OGDCL and ISGS aim to mitigate these challenges by creating storage capacity and facilitating gas-swapping arrangements with other stakeholders in the industry on commercial basis

Subject to technical and commercial feasibility, project involves the development withdrawal compressors, connecting pipelines and the construction of storage facilities capable of accommodating up to 15 billion cubic feet (BCF)

being created for the newly

government under a

deliberate conspiracy by

cannot be ignored under

any circumstances while

our country is already

running in economic crises.

the business community of

the province and the

importers and exporters

are already in under burden

of heavy taxes while the

Cess levy of 2% on import

and export trade by the

care-taker provincial government will further

increase the problems and

He further said that

Pakistani rupee witnessed no change against the US Dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at the previous day's closing rate of Rs

Ghulam Áli.

Rupee stands

at break-even

point against

Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP):

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.3 and Rs 282.2, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 30 paisa to close at Rs 302.41 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.11, according to the State Bank of Pakistan

The Japanese Yen gained 01 paisa to close at Rs186, whereas a decrease of 06 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 353.24 compared to the las closing of Rs 353.30.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged to close at Rs 75.99 and Rs 74.42 respectively.

FCCI emerges as first E-chamber in country

FAISALABAD (ÅPP): The Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has emerged as the first É-chamber of the country by starting a 24/7 online digitalise service to issue new as well as renewal of the existing memberships.

Acting President FCCI Dr Sajjad Arshad renewed the first membership of his firm through this facility while Vice President FCČI Hajji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli was also present during the inaugural ceremony.

Dr Sajjad Arshad termed E-chamber a revolutionary step taken by the FCCI to digitise its system and facilitate its members who could avail from FCCI services without visiting the chamber. "They could also make online payments," he said and added that arrangements underway to offer other services to its valued members.

Rana Ayub assumes charge as CEO **MEPCO**

MULTAN Engineer Rana Muhammad Ayub assumed charge as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) MEPCO here on Thursday. The Board of Directors MEPCO has given him responsibility retirement of CEO MEPCOMahar Allah Yar Bharawana completing his tenure.

Engineer Rana Ayub was considered senior most engineer in power sector and MEPCO. He started his service as Assistant Manager Planning WAPDA house Lahore in 1990. He was serving as General Manager Technical MEPČO currently

Facilitate rescue & relief operations Ufone 4G provides free calls in Gwadar to help connect flood-affected families

ISLAMABAD (APP): As urgent rescue and relief Gwadar faces a large-scale natural disaster caused by catastrophic rains and flash floods, Pakistani telecom company, Ufone 4G has announced free calls to help connect local families, and assist in swift execution of rescue and relief operation in the

affected port city. The heavy downpour has inundated large parts of Gwadar, destroying homes and livelihoods, and rendering hundreds of families homeless, said a news release.

A considerably large section of the local population is associated with the fishing industry, whose boats were wrecked, and businesses adversity. decimated by the deluge.

As a responsible Pakistani always stepped up to help fellow Pakistanis affected by natural disasters. The free minutes will help the

assistance.

The initiative is particularly crucial as the extensive flooding has disrupted communications channels and made it harder for people to finds ways to recharge their mobile balance.

Ufone 4G users across the affected areas will receive 70 Ufone to Ufone and PTCL free minutes with a validity of days. No call set up charges will be levied on these free minutes. The modest support will inspire resilience and fortitude amongst the people of Gwadar to confront and emerge stronger from this

The initiative mirrors responsible the Ufone 4G sustained commitment to fostering citizen, Ufone 4G has social good and ensuring wellbeing of the communities it serves. The Ufone 4G family has expressed complete locals to connect with their solidarity with the fellow loved ones, alert authorities citizens who are affected to their plight and request by this natural calamity.



GILGIT: A shepherd guiding herd of goats heading towards grazing field near Nomal area.

Enhancing nutritional standards, IFA organizes training in oil fortification ISLAMABAD (INP): To their significant health

enhance the nutritional standards, the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) attended organized a comprehensive training session on oil fortification for the capacity building of Nutrition International, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Food Authority, and oil mill owners.

Islamabad Capital
Territory (ICT)
Spokesman, Abdullah Tabassum said that with aim to educate key stakeholders on the vital inclusion of vitamin A and

representatives from Nutrition International, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Food Authority, and local oil mill owners, and the training delved into the importance of fortification in combating nutritional deficiencies prevalent in the region. Highlighting the collaborative effort, the ICT spokesman revealed that Nutrition International generously provided iCheck Chroma equipment D in cooking oils and ghee, to bolster the operational the session emphasized capacity of the IFA.

German inflation continues to weaken

Monitoring Desk BERLIN: Inflation in Germany weakened further in February, with the consumer price index (CPI) up an annual 2.5% this month compared to a 2.9% annual rise in January, according to preliminary data released by the Federal Statistical Office on Thursday.

Economists expect inflation to fall further over the course of the year. However, the decline could lose pace due to an increase in the price of carbon

dioxide, a key industrial ingredient, to €45 per ton from €30 (\$33) per ton and a return of the regular value added tax rate on food in restaurants Higher inflation rates

reduce the purchasing power of consumers. resulting in many cutting

back on expenditures.

According to
preliminary figures,
household energy and fuel became 2.4% cheaper in February compared to the same month last year. Food cost 0.9%

Pakistan's exports to China increase by 44.53% in 7 months

Pakistan's export of goods to the exports of \$257.978 and services to China witnessed an increase of 44.53 per cent during the first seven months of the exports to other countries current fiscal year (2023- witnessed an increase of 24) as compared to the 9.32 per cent in the first exports of the seven months, from US corresponding period of \$16.444 billion to US last year, State Bank of \$17.977 billion, the SBP Pakistan (SBP) reported. data revealed.

China were recorded at US \$1726.679 million during July-January (2023-24) against exports of US \$1194.639 million during July-January (2022-23), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year

basis, the exports to China also surged by 79.54 per cent from \$136.551 million in January 2023, against the exports of \$245.169 million in January 2024.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to China decreased

ISLAMABAD (APP): January 2024 as compared million in December 2023, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's

imports from China into months under review were recorded at US \$6959.768

enterprise Germany calls on KP Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): A Bundesverband mittelständische Wirtschaft (Association of Small and Medium Enterprises Germany) here Thursday called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali. The delegation, led by country head of the association Matthew Shaw, discussed various prospects of investment in merged

districts of KP including mining, forests, sports, tourism and human development. delegation expressed interest to work in collaboration with local business community and added that the association would provide needed help, training and resources to stakeholders for the purpose. Speaking on the occasion, KP Governor appreciated the visiting guests.



LAHORE: A vendor selling coal sacks as per increased demand in winter

PR CEO announces plans for train restoration, improvements

Officer Aamir Baloch said on Thursday that train service would be restored gradually based on resource availability.

During an online live e-Kutchery session, Baloch revealed that a new train timetable was set to be implemented from March 15 while the restoration of Sandal and Khushhal Khan Khattak Express trains was possible upon available resources.

He highlighted ongoing efforts to enhance track conditions in the Main Line Sukkur Division and mentioned plans to increase the number of trains overtime, with improvements expected to reduce engineering restrictions. Regarding specific routes, Baloch indicated that the decision on restoring Akbar Bugti Express was pending. He complaints thoroughly.

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan assured the public of Railways Chief Executive special Eid trains and improved facilities during the festive season. Furthermore, he noted a decrease in salary delays, attributing it to enhanced

> anticipated in the future. terms infrastructure, Baloch mentioned the timely completion of manufacturing project for 230 new coaches, with Chinese collaboration. He underscored

revenue generation, with

reductions

further

significance of passenger service over personal interests, emphasizing that train seats were meant for passengers, employees.

Addressing concerns about staff behavior and misuse of railway quarters, Baloch instructed the authorities to investigate

FCCI greets CM Punjab

FAISALABAD (APP) Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) President Dr Khurram Tariq, Senior Vice President Dr Sajjad Arshad and Vice President Hajji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli congratulated have Maryam Nawaz on her election as the Punjab chief minister.

In a statement on Thursday, they hoped that the new CM would ensure much-needed economic stability by involving the business community in policy making. They said Punjab is the biggest and most important province of the country which is playing a key role in overall national economy. Hence, the CM must adopt a strategy to spur the economic activities in order to create new jobs and root out poverty from the province. They said it was privilege for her to become the first female CM of the province. "She ensure should

mainstreaming of women.

ISLAMABAD (APP): A exported its products to delegation of the Islamabad several countries around the world. He said that POF imported many parts and equipment to produce its

to the poor people of the complications which is to

ICCI delegation visits POF

to explore business chances

in defense industry

province, problems are be condemned.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President visited the Ordnance Pakistan Factories (POF) and held a meeting with Lt. Gen. Syed Tahir Hameed Shah, Chairman POF to explore business opportunities for the private sector in the defense industry.

Chairman, POF, Lt. Gen. Syed Tahir Hameed Shah briefed the ICCI delegation about the role of Pakistan Factories, which was the country's premier defense production organization. He said that besides

meeting the defense needs

comprising 14 ordnance factories and three Ordnance

it with parts and equipment according to the required standards. He said that POF was largest defense industrial complex

finished products and said

that it would welcome local

vendors who could supply

commercial subsidiaries. He said that the surplus products of POF were sold in the civil market and the standards of POF products were not less than any international company.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging and displaying clay made items to attract customers at his roadside setup at H-9 in the Federal Capital.

Putin warns West of risk of nuclear war

Warns West against sending troops to Ukraine in major speech

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin told Western countries they risked provoking a nuclear war if they sent troops to fight in Ukraine, warning that Moscow had the weapons

to strike targets in the West. The war in Ukraine has triggered the worst crisis in Moscow's relations with the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Putin has previously spoken of the dangers of a direct confrontation between Nato and Russia, but his nuclear warning on Thursday was one of his most

Addressing lawmakers and other members of the country's elite, Putin, 71, repeated his accusation that the West was bent on weak-

gested Western leaders did not understand how dangerous their meddling could be in what he cast as Russia's internal affairs. He prefaced his

nuclear warning with a specific reference to an idea, floated by French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday, of European Nato members sending ground troops to Ukraine — a suggestion that was quickly rejected by the United States, Germany, Britain and others.

"(Western nations) must realise that we also have weapons that can hit targets on their territory. All this really threatens a

Speaking ahead of a March 15-17 presidential election when he is certain to be re-elected for another six-year term, he lauded what he said was Russia's vastly modernised nuclear arsenal, the largest in the

"Strategic nuclear forces are in a state of full readiness," he said, noting that new-generation hypersonic nuclear weapons he first spoke about in 2018 had either been deployed or were at a stage where development and testing were being completed.

Visibly angry, Putin suggested Western politicians recall the fate of those Russia in the past.



A member of the press consoles a woman outside Al-Aqsa hospital in

nation's residents and in-

tern doctors had walked off

the job to protest a govern-

ment plan to increase the

number of students admit-

ted to medical school in a

bid to address what au-

thorities say is a shortage

The young doctors

of doctors.

physicians.

South Korea to send military doctors to hospitals amid doctors' protest

Monitoring Desk SEOUL: South Korea will send its military and community doctors to hospitals within the next few days as part of emergency measures to support the healthcare system after a mass walkout by trainee doctors, Prime Minister Han Duck-

said on Wednesday.
Han also pleaded with
Ban also pleaded with
Ban also pleaded with soo said on Wednesday. to work by a Thursday deadline set by the government, and said the authorities would listen to their concerns.

"The government the licenses of the doctors fully understands that trainee doctors have serious concerns about the work environment and future career, and we are seeking measures to improve this from a number of perspectives," he told a government

Two-thirds of the said.

China urges largest nuclear **Monitoring Desk**

dress pay and working oo called on nu conditions before trying to increase the number of The government has warned it could suspend who do not comply with the back-to-work order. Starting next month.

doctors who are serving in the military and at local clinics in lieu of mandatory military service will be assigned to hospitals affected by the walkout, Han

South Korea, US to stage annual drills focusing on Korea nuclear threats

Monitoring Desk SEOUL: South Korea and the United States will begin their annual spring military drills next week with a focus on heading off North Korea's potential use of nuclear weapons, officials said on Wednesday.

The Freedom Shield exercises, set for March 4-14, come as North Korea continues to test missiles and other weapons systems and develop its nuclear capabilities, and will be first since Pyongyang scrapped a 2018 inter-Korean military pact in No-

The drills will be are jointly developing a "tough and realistic", and counter operation concept based on scenarios that reflect lessons from recent conflicts, officials from the two countries' militaries said at a briefing.

rounds of combined field training, including air assault and air strikes, participated by twice the number of troops from both sides compared with last year, said Col. Lee Sung-jun, spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of

The exercises are chiefly designed to neutralise North Korea's nuclear threats, including by "identifying and striking" cruise missiles, which Pyongyang had suggested could carry nuclear war-

"The two countries against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats and it will be applied to deter and prevent their further and possible nuclear usage," Lee said.

states to negotiate a 'no-first-use' treaty

BEIJING: States with the largest nuclear arsenals should negotiate a treaty on no-first-use of nuclear weapons against each other or make a political statement in this regard, the Chinese foreign ministry's arms control department

Director General of the department, Sun states to fulfil their "special and priority responsibilities" on nuclear disarmament according to the UN Conference on Disarmament, which seeks to prevent nuclear war, official news agency Xinhua said on Wednes-

During the forum's weekly meeting in Geneva on Monday, Sun said the body should define a roadmap or timetable for an international legal instrument that would protect non-nuclear-weapon states from the threat of nuclear weapons.

Italian general suspended for book slammed as racist

Monitoring Desk ROME: Italy's defence

ministry has suspended a general and cut his pay for breaching army neutrality with a book that critics said insulted sexual and ethnic minorities, his lawyer said on Wednesday. Roberto Vannacci,

55, had already been ousted last year from the management of the Military Geographical Institute, and moved to an essentially administrative role as chief of staff of the operational land forces command.

He has now been suspended from that position for 11 months, with the resulting "halving of his his lawyer salary' Giorgio Carta said.



Relatives of the Azovstal defenders and other Ukrainian prisoners of war hold banners as they attend a rally calling for authorities to return their relatives from Russian captivity, on the second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Kyiv.



Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers his annual address to the Federal Assembly, in Moscow, Russia.

More than 30,000 killed in Gaza, Hamas-run health ministry says

JERUSALEM (Online): dead is likely to be far higher as the count does not inians have been killed in Gaza since 7 October, the Hamasrun health ministry says. That number equates to about 1.3% of the 2.3 million population of the territory - the latest grim marker of the awful toll of this war.

The ministry says that the majority of those killed were women and chil-

Its figures do not dif-ferentiate between civilians and fighters when identifying those killed.

In its daily update on Thursday, the ministry said 81 people had been killed in the last 24 hours, bring-

clude those who have not reached hospitals, among them thousands of people still lost under the rubble of buildings hit by Israeli air strikes.

More than 70,000 injured people have been registered by the Gaza ministry of health (MoH), which is the only official source for casualties. Its data is quoted by UN agencies and other international institu-

The World Health Organization (WHO) says it has a "long-standing cooperation" with the Gaza in the last 24 hours, bringing the total to 30,035.

The actual number of the actual number o

Alexei Navalny's funeral to be held on Friday in Moscow: spokesperson

Monitoring Desk OSCOW: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's funeral service and burial will take place in Moscow on Friday, his spokesperson said, after a search for a hall to allow his supporters to bid farewell him failed.

Kira Yarmysh, his pokesperson, posted on X that a service for Navalny would be held on Friday at 1400 Moscow time (1100 GMT) in the Church of the Icon of the Mother of God in the Moscow district of Maryino. She told people to get there early. Navalny would then be buried at the Borisovskoye cemetery, Navalny, 47, died at an

Arctic penal colony on Feb 16. His allies have accused President Vladimir Putin of having him murdered because the Russian leader could allegedly not tolerate the thought of Navalny being freed in a potential prisoner swap.

Palestinians urged to reach Al Aqsa mosque in Ramazan **Monitoring Desk**

UN 'appalled'

by public

executions in

Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: The United

Nations on Wednesday

condemned recent pub-

lic executions in Af-

ghanistan, urging the Taliban authorities to

cease the use of capital

punishment.
Afghanistan's

Taliban government pub-

licly executed three con-

victed murderers in the

past week on death war-

rants signed by Supreme Leader Hiba-tullah

shot multiple times in

front of large crowds that

included the families of

All three men were

Akhundzada.

their victims

CAIRO: Hamas urged Palestinians on Wednesday to march to Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque at the start of Ramazan, raising the stakes in negotiations for a

The call by Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh followed comments by Biden, broadcast on Tuesday, that there was an agreement in principle for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas during Ramazan, while prisoners held by the Palestinians



People look at election results at a monitoring centre set up in Dearborn by the Listen to Michigan watch party, a group which asked voters to vote 'un committed' instead of voting for President Joe Biden.

China says its coast guard patrols around Taiwan islands 'beyond reproach'

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: China's government said on Wednesday that its coast guard patrols around a group of Taiwanese islands near the Chinese coast were "beyond reproach", and dismissed complaints the boarding of a Taiwan tourist boat had caused panic.

China's coast guard this month began regular patrols around the Taiwancontrolled Kinmen islands, which face China's Xiamen and Quanzhou cities, where two Chinese nationals died trying to flee Taiwan's coast guard after their boat entered prohibited waters.

a Taiwanese tourist boat operating from Kinmen had been boarded briefly by China's coast guard, triggering "panic", and that this week five Chinese ships entered prohibited or controlled waters.

Speaking at a regular news briefing in Beijing, Zhu Fenglian, spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, reiterated it does not recognise any offlimits waters around Kinmen for fishermen, and said that the coast guard did not cause alarm with boarding the tourist boat. "I don't think there is

red prohibited waters.
Taiwan said last week
any issue of panic," Zhu
said.

Spy row erupts in Australia over 'traitor' politician

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: Australia's government faced angry demands on Thursday to name a "traitor" former politician accused by Canberra's top spy of having "sold out" the country to a foreign power.

In an extraordinary revelation, Australia's director general of security Mike Burgess said a spy team from an unidentified country had cultivated and recruited a former Australian politician.

This politician sold out their country, party and former colleagues to advance the interests of the foreign regime," the spy

chief said in a speech in Canberra on Wednesday. Australia is a member of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing group that includes the United States, Britain, Canada and New Zealand — making it a juicy target for operatives from countries such as

China and Russia Burgess, who runs the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), said the unidentified former politician had been recruited several years ago'

The person had even proposed bringing a prime minister's family member into the "spies' orbit", a plan that did not proceed.

are released.

Northern Ireland amnesty law breaches HR convention, says UK court

Monitoring Desk BELFAST: AUK law granting immunity to combatants involved in the decades of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland known as "the Troubles" breaches the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), a Belfast court ruled on Wednesday.

Victims of the violence challenged the law, which received royal assent in September despite widespread opposition from political parties, victims organisations, the Irish government and the Council of

Drones, snake robot enter wrecked Japan nuclear reactor

TOKYO (INP): Japan sent on Thursday two minidrones and a "snake-shaped robot" into one of three nuclear reactors at the Fukushima plant crippled by a tsunami in 2011, the facility's operator said. The gadgets were de-

ployed in preparation for the removal of hundreds of tonnes of highly radioactive fuel and rubble, a risky operation expected to take decades. "We sent two drones yesterday and two drones today", in addition to the "snake-shaped robot" on Thursday, a spokesman for Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO) told.

'Uncommitted' votes show Gaza impact on Biden

Monitoring Desk DEARBORN: Joe Biden's campaign and top Democratic officials vowed to double down on efforts to win back former supporters after being hit by a much stronger-than-anticipated protest vote in the Michigan

primary over the president's

support of Israel.

About 13.2 per cent of Michigan Democrats cast a ballot for "uncommitted" in the nominating contest, following a weeks-long push by activists, an Edison Research tally showed after 9am on Wednesday. With about 85pc of all votes counted, the uncommitted vote was already over 101,000 votes, far higher than expected. Turnout for the Democratic primary was also high, at some 900,000 voters overall. About 81pc of those votes backed Biden.

being tallied, a senior Biden campaign official said the team will continue to "make our case in the state — to both uncommitted voters and the entire Michigan constituency. The president will continue to work for peace in the Middle East."

Biden's staunch sup-

port for Israel during its five-month war with Hamas, which has decimated Gaza, has sparked outrage and a well-organised backlash among progressive Demo-crats and Arab Americans, with Michigan as their epicentre. They asked Biden to push for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, condition aid to Israel and for sympathetic Democrats to vote "uncommitted" in the primary to signal that Biden could lose their support in ose votes backed Biden. As the results were aiming for 10,000 votes.

US seeks Israel's assurance for using American weapons

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Biden administration has established a mid-March deadline for Israel to sign a letter committing to adhere to international law when using American weapons. Furnished

Washi-ngton, the letter also mandates Israel to facilitate humanitarian aid into Gaza, where over half a million Palestinians are on the brink of famine.

Axios, a US news outlet, which has a copy of the letter, reports that on Tuesday, ÚS officials in both Washington and Tel Aviv formally briefed their Israeli counterparts on this new policy. They provided them with a draft letter, essential for Israel to

According to a senior Israeli official, the US has requested written assurances by mid-March. This timeline aligns with Secretary of State Blinken's goal belated.

to certify them by monthend. Israel has the flexibility to designate the government representative signing the letter.

Similar letters have also been presented to several other nations utilising US weaponry, as disclosed by a US official to Axios.

This assurance is mandated under a memorandum President Biden issued earlier this month and indicates a shift in US policy towards Israel. The change follows concerns voiced by some Democratic senators regarding the Israeli military campaign in Gaza. Failure to provide the assurance by the deadline will result in a pause in US weapon transfers to the country.

The administration's latest push for Israel to adhere to international laws of war and peace is perceived by many as insufficient and

European countries eye reopening embassies in North Korea after pandemic closures

Monitoring Desk SEOUL: A German delegation visited the North Korean capital of Pyongyang for the first time since its embassy was shuttered during the pandemic, as other European countries prepare for an anticipated

A team from the German Federal Foreign Office currently Pyongyang on a technical inspection trip, a foreign office spokesperson told Reuters

"It is inspecting the site of the German embassy over a couple of days," the spokesperson said, noting there was still no decision on reopening the embassy, which was closed in March

Many embassies closed in Pyongyang because they were unable to rotate staff or ship supplies during the COVID-19 crisis. Already under authoritarian control, North Korea world's strictest pandemic ter the country, the measures, including near-spokesperson added.

total travel bans and largescale border walls, and has only recently begun easing international restrictions.

Britain, which closed its embassy and pulled all diplomatic staff from North Korea in May 2020, was also seeking to send a team, a Foreign Office spokes-person told Reuters.

'We are pleased that some diplomats are returning to Pyongyang and welcome DPRK moves to reopen the border," the spokesperson said, using the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"We are in discussions with the DPRK government through its Embassy in London about arrangements for a visit soon by a UK technical-diplomatic team.

Britain called on North Korea to allow the international community, including all diplomats and UN agencies and huimposed some of the manitarian NGOs, to en-

Indonesia awards presumed next president Prabowo rank of four-star general

Monitoring Desk JAKARTA: Indonesia's president on Wednesday

awarded Prabowo Subianto, his presumed successor and an ex-special forces commander, the rank of honorary four-star general, decades after he was dismissed from the military amid allegations of rights Defence Minister

Prabowo, who took an insurmountable lead in the Feb 14 presidential election according to unofficial quick counts, was awarded the rank of four-star general by outgoing President Joko Widodo in a ceremony at the military headquarters in Jakarta.

"This honour is a form of appreciation, it reaffirms devotion to the people and the country. I would like to say congratulations to Prabowo General Subianto," he said, before attaching lapels with four gold stars on Prabowo's

The award marks the culmination of a decadeslong rebrand for Prabowo. 72, a once rising military star who was dismissed from the military in 1998 amid accusations he was involved in human rights abuses in East Timor and in the disappearance of 13 pro-democracy activists.

At the time, he was a three-star Lieutenant Gen-

Prabowo, the ex-sonin-law of late Indonesian dictator Suharto, has always denied wrongdoing, but was previously banned from entering the United States on account of the claims. He has never faced prosecution.

Prabowo sought selfexile in Jordan following his discharge from the military, but in the decades since he has returned to Indonesia, has built an influential political party and civilian career. In 2014 and 2019 he lost consecutive presidential bids to Jokowi, as the incumbent leader is known, before being brought into the government as defence minister in 2019.

Command & Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy reviews regional maritime situation

and Staff Conference of at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. The Conference was chaired by Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral

During the conference, maritime situation in North Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden was deliberated and measures for safety and security of Pakistan bound shipping were reviewed. Naval Chief expressed confidence over combat readiness and significant contributions of the Navy in maritime domain. During the conference, matters related to geo strategic environment, national security, operational preparedness,

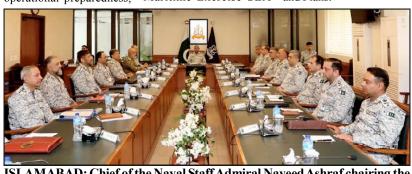
troops were reviewed. Comprehensive briefing on important on-going and future developmental projects of Pakistan Navy was also given to Chief of the Naval

Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized on strengthening of maritime security and maintaining combat readiness so as to effectively respond to any aggression against Pakistan. He urged on acquisition of niche and novel capabilities while exploiting indigenous sources in order to cope with modern day challenges in maritime

Maritime Exercise SEA

training and welfare of SPARK-2024 followed by Live Weapon Firing of Surface to Air Missile FM-90B reaffirming operational preparedness of Pachallenges while safeguarding the maritime frontiers of Pakistan. He specifically appreciated the prolonged deployment of Naval assets in North Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden and Bay of Bengal during the exer-

Command & amp; Staff Conference is the apex decision making body of Pakistan Navy in which Chief of the Naval Staff along with all Principal Staff Officers and Field Com-He lauded the suc- manders undertake review cessful conduct of major of Pakistan Navy's Policies



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf chairing the Command and Staff Conference held at Naval Headquarters.

Hajj visas from March 1: Makkah approves buildings to accommodate 1.2m pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): A month in the Islamic lunar cific places would be allot-Saudi committee in charge of housing Muslim pilgrims during the upcoming annual Hajj season in the holy city of Makkah has already licensed a total of 1,860

buildings.

The licensed buildings can accommodate an estimated 1.2 million pilgrims, according to the government panel.

Deputy Governor of Makkah Prince Saud bin Meshal has recently extended the deadline for receiving applications from landlords of such buildings for licensing them until the end of Shawwal, the 10th ing to these rules, no spe-

ISLAMABAD (APP):

The National Disaster

Management Authority

(NDMA) on Thursday

said that approximately

60% of dewatering of flood-

water in Gwadar had been

reportedly damaged so far,

while 21 individuals were

injured due to flood and wall

collapses, and under treat-

ment at medical centres, an

Some 250 houses were

completed.

month corresponding to ted any more for countries

The number of buildings for pilgrims in Makkah, known as the Holy Capital, is expected to eventually exceed 5,000.

Nearly 2 million pilgrims from around the world performed Hajj in and around Makkah last year, marking the return of their numbers to pre-pandemic

levels, Gulf News reported. Saudi Arabia has re-cently disclosed rules for the upcoming Hajj season due next June and stressed early preparations. Accord-

places for different coun-

visas will commence on March 1 and end on the 20th of Shawwal, corresponding to April 29.

grims will begin on the first of Dhul Qaidah, the 11th Islamic month, corresponding to May 9.

ISLAMABAD (Online):

Provincial Disaster Management Authority and District Administration of Gwadar was also appreciable, the NDMA said. It added that another

spell of rain was expected in southern region of Balochistan from tonight (Thursday night), which might hamper the rescue efforts.

"The NDMA is itering on

partment Balochistan,

whereas the response of

NDMA news release said. The residents of damclosely monitoring on aged houses had been ground situation and ensuring smooth coordination of shifted to rescue centres. Some 200,000 water rescue efforts between departments at provincial and purification tabs were disnational levels," the news tributed in Gwadar and Turbat by the Health Derelease said.

60% dewatering of

Gwadar floodwater

completed: NDMA



QUETTA: MPAs Mir Zabid Ali Reki, Sadiq Umrani, Younis Aziz Zehri and Haji Ali Madad Jattak in a meeting after Assembly session.

Chairman PRCS announces comprehensive relief efforts in Gwadar

the wake of the recent heavy rainfall and consequential damages in Gwadar and other regions of Balochistan, Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari announced comprehensive relief efforts aimed at addressing the immediate needs of the affected communities.

Chairing an Emergency Response meeting attended by the Secretary General and the relevant departments, he gave robust directives for urgent rescue and relief operations.

He said the PRCS National headquarters has already activated its operations room to monitor the situation closely.

Collaborating with rogram heads and the Balochistan provincial branch, PRCS has devised a detailed action plan focused on providing timely assistance to those impacted by the adverse maximum impact.

ISLAMABAD (APP): In weather conditions. Rapid assessment teams have been mobilized at both district and provincial levels to evaluate the extent of the damage and execute critical rescue and relief efforts, he

Chairman Laghari has instructed the mobilization of relief packages from warehouse stocks to meet the immediate needs of the affected individuals. The action plan prioritizes the provision of essential household non-food items deployment of health teams, establishment of public health facilities, promotion of personal hygiene, and ensuring access to clean drinking water for

those affected. He said maintaining open lines of communication, PRCS is in constant contact with the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and district administration to coordinate efforts effectively and optimize resources for

at the Saudi holy sites in the new pilgrimage season Saudi Minister of Hajj Tawfiq Al Rabiah has said. He explained that

tries will be designated de-pending on finalising con-The issuance of Hajj

The arrival of Hajj pil-

PDM-2 will soon meet its doom: Pervaiz

PTI leader Chajudhry Pervaiz Elahi has said PDM-2 will soon meet its He said this in an in-

formal chat with journalists on the occasion of his appearance in Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad Thursday. He held how the de-

feated persons are taking oath by changing the man-date of PTI. The junior darling failed senior ladla first and now he has come He and the filth he has spread will be cleaned together

He went on to say distribution of posts is not acceptable to people.

PPP letter to CEC Election on 9 vacant seats of Senate be held forthwith

ISLAMABAD (Online): PPP has written a letter to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on the mat-ter of 9 vacant seats of sen-

It has been said in the letter that 8 senators were elected as Members of National Assembly (MNA) in the recent general election. Those who have succeeded as MNAs are Yousuf Raza Gillani, Abdul Ghafoor Haidri, Nisar KhoroJam Mehtab, Sarfraz Bugti, Sadiq Sanjarani,Prince Umar and Nuzhat Sadiq. Caretaker prime minister has already resigned from his Senate

Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves reach \$ 13.038 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 13,038.5 million in the week ended on February 23. 2024 while foreign reserves held by State Bank reached \$ 7.949.6 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank decreased by \$63 million to \$7,949.6 million due to debt repayments during the week under review.

Meanwhile net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$ 5,088.9 million.



KHEWRA: President Dr Arif Alvi being briefed about salt mining during his

Pink salt may be projected as Pakistani product in world markets: President

KHEWRA (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday underlined the need for projecting pink salt as a Pakistani product in potential global markets after its value addition in line with the international stan-

"A significant amount of foreign exchange can be earned by adding value to the local raw salt and making various products," he said during his visit to the Khewra Salt Mine.

He also emphasized to utilize the modern technology to minimize the loss of salt during the mining process besides adopting atmo-

sphere-friendly and reonsible mining ways. He said Pakistan had huge reserves of high quality rock salt which was low-cost and full of miner-

The president also reviewed the tourist places inside the salt mine.

On the occasion, the president was briefed on various ongoing projects of Pakistan Minerals Development Corporation in Khewra. He was informed about quality of the salt found in Khewra and various salt ingredients.

est in the historical back-ground of Khewra Mine Managing Director, Pakistan Minerals Develand wrote down commen in the guest book.

Continuous rains all over province: Rain Emergency enforced in all local councils of Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The rain emergency has been enforced in all local councils of Balochistan in view of the continuous intermittent

The rain emergency has been enforced by the Local Government department, as announced by its administrative secretary, Noor Ahmed Pirkani on Thursday. The emergency has

been enforced to mitigate any unforeseen situation owing to forecasted rainfall spell issued by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan.

According to the Secretary Local Government, all the chief officers and

directed to remain alert to tackle any emergent situation in view of the rains continued in the province.

The Secretary also directed to the chief officers to ensure their presence at their respective stations and extend close coordination and cooperation with their respective district administration.

They have also been directed that all the necessary machinery / equipment be made readily available. In case of any damage / loss of life and livelihood the same may be reported the Balochistan Local Government Board along with pictography report on imme-

Meanwhile, a control room has also been establines by the FIA team, and other concerned high ups of lished in the Local Govern-



QUETTA: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai administering oath to newly elected Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola.

Siraj calls for national dialogue for transparent election mechanism

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq has expressing concerns over the future of democracy in the country has urged a national dialogue among political stakeholders to establish a transpar-

ent election mechanism. Addressing a press conference at Mansoorah on Thursday, he said the JI's Working Committee in its Wednesday meeting has unanimously deemed the Election 2024 as rigged and controversial, vowing to expose it democratically.

Sirajul Haq had presided over the session of the JI's Majlise Aamal which discussed election and post-election's situation

and future strategy.
He said that the JI has already started efforts for holding of national dialogue to save the democracy and in this regard, it hosted a session of the observers and members of civil society.

sized the importance of announcing results based on Form 45, asserting that any government formed on a fake mandate would fail to address the country's crises. The nation demanded the poll results should be announced on the basis of Form 45, he said. He criticized institutions for falling short of the nation's expectations regarding election impartiality. He called for the resignation of the chief election commissioner, saying the latter has failed to protect the democratic rights of the people of Pakistan. The JI demanded a transparent audit of the 2024 elections through an independent judicial commission inclusive of political party represen-

tations, he said. Siraj asserted that the JI's mandate

was stolen in Karachi and

results tampered with in

The JI leader empha-



(LPG) into cylinder at his shop in Quetta.

People's representatives to run country' affairs after general elections: Solangi

formation, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said the elected representatives of the people would eventually run the affairs of country after general elections.

Speaking in a talk-show of the Pakistan Television, he said the caretaker government had fulfilled its constitutional responsibility of holding elections in free, fair and peaceful manner by fully facilitating the Election Commission of

To a query, he said the newly elected Prime Minister would take oath on March 4 while Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly would be

opment Corporation in-

formed the president about

various aspects of salt min-

ing from Khewra Salt Mine

The president was informed about the ongoing

activities for salt mining.

augurated the salt library at

the Khewra Salt Mine and

visited the Asthma Center.

ing treatment in the

Asthuma center in Khewra

PTA escalates

crackdown on

illegal issuance

of SIMs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pa-

kistan Telecommunication

Authority (PTA) Zonal

Office Rawalpindi, in col-

laboration with the Federal

Investigation Agency (FIA)

Cyber Crime Wing, suc-

cessfully conducted three

raids targeting franchisees

of a mobile phone company

and an illegal SIM registra-

tion vendor in Hasan Abdal,

Wah, and Rawalpindi, re-

were found to be involved

in illegal issuance of SIMs

pre-active SIMs, 3 BVS

devices, 748 silicon

conducting a thorough in-

said a news release.

The sale channels

During the raid, 3550

spectively.

President Alvi also in-

He also interacted with the patients undergo-

He took special inter-

ISLAMABAD (APP): elected on Friday.
Caretaker Minister for InHe said newly elected Members of National Assembly had taken oath today as the notification for convening of National Assembly session was issued

late night.
Murtaza Solangi said the process of negotiations with International Monetary Fund would go forward despite PTI's letter.

To a question Murtaza olangi said the next Prime Minister would take multiple initiatives to redress the major problems being faced by the country.

He said the caretaker government had fulfilled the financial requirements of the ECP for holding the elections and added it also attached priority to put the economy on track



QUETTA: MPAs Mir Asim Kurd, Haji Muhammad Toor Utmankhail and Mir Shoaib Nosherwani greet newly elected Speaker Balochistan Āssembly Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

Sanctity of House would be maintained Khaliq Achakzai vows to take all parties along while serving as Speaker BA

Independent Report elected Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai has vowed to take all parliamen-

serving as the Speaker. Abdul Achakzai was speaking to the media persons soon after announcement about his election as Speaker Provincial Assembly on Thursday.

Mr. Achakzai said that it would be his endeavour to take all the parties along as custodian of the house. He said that he is thankful to Allah Almighty and then to all those who

thumbs, 11 thousand digital fingerprints, and a printer were confiscated. reposed confidence in him. Three individuals were apprehended on the pre-FIRs have been filed against them. Currently, the FIA is

vestigation into the matter. Prior to these raids, PTA had filed a complaint with the FIA based on information related to the illegal issuance of SIMs by these sales channels.

Ahsan stresses national unity, consensus building

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim Leágue-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday emphasized the responsibility of politicians to foster progress through empathy and reconciliation. Talking to PTV news

channel, Ahsan said that rather than dwelling on past grievances, Ahsan advocates for healing and unity, stressing the importance of national interest and consensus-building. Acknowledging the forthcoming government's challenges, he underscores the party's sincere intentions to address the country's issues and prioritize the welfare of future generations. He admitted a gap between the old and new generations' political approaches, and he acknowledged the need to match the younger generation's aspirations.

honourableand valued for us. He said that it would be his utmost endeavour to run the assembly in judi-

tary parties along while Meanwhile, while expressing his views soon after taking oath of his office, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai once again thanked those members of assembly who reposed their confidence on

> He said that it would be his endeavour to maintain sanctity of the House and run the assembly according to the rules and regu-

He also sought the support of members of as-To a query, he said that all sembly in this regard.

ECP appoints five Presiding officers for presidential elections ISLAMABAD (INP): The tion, the Chief Justice of

Pakistan (ECP) has appointed five Presiding officers to conduct election to the office of President of Pakistan, in Islamabad and four provincial capi-According to Spokes-

person of the ECP, these officers will receive nomination papers from candidates and chair meetings of the Parliament at the Parliament House, Islamabad, and the Provincial Assembly of the respective province during the scheduled polling for the Presidential Election. According to the notifica-

the Islamabad High Court will oversee the elections in the Senate and National Assembly in Islamabad.

A Member of the Election Commission of Pakistan, Election Commissionwill supervise polling in the Provincial Assembly of Punjab. The Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court will supervise the Presidential Elections in the Provincial Assembly of Sindh.

Similarly, the Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court will supervise the polls in the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Training of Division and District Coordinators from Balochistan appointed for 7th Agricultural Census on 'Supervisor and Enumerators Management System held on Thursday.

Seven software module will be utilized for 7th agricultural census in Pakistan: Gondal

Independent Report QUETTA: The training series on the 'Supervisor and Enumerator Management System' is aimed at Census Divisional and District coordinators appointed for the 7th Agricultural Census, 'Integrated Digital Count,' across Pakistan. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has deployed 200 Census District Coordinators at 157 Census Support Centers to provide technical guidance and digital support to field staff, in collaboration with Deputy Commissioners. Provincial Governments are providing approximately 7000 field staff for the field operations

The training session, at-

from various regions of source utilization. Balochistan, focused on software modules essential for conducting the digital Agricultural Census scheduled for 2024.

In September-Octo-ber, 2024, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) is gearing up to undertake the 7th Agricultural Census across the nation. This will mark the

implementation of a Digital Integrated Agricultural Census in Pakistan. Previously, agricultural, livestock, and agricultural machinery were tallied separately in distinct censuses. Now, they have been amalgamated into an Integrated Agricultural Census as a singular en-

The field operations team has been sourced from Provincial Governments, who will also oversee the execution and monitoring of field operations.

The Support Services Wing of PBS has developed several administrative modules and data entry software applications to enhance the systematic and efficient utilization of digital technol-

Among these, a key software is the 'Supervisor and Enumerator Management System', which plays a crucial role in facilitating the smooth finalization of Human Resources for Field Work by providing detailed insights into staff allocation