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PML-N's Ayaz Sadiq elected NA speaker in protest-marred session

Ayaz pledges to conduct affairs of NA in accordance with constitution

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq was elected as the speaker of the National Assembly on Friday after the conclusion of the voting process.

The PML-N politician defeated the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed independent lawmaker Malik Aamir Dogar, who was supported by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) Council lawmakers in the House.

Sadiq won the speaker's contest with 199 votes, gaining a majority from the members of the PML-N, PPP and other lawmakers backing his nomination in the lower house.

This is the second time that he has become the speaker. Sadiq had served as the speaker from 2013-

2018 in the 14th National Assembly. The polling for the election of the National Assembly speaker has been completed and the counting of votes is underway in the session that has been marred by protests of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) lawmakers. Sadiq will now be administered oath by outgoing Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf. After the oath-taking, the new speaker will then take charge of the house forthwith. Ashraf will, subsequently, step down from his position.

As the first order of business Sadiq will now hold elections for his deputy. Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Syed Ghulam Mustafa and SIC's Junaid Akbar will contest for the slot.

Today's session The NA session was



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq congratulated Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah on his election as Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly in the Federal Capital.

convened today to elect the speaker and deputy speaker during which opposition lawmakers chanted slogans against alleged rigging in the

Feb 8 polls. Before the session started SIC's parliamentary party meeting was held in the house's lobby, where they vowed to continue their pro-

test in the assembly. This is the second consecutive day that SIC has been protesting in the National Assembly over "rigged" results. As the session began, Speaker Ashraf asked if there were any new members present who had missed the oath-taking a day earlier.

As no new members came forward, the speaker then gave the floor to PTI-backed Omar Ayub Khan to speak on a point of order.

The lawmaker alleged that foreigners were present in the house.

"People who got fake mandate have entered the house, hence, they should be expelled," said Omar, adding that "prisoner number 804", the number assigned to PTI founder Imran Khan in Adiala Jail, should be brought to the Assembly.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah pays a surprise visit to the New Secretariat.

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

KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur demands CEC's resignation in fiery victory speech; Demands judicial inquiry into May 9 incidents

PESHAWAR (Online): Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has been elected as the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He secured 90 votes, during the session of the provincial assembly held in Peshawar today.

PML (N) candidate for the Chief Minister slot Ibadullah Khan secured 16 votes.

Speaking in the House after his election, newly elected Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said efforts will be made for bringing reforms in system of justice and accountability in the province.

He said laws will be enacted from this assembly for curbing corruption in society. He said terrorism has badly affected the province and efforts will be made for lasting peace.

Ali Amin Gandapur said the new provincial government would expand the tax base to increase revenue collection.

He said tourism and mining will be promoted for the development of the province.

Ali Amin Gandapur said job opportunities will be created for the youth.

Speaking on this occasion, opposition leader Ibadullah Khan said all out cooperation will be extended to the government for welfare of the people.

He stressed the need for unity among political parties for the development of the country.

Ibadullah Khan congratulated Ali Amin Khan on becoming the leader of the House.

The session has now

been prorogued.

Soon after being elected as the new Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, Ali Amin Gandapur, Friday delivered a fiery victory speech, demanding the Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja to resign alleging his role in the stealing of his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) mandate in the February 8 general elections.

Gandapur, a PTI leader who contested the polls as an independent candidate from KP, was elected as the province's new chief minister after voting concluded in the KP Assembly. Gandapur defeated Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate Dr Ibadullah Khan after securing 90 votes compared to the latter's 16.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing during launch ceremony of Womentum Organization at Governor House.

MoPA played remarkable role during interim set up: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi has said that the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs expressed remarkable performance and cooperation during interim set up.

He stated this while speaking at a farewell ceremony organized by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in his honour on Friday. Murtaza Solangi said that with the grace of Allah Almighty, the democratic process was going on in the country.

The caretaker minister

said he had been reiterating the commitment of the government since the first day that the elections would be held at time schedule given by Election Commission of Pakistan.

"The caretaker government organized timely elections and today new assemblies have come into being in the country," he maintained.

Democracy could not succeed without participation of people, Murtaza Solangi said and expressed the hope that the upcoming government would meet the expectations of the people.

Asif Zardari constitutes committee to oversee party's affairs in Punjab

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Asif Ali Zardari, Friday formed a committee to oversee party affairs in the Punjab Province.

The committee comprises two members, Nadeem Afzal Chan and Syed Ali Qasim Gillani, said a press release issued by Rukhsana Bangash, Political Secretary to the President of PPPP.

Convener MQM-P calls for helping people in rain emergency situation

KARACHI (APP): Convener of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P), Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqi has asked the members of Coordination Committee of his party, members of provincial assembly, officials and workers to stay among the people in their respective areas to help them in any kind of emergency after the rains.

He instructed that especially the members of the Sindh Assembly along with the officials and workers should play their active role in draining the rain water from the roads, to ensure smooth flow of traffic, shifting of rain-affected people to a safer place and other activities and be present among the people, said a spokesperson on Friday.

He also appealed to the people that do not go out of the house unnecessarily, especially keep children away from electric poles.

CM pays surprise visit to low-lying areas, New Secretariat

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah started his Friday morning with surprise visits to check dewater machinery in the low-lying areas and the attendance of officers at the New Secretariat.

The Chief Minister of Sindh recently visited low-lying areas in District South, including underpasses, Khaliqzaman Road, Aiwan-e-Saddar Road, the road between Sindh Secretariat and High Court, II Chundrigar Road, and other areas.

During his visit, he noticed that in some areas, the machinery of the water

board and other suction machines were not installed. As a result, he directed Commissioner Karachi to ensure that the machinery was deployed and to report back to him.

The Chief Minister paid a visit to the New Secretariat and was welcomed by the Chief Secretary, Dr Fakhre Alam. During his tour, Murad Ali noticed that some secretaries were absent from their offices at 9:30 a.m. To ensure that the staff follows their example, the CM instructed the Chief Secretary to issue directives to the department's secretaries to arrive on time at their offices.



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

Senator Khuhro claims of successful completion of tenure of upcoming govt

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Nisar Ahmed Khuhro of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has claimed that the upcoming government would successfully complete its tenure by resolving the prevailing issues being faced by the country.

Interacting with media person in the Parliament House Lobby on Friday, he said the former governments since 2008 had completed their tenure successfully, so the upcoming government would also complete its tenure.

Senator Nisar Khuhro urged the all political parties in the National Assembly to play positive role for the country's development as masses have sent them in the lower house through vote to resolve their issues.

To a question, he said that the allegations of rigging were leveled in all elections, adding, if any candidate has proof then he/she should contact to the relevant institution.

Pakistan Navy continues relief efforts in Gwadar's rain hit areas

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Navy continues relief efforts in rain and flood hit areas of Gwadar to provide relief to the affected.

According to details, Pakistan Navy troops in coordination with local administration were continuously engaged in de-flooding of homes and streets in different parts of the city while Pakistan Navy boats, divers and mobile medical teams were prepared to promptly respond to any emergency situation.

The Pakistan Navy troops along with civil administration through continued efforts were engaged for early restoration of road connectivities for onward smooth conduct of rescue activities. Further, Pakistan

Navy teams were providing cooked food, drinking water and ration bags to distressed people in various areas of Gwadar. Apart from ration distribution medical assistance was also being provided to the local affected community. In this regard, Pakistan Navy's medical teams were providing free healthcare facilities to flood affecteds at a medical camp established for local flood affected populace.

Pakistan Navy has always remained at the forefront in extending humanitarian assistance during natural calamities. Pakistan Navy was determined to continue the rescue and relief operation till the rehabilitation of all distressed people of Gwadar.

JUI boycotts election of NA speaker and deputy speaker

ISLAMABAD (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam of Maulana Fazlur Rehman opted to boycott the election of speaker and deputy speaker in the National Assembly on Friday.

Talking to a private TV channel, Shahida Akhtar Ali said their party's strategy is crystal clear as they will not take part in any election process in the National Assembly. Shahida Akhtar said "The JUI will sit on the opposition benches until it gets its mandate."

ECP fixes March 9 for presidential election

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

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

Nomination papers will undergo scrutiny by the Returning Officer in Islamabad by 10 am on Monday (March 4). Candidates have the option to withdraw their nomination papers before the Returning Officer in Islamabad until noon on Tuesday, (March 5).

KSA gifts 100 tons dates to Pakistan as goodwill gesture

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a goodwill gesture has gifted 100 tons of dates to its Pakistani brethren.

Following the recommendation of leadership of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Saudi government has extended a heartfelt gift to the people of Pakistan continuing its annual tradition during a ceremony held here at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia.

Senate by-elections on vacant seats to be held on March 14: ECP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has announced the election schedule on the six vacant seats in the Senate.

Six seats were declared vacant when the Senate members were elected as members of other houses.

These six Senate seats including election schedule for one vacant seat in Islamabad, two in Sindh and three vacant seats in Balochistan.

As per schedule, nomination papers can be collected on March 2 and 3. The elections will be held on three vacant seats of Balochistan, two of Sindh and one of Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Syed Tariq Mahmood-Ul-Hassan exchanging views with H.E Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al Maliki Royal Saudi Arabia Ambassador in Pakistan.

All is finally well between PML-N, MQM as agreement reached for parliamentary support

ISLAMABAD (INP): A three-point government formation agreement has been reached between Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P).

MQM will vote for PML-N for Prime Minister and Speaker. The three-point agreement was also signed by the leaders of both the parties.

Local government system and solving the problems of Karachi are also part of the agreement.

"According to the Charter, Constitutional amendments will be a priority," the agreement stated.

"MQM will sit on government benches instead of opposition," as per the agreement copy signed by the leaders from both sides.

MQM will vote for PML-N for Prime Minister and Speaker.

PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal also told media that MQM-P and PML-N are allies and all matters solved between both sides.



SEHWAN: A large number of devotee attending 772nd Urs of Hazrat Lal Shabbaz Qalandar.

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

Independent Report
LAHORE: A delegation led by Deputy Auditor General (Central) Tariq Bashir Chatha met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. During the meeting, the Deputy Auditor General (Central) presented the Accounts and Audit Report of the Punjab Government for the year 2023-24 to the Governor of Punjab. The delegation comprised Director General Audit Punjab, Muhammad Naseem Rashed, Director of Audits, Ikram Haq,

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

increasing the efficiency of the institution. Deputy Auditor General (Central), Tariq Bashir Chatha, told Punjab Governor in detail about the steps taken to improve the institution. He said that Auditor General's organization will review the legal organization requirements and make a strategy to include those departments in the audit system which are not being audited for any reason. He told the Punjab Governor that staff trainings are being conducted in the institution on a regular basis.



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

Four more matches decided in senior Inter-district cricket tourney

KARACHI (APP): Four more matches were decided in the Khansortium Karachi Region Senior Inter District Cricket Tournament at various cricket grounds. The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi. Brilliant centuries by Jehangir Javed 124, Ubais Ullah 124 and Waqar Ahmed 103 were made, a communique said on Friday. Scores in Brief: In the first match of

ATC grants bail to 16 accused in Jinnah House attack case

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday granted bail to 16 accused involved in a case of attacking Jinnah House. The court ordered the accused to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each for availing the relief of bail. ATC Judge Muhammad Naveed Iqbal heard the post-arrest bail petitions of accused and allowed them on completion of arguments by the parties. Muhammad Danish, Farhan Ahmad, Mukhtar Khan, Saqib Munir, Mian Abdul Rehman, Hassan Ijaz, Yasir Abbas, Muhammad Kashif, Mian Bilal, Suleman Ilyas, Adnan Ashraf, Muhammad Shan, Raheemullah, Hafiz Muhammad Nauman and Muhammad Rayan were included among the accused who were granted bail. The Sarwar Road police had registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders and workers on charges of attacking Jinnah House.



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

KPIC, TIP joins hands to promote good governance

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) and Transparency International-Pakistan (TIP) on Friday joined hands to promote good governance. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Transparency International-Pakistan to extend collaborative efforts in ensuring merit and openness in public affairs performed by public entities. The MoU was signed by Farah Hamid Khan, Chief Information Commissioner KPIC and Kashif Ali Sheikh, Executive Director, TI-Pakistan in presence of other senior officers of the organizations. Under the MoU, both the organizations will collaboratively work in mass awareness regarding Right to Information Act (RTI) and training of Public Information Officers (PIOs) for the smooth flow of public information. Both the institutions look forward to a fruitful partnership that will promote citizen integration into public affairs.

CM seeks report on murder of domestic worker

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has taken notice of the murder following alleged torture of a domestic worker in Sargodha. She immediately sought a report from the Inspector General of Police regarding the incident. According to the initial report, the accused has been identified, and raids are underway to apprehend him. Maryam Nawaz Sharif emphasized the need for a thorough investigation into the incident and urged that the perpetrator be brought to justice swiftly. She stated that violence of any kind has no place in Punjab.

IGP discusses admin, professional steps about police working

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar chaired a meeting of the police executive board at Central Police Office here on Friday and discussed administrative and professional matters related to working of the police field formations. Senior officers presented suggestions and recommendations regarding administrative and policy issues. In the executive board meeting, various issues including Punjab Mounted Police Force, inclusion of Band Staff in Telecommunication Wing and Welfare initiatives were discussed. The meeting also reviewed progress of various development projects, welfare measures of the force. The IGP ordered that proposals should be finalised and presented in the next meeting for taking a decision. He said the supervisory officers should complete all ongoing projects within the stipulated time under personal supervision.



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

'Eat Safe Kids Campaign' launched across Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority, in collaboration with the School Education Department and Special Education Department, Friday launched a province-wide 'Eat Safe Kids Campaign' in private and public schools to promote nutritious eating habits from childhood. The 'Eat Safe Kids Campaign' consisted of various interactive activities, workshops, and educational materials to engage children and make learning about healthy eating fun. Children will learn about the importance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins in their diet. The inaugural ceremony was organised at the Government Boys High School in Kareem Block and the Government Central High School for the Deaf in Gulberg. The programme was attended by PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid, Secretary School Education Muhammad Ahsan Waheed, Additional Secretary School Saba Adil, Additional Secretary Special Education Khadija-tul-Kubra, Additional Secretary Amna Munir and Additional Director Generals of PFA.

Diplomats from various countries appreciates business opportunities with Pakistan

KARACHI (APP): Diplomats of Germany, China and Oman while crediting the performance of the caretaker government and security agencies for holding peaceful election, expressed hope that democracy will strengthen in Pakistan, the future of Pakistan is, however, in the hands of the youth. They were talking to journalists at a dinner hosted by prominent businessman and Honorary Consul of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire Fazal Karim Dadabhoi in honor of Dr. Rudiger Lotz, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany at Dadabhoi residence and was attended by former caretaker provincial information minister Ahmed Shah, Mohammad Iqbal Memon, Home Secretary.

3 injured in jubilant firing, 2 held after CPO notice

FAISALABAD (APP): Three people including two minor children sustained multiple injuries due to jubilant firing while the police arrested two accused after the City Police Officer (CPO) took notice. A police spokesman said here on Friday that Muhammad Iqbal of Jameel Town, Ghulam Muhammad Abad, 5-year-old Ibrahim of Tariq Town, Kokiyanwala.

International News

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

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Gaza health authorities said Israeli forces on Thursday (Feb 29) shot dead more than 100 Palestinians as they waited for an aid delivery, but Israel blamed the deaths on crowds that surrounded aid trucks, saying victims had been trampled or run over. At least 112 people were killed and more than 280 wounded in the incident near Gaza City, Palestinian health officials said. The loss of civilian lives was the biggest in weeks. Hamas said the incident could jeopardise talks in Qatar aimed at securing a ceasefire and the release of Israeli hostages it is holding. When asked if he thought it would complicate the talks, US President Joe Biden said: "I know it will." Medics said they could not cope with the flood of serious injuries, which came on the day the death toll in nearly five months of war passed 30,000, according to Palestinian health authorities. Israel disputed the account provided by officials in Hamas-run Gaza, which has been bombarded by Israeli forces for months in a war that began after the Palestinian militant group's deadly rampage in southern Israel on Oct 7. Its military said the trucks were operated by private contractors as part of an aid operation that it had been overseeing for the past four nights. One Israeli official said there had been two incidents, hundreds of

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



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

Five countries pledge personnel for Haiti security mission, UN says

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin and Chad have formally notified the United Nations of their intent to contribute personnel to an international force to help Haitian national police fight armed gangs, a UN spokesman said on Thursday. Contributions of \$10.8 million have also been deposited into a trust fund to support the multinational security support mission, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters, adding that further pledges of \$78 million had also been made. The United Nations Security Council authorised in October a foreign security mission to Haiti, a year after the Caribbean country asked for help to fight violent gangs that have largely overrun its capital Port-au-Prince. The 15-member council's resolution requires countries to inform UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres of their participation in the security mission. While approved by the Security Council, the mission is not a UN operation. The response to Haiti's request for help was delayed due to a struggle to find a country willing to lead a security assistance mission.

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

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia is ready to hand over to Ukraine the bodies of the victims of a January military plane crash, the RIA news agency cited Russian human rights official Tatyana Moskalkova as saying on Friday. Moscow accuses Kyiv of downing the Il-76 plane in Russia's Belgorod region and killing 74 people on board, including 65 captured Ukrainian soldiers en route to be swapped for Russian prisoners of war. It has not presented evidence.

Bangladesh building fire kills 46, injures dozens

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: A massive fire in Bangladesh that raged through a six-storey building home to restaurants where many families with children were dining has killed at least 46 people and injured dozens, the health minister said on Friday. Fire authorities said a gas leak or a stove could have caused Thursday's blaze in the capital, which spread quickly after breaking out in a biryani restaurant, and was only brought under control following two hours of effort by 13 units of firefighters. Hospitals were treating 22 people with burns, Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen told reporters. "All 22 people [...] are in critical condition," Sen, himself a well-known physician, said after a visit to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. "We are trying our best to save their lives," he said. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed shock and sorrow at the incident, ordering swift treatment for the injured. She urged adherence to construction rules and regulations, including requirements for essential safety features such as fire exits and ventilation systems to prevent such tragedies in the future. One survivor, Mohammad Altaf, recounted his narrow escape from the blaze that killed two colleagues. "I went to the kitchen, broke a window and jumped to save myself," he told reporters, adding that a cashier and server who urged people to leave during the first moments had died later.



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

US Supreme Court to hear Trump's immunity claim

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court agreed on Wednesday to hear Donald Trump's claim that as a former president he is immune from prosecution, further delaying his trial on charges of conspiring to overturn the 2020 election. Trump had been scheduled to go on trial in Washington on March 4, but the nation's highest court scheduled arguments in the high-stakes case for the week of April 22 and said Trump's federal election interference trial would remain on hold for now. On the same day, a judge in the state of Illinois ordered the former president stricken off the state's primary ballot for his role in the January 6 Capitol riot. Today, both Trump and incumbent President Joe Biden are due to pay dueling visits to the US-Mexico border Thursday as they try to win over voters on immigration.

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

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: A six-story shopping mall that caught fire in the Bangladeshi capital had no fire exits, the country's prime minister said Friday, as the death toll climbed to at least 46 and rescuers continued to search for more victims. The fire started late Thursday in a restaurant on the first floor of the Green Cozy Cottage Shopping Mall in downtown Dhaka. More than a dozen firefighting units were deployed. Firefighters rescued survivors and pulled out bodies, and by early Friday, at least 43 people were confirmed dead.

Three shot dead at US dental clinic

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

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

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said on Friday improved ties with Japan were helping to combat threats from Pyongyang's weapons developments and called for help from the international community to bring about unification with North Korea. Under Yoon's conservative administration, Seoul has sought better ties with Tokyo which have been fraught with historical baggage for years at a time of China's growing influence and North Korea's growing missile and nuclear programs. During a ceremony to mark an independence holiday, Yoon said next year would be the 60th anniversary of normalised diplomatic relations with Japan and he hoped it could be a chance for the bilateral relationship to reach a "higher level." "Now, South Korea and Japan are working together to overcome the painful past and moving toward a 'new world,'" he said in a speech to commemorate the formation of an independence movement against Japan's 1910-1945 occupation of Korea. "The security cooperation between the two countries against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats has been strengthened further," he added. During his speech, Yoon said that Seoul would need international help for any prospect of unification with North Korea. "Unification is a challenging task that we cannot accomplish alone. The international community must pool its strength in a responsible manner," he said. Yoon's comments come after the North's leader Kim Jong Un in January called South Korea a "primary foe" and said unification was no longer possible.

President for enhanced cooperation between audit institutions of Pakistan, Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday called for increasing cooperation between the supreme audit institutions of Pakistan and Azerbaijan for sharing best auditing practices to enhance transparency and financial accountability.

The president, talking to the visiting Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Vugar Gulmammadov who called on him, said that public sector accounting was a critical component of financial management within government organizations that helped ensure transparency and accountability in government spending.

Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP), Muhammad Ajmal Gondal and officials of AGP also attended the meeting, a President House press release said.

Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan (CAA), Vugar Gulmammadov, briefed the president about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Supreme Audit Institution of Azerbaijan, CAA, and the Supreme Audit Institution of Pakistan, AGP, for peer reviews of public accounts.

He said that the MoU would help deepen friendly relations between the two countries.

The president lauded the signing of the MOU between AGP and CAA, adding that it would increase cooperation between two countries in the field of Public Sector Auditing.

He added that cooperation between CAA and AGP would be mutually beneficial for both the countries.

He also appreciated AGP's role in carrying out peer reviews of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of Azerbaijan.

Talking to the delegation, President Alvi said that Pakistan accorded special importance to its relations with Azerbaijan, which were based on common faith, shared history, and people-to-people contacts.

He stated that promoting cultural exchanges and strengthening cooperation in the cultural and economic fields was vital for fostering understanding and mutually beneficial development between the two brotherly nations.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan, Vugar Gulmammadov, along with his delegation called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Minister Aneeq calls for OIC delegation to broker ceasefire talks with Israeli premier

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed on Friday proposed that a delegation comprising of crucial Muslim countries, under the banner of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), should talk to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for immediate ceasefire.

In a meeting with Palestinian Ambassador Ahmed Jawad Rabi'i, the minister said Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Qatar, Egypt, and Pakistan should play their pivotal role in that regard.

The two leaders exchanged views on mutual interests and the situation in Palestine.

Minister Aneeq highlighted the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Palestine, affirming Pakistan's ongoing moral and diplomatic support for its Palestinian brethren.

He said, "Pakistan stands as the foremost supporter of the Palestinian cause and will continue to do so. The unity of the Muslim Ummah can lead to a resolution of the Palestine issue."

The minister stressed the importance of collective action to restore the sanctity of the Islamic world.

Palestinian Ambassador, Ahmed Rabi'i expressed gratitude for the love and support shown by the people of Pakistan towards Palestine.

Pakistan to host 9th Pakistan-EU Political Dialogue on 06 March

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan is hosting the 9th Pakistan-EU Political Dialogue on 06 March 2024.

During weekly press briefing it was said by the Spokesperson of Foreign Office that Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi will lead the Pakistan delegation, while Deputy Secretary General European External Action Service (EEAS) Enrique Mora will lead the EU side.

The two sides will discuss implementation of the Pakistan-EU Strategic Engagement Plan, counterterrorism, as well as important regional and global developments.

IGP reshuffles 5 DSPs in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): The Inspector General of Sindh Police Riffat Mukhtar Raja has posted five Sub Divisional Police Officers (SDPOs) including a DSP for Central Investigation Agency (CIA) in Hyderabad.

According to the office order issued on Friday, DSP CIA of Tando Allahyar district Muhammad Aslam Langha has been posted as DSP CIA in Hyderabad.

Langha during his previous stint in Hyderabad became known for leading encounters against suspects who were mostly arrested in injured conditions.

Uzair Baloch acquitted in one more case

KARACHI (INP): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Uzair Baloch and other suspects in a case pertaining to an attack on policemen to kill them during the Lyari operation.

The ATC pronounced the verdict to acquit Uzair Baloch after the prosecution failed to establish the charges against him and three others. The other acquitted suspects included Muhammad Salam alias Mullah Nisar, Zakir alias Dada and Ghulam Muhammad.

According to the prosecution, Uzair and the other accused were charged with attack and attempted murder on the police team during the Lyari operation in April 2012. The case was registered against the suspects at Kalri police station under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.

SRSO officer died in road accident

SUKKUR (APP): Asim Shaikh, an officer of Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) age 35 years, died in a tragic accident near Islamabad on Thursday night. The incident took place when he was travelling to Islamabad from Sukkur along with his three officials in a vehicle, which met an accident.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SRSO, Muhammad Dital Kalhoro visited the bereaved family and offered his condolences and expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the death of the young officer.

Power outage hits Karachi after heavy rain

KARACHI (INP): Several areas of Karachi are facing power outage as at least 150 feeders of K-Electric (KE) tripped after the city received heavy rainfall.

As per details, the electricity was suspended in Baldia Town, Surjani Town, Gulistan-e-Johar, Korangi, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Gulshan-e-Maymar, Liaquatabad, North Nazimabad and Nusrat Bhutto Colony.

Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic support to Kashmiris: FO Spokesperson

ISLAMABAD (INP): Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch has said that Pakistan will continue to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiris for the just and peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch addressing the weekly press briefing on Friday said Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi delivered a statement at the ongoing 55th Session of the Human Rights Council, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to making 2024 pivotal for human rights. She said that the Foreign Secretary urged the High Commissioner's Office to closely monitor the situation in IIOJK, to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the human right situation there.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that Pakistan denounces the decision by the Indian authorities to ban the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Bhat faction), and Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Sumji faction), while extending the current ban on the Jamaat-e-Islami, Jammu Kashmir for five more years.

Restoration of peace Govt's top priority: Sindh CM

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah says complete restoration of peace, provision of potable drinking water in Karachi and further improving transport and infrastructure of the province are the top priorities of his government. He was talking to US Ambassador Donald Blome in Karachi today.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah meets American Ambassador Donald Blome at CM House.

Commissioner visits, inspected rain water drainage in Nawabshah city

HYDERABAD (APP): Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Division Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider Shah visited different areas of Nawabshah city, inspected rainwater drains, drainage disposals and reviewed the arrangements regarding the expected rains.

The Commissioner while giving instructions to the officers of the Municipal Corporation Visited Quaid-i-Awam University, Mehran Colony and other drainage disposals and inspected the existing machinery.

Commissioner instructed the officers of the Municipal Corporation for the availability of machinery for the cleaning of the drainage channels and the disposal of rain water should be ensured and diesel should be ensured due to power outages.

DC urges removal of signboards ahead of forecasted heavy rains

HYDERABAD (INP): The Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Tariq Qureshi has directed the relevant departments to take immediate action to remove heavy signboards and billboards from the city. According to a handout issued on Friday, a letter has also been written by the Deputy Commissioner to the concerned departments in this regard.

This action was deemed necessary as the meteorological department has forecasted heavy rains in Hyderabad, and in such circumstances, it is crucial to undertake the mentioned operation to prevent any untoward incidents.

On the other hand, Deputy Commissioner Tariq Qureshi and Additional Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Najeeb-ur-Rehman Jamali visited various areas and pumping stations of Hyderabad and directed the concerned officers to assess the situation by visiting their respective areas.



KARACHI: Motorists and pedestrians wade through a street after heavy monsoon rains in the port city of Karachi.

SSDO, US Embassy organise Interactive Session with TIP experts

KARACHI (APP): The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) in collaboration with Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and US Embassy organized an interactive session with TIP experts here on Friday.

TIP survivor from New York Ansa and Joseph from law enforcement of Georgia participated as an expert in the session.

The representatives of the Sindh Government, different academia, media, parliamentarians and civil society were also attended the session.

Pakistan's strategic location fosters Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SOM), compounded by refugee influx. Despite being on Tier II Watchlist, Pakistan improved to Tier II in 2022 and 2023 due to government actions like curbing trafficking and prohibiting child soldier recruitment. Civil society, notably SSDO, aided capacity building.

Sustainable Social Development Organization's (SSDO) Executive Director Syed Kausar Abbas emphasized the importance of implementation and awareness at the district level, identifying government departments responsible for enforcing TIP regulations. SSDO has developed TIP standards and holds quarterly meetings to address the issue.



KARACHI: Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Chief, Hafiz Naem-ur-Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference, at Idara-e-Noor-ul-Haq in Karachi.

Saudi embassy, PBM join hands for Ramadan ration distribution, orphan care

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Saudi Embassy on Friday agreed to collaborate with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) to distribute ration bags during Ramadan ul Mubarak and take responsibility for the care of 100 orphans supported by Pakistan Sweet Home, with formal documentation to follow soon.

Managing Director of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Syed Tariq Mahmood Al-Hassan, visited the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad upon a special invitation from the Saudi Ambassador, Nawaf Al-Malki.

The Saudi Ambassador warmly welcomed him during the visit. He congratulated Syed Tariq Mahmood Al-Hassan on assuming the position of Managing Director of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal.

In the meeting, the Managing Director of Bait-ul-Mal and the Saudi Ambassador reached an agreement to collaborate on initiatives within Pakistan's social sectors. The Saudi Ambassador assured the Managing Director of Bait-ul-Mal of seeking further cooperation for additional social projects in the country.

Previously, Saudi relief agencies and other social organizations from Saudi Arabia have collaborated with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal on numerous projects aimed at the welfare of the needy and vulnerable individuals. The Saudi Embassy in Islamabad has consistently maintained positive and fruitful cooperation with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal.

Sindh Excise impounds 2337 vehicles during tax recovery campaign

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Excise and Taxation department, Friday, impounded 2337 vehicles and collected Rs25.4 million taxes in 11 days of road checking campaign aimed at recovery of outstanding taxes.

Inspection teams, across the province, checked 25054 vehicles and documents of 2013 defaulting vehicles were seized as well, Director General Excise and Taxation Aurangzeb Panhwer informed, said a statement issued here.

The Excise and Taxation teams checked 5510 vehicles in Karachi, 7039 in Hyderabad, 3043 in Sukkur, 3135 in Larkana, 2540 in Mirpur Khas and 3787 vehicles in Shaheed Benazirabad, he said. Road checking campaign to collect due taxes from the owners of defaulting vehicles will continue till March 7, 2024, the DG informed.



HYDERABAD: Members of Sindh Forest Workers and Civil Society are holding protest demonstration against attack on Riaz Ahmed, Chief Forest Office, at Hyderabad press club.

KDA okays process to auction govt lands this month

KARACHI (APP): The Karachi Development Authority (KDA) is all set to auction its land across the city this month.

In this context, the KDA lands across Karachi will be auctioned after completing all the necessary procedures, said Director General KDA Naveed Anwar while addressing a meeting regarding the auction.

In the meeting, there was a detailed discussion on the KDA lands to be auctioned and all the arrangements were finalized by selecting the government lands for the auction.

On this occasion, Naveed Anwar said that it will be ensured in all cases that all the lands are auctioned on merit and priority to bidders with good offers.

In the first phase, several KDA plots located in Korangi Town, North Karachi, old Nazimabad and Surjani Town will be auctioned while the auction will be broadcasted live on KDA's website www.kda.gos.pk and Facebook.

Apart from this, in order to maintain transparency during the auction, letters have also been issued to the concerned institutions to ensure their presence on the occasion of the public auction so that the entire process can be completed impartially.

Kashmor police recovers 3 hostages: DIG

LARKANA (APP): Kashmir Police and Rangers conducted a joint operation and recovered three hostages including a policeman who was kidnapped 10 days ago.

In this context, DIG Larkana Nasir Aftab said that on February 28, armed criminals attacked the police picket in Mayani, Badani police station and kidnapped police officer Asghar Ali Chachar on resistance.

In addition, 10 days ago, two persons, Wahid Ali son of Shah Mohammad Chandio and Dadan son of Arbab Ali were abducted by bandits after demanding marriage certificate.

Pharma industry should focus on Africa, Central Asia & Afghanistan to boost exports: Minister

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr. Nadeem Jan said that despite the short time, he made strenuous efforts to bring reforms in the health sector. He said several steps were taken, including the digitization of DRAP, a new policy for the prices of medicines, and the search for new markets to promote exports.

Talking to President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and other members of chamber during his visit to ICCI on Friday, he said that Pakistan's pharma sector has the potential to expand the country's exports. The industry should focus on exports to countries in Central Asia, Africa, and Afghanistan.

Dr Nadeem Jan said that it was his mission to bring reforms in the health sector. He said that he worked day and night for the country's pride he took practical steps to increase pharma exports for the betterment of the economy and took the Pharma Park project forward. He said that this project is of key importance to the industry.

Teenager killed, two injured in roof collapse

KARACHI (INP): A teenager was killed and two others injured roof of a dilapidated house came down here on Friday, rescue sources said.

According to details, roof of a house located in Sarjani Town area of Karachi suddenly came down resultingly three people were trapped under the debris.

A 12-year-old child identified as Raza was killed in the mishap while two others sustained injuries.

Two robbers injured, held with arms, looted valuables after encounter

KARACHI (INP): Two robbers were injured and arrested with arms and looted valuables after exchange of fire here in the metropolis on Friday.

The police on a tip-off approached a two-member gang of motorcycle riding robbers engaged in looting citizens in Jamshed Quarter area of Karachi.

Upon sight of police, the robbers started firing and attempted to flee from the scene.

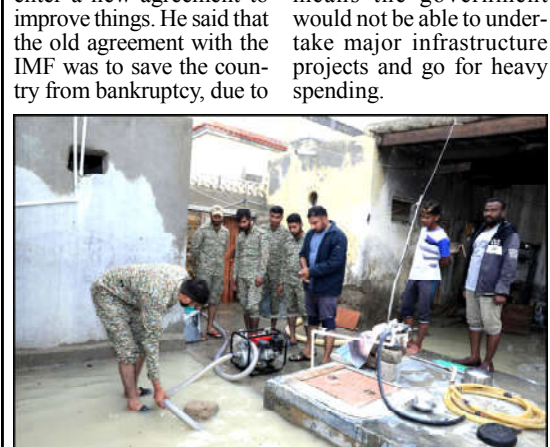
In retaliatory firing of police, both robbers were injured and held with arms and looted valuables.

World Civil Defense Day observed in Mirpurkhas

MIRPURKHAS (APP): On the occasion of World Civil Defense Day, a commendation award distribution ceremony was organized by the Civil Defense Department of Mirpur Khas in the Municipal Corporation Hall here on Friday.

Chief Warden Civil Defense and Mayor Municipal Corporation Abdul Rauf Ghori addressed the ceremony.

He said that Civil Defense volunteers are rendering their services fearlessly and free of charge in emergencies and other situations, which is commendable.



Pakistan Navy rescue workers during rescue efforts at flood affected areas of Gwadar.