

Independent

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Vol. XIV No. 93 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Monday April 22, 2024, Shawal 13, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Parvez Elahi loses PP-32 seat to Musa Elahi in Gujarat

PML-N takes lead as results pour in of by-elections in 21 NA, PA seats

A clash between PML-N and PTI workers in Narowal's PP-54 resulted in death of a PML-N worker; ECP takes notice of activist killing, 'abduction' of polling staff

LAHORE (INP): The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has taken the lead in the by-polls held on nearly two dozen national and provincial seats on Sunday, as per unofficial and preliminary results.

Provisional results of the by-elections in five national and 16 provincial constituencies have begun trickling in as the vote count commenced following the conclusion of polling on Sunday.

Polling continued from 8 am until 5 pm without any break – across five National Assembly seats, 12 Punjab Assembly seats, two Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Assembly seats and two Balochistan

Assembly seats – amid stringent security measures.

In a major upset, former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed (PTI) Sunni Ittehad Council candidate Parvez Elahi, contesting from PP-32, faced defeat from Gujarat as Musa Elahi from the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) secured victory.

Musa Elahi emerged victorious with an impressive count of 63,536 votes, as per unofficial results.

In contrast, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi could only manage to secure 18,237 votes, according to the unofficial tally.

This outcome marks a significant shift in the po-

litical landscape of Gujarat, signaling a change in representation for the constituency.

The results of the 21 by-elections started pouring in as per the unofficial and unverified after polling concluded amid violent incidents reported in Narowal. Elections were originally scheduled for 23 constituencies. However, the results of two seats, one national [NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad] and one provincial [PS-80 Dadu], had already been announced.

PPP's Aseefa Bhutto Zardari was elected unopposed on the NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad seat, while the PS-80 Dadu seat was secured by Zubair

Ahmad Junejo.

During the polling today, cellular and internet services remained suspended in 13 cities of Punjab and are likely to remain off till late night.

As per unverified and unconfirmed reports coming in shortly after by-polls closed, the PML-N is riding the tide in Punjab, with its election candidates attaining lead over competitors mainly from the Sunni Ittehad Council which is backed by the PTI.

Meanwhile at least one dead in clashes between Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) workers in PP-54 Zafarwal during by-

elections.

As per details, the police officials said that the deceased was identified as 60-year-old Muhammad Yousuf, a PML-N worker.

Following the tragic incident, the police took the dead body into custody for further investigation. Reacting to the incident, the Punjab Election Commissioner's spokesperson said that the polling continued uninterrupted despite the incident as it occurred 200 meters away from the polling station.

Election Commissioner Punjab, Ejaz Anwar Chohan, urged political parties to remain tolerant and appealed to workers to refrain from violence.



WASHINGTON DC: Finance Minister Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb's interaction with Pakistani media at Pakistan Embassy.

FM declares negotiations with Int'l financial institutions as positive

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb has declared negotiations with international financial institutions as positive.

Addressing a news conference in Washington along with Pakistan Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan, he said that Pakistan Stock Market witnessed a historical bullish trend in recent days due to positive indicators of economy.

The Minister said that the mechanism regarding tax collection was also being improved through reforms.

He said that Pakistan was heading towards financial stability as government's vision regarding revival of economy is quite clear.

Muhammad Aurangzeb also stressed the need for concrete measures to reduce government expenditures.

INP adds: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb has expressed the expectation of larger bailout programme from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and considered

improving the revenue distribution between the provinces and the Centre.

The minister said, if the loan is approved, Islamabad would revisit its NFC award that allocates revenues between the federation and the provinces.

He said that some of the sectors which need to be brought in a much bigger way into the tax net were provincial markets.

Pakistan is requesting a "larger and longer" multi-billion-dollar loan programme from the IMF and discussions are underway with the Fund's officials, the finance minister said, without specifying how much the nation was trying to secure.

Aurangzeb, who is in the US capital with his team to participate in the

IMF and World Bank's meetings and request new financial package, said once the mission is back in Islamabad, we are going to agree on the priorities and the principles. "I believe it is Pakistan's programme. It is not an IMF programme. It is a Pakistan's programme and it is supported, assisted and funded by the IMF."

What's the size, and the reality and where we are, it's premature to talk about that. We have our own views and we'll share it with IMF. But I would rather leave it to the joint meetings in terms of the size and the duration of the programme," Aurangzeb told a group of journalists and think-tanks in Washington on Saturday.

Asked by TRT World if Islamabad would revisit its National Finance Commission (NFC) award the allocation of revenues between the federation and the provinces once IMF approves the new loan programme, Aurangzeb said, Pakistan needs to review it in the context of 18th amendment where a lot of stuff has been devolved to the provinces.

"It is a discussion which we will have with the provinces in terms of either expenditure sharing or requesting them to incentivise to bring up the tax base, because the reality is, after the 18th amendment and the NFC award, some of the sectors which need to be brought in a much bigger way into the tax net are actually provincial markets," he said.



LAHORE: Eminent religious scholar Dr. Raghیب Hussain Naeemi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

People rejected PTI's narrative of falsehood by overwhelmingly voting PML-N in by-polls: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Sunday called the victory of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) as a manifestation of the people's trust in the people-friendly policies of the government and a clear rejection of the narrative of falsehood worked out by the leadership of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from behind the bars.

"Preliminary results of today's by-polls have validated the fact that the

people of Pakistan firmly believe in the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and they fully welcome the people-friendly policies of its government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif," said the minister in a video message on the by-polls held in multiple constituencies today. He said the economic reforms implemented by PM Shehbaz Sharif and his team had given a hope to the masses who shown their trust in the government by voting the PML-N.



LAHORE: President Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan Dr. Hafizur Rehman sending 8th tranche of relief goods for people of Palestine.

Pakistan sends humanitarian assistance tranche for Gaza: FM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar on Sunday said that Pakistan dispatched 8th tranche of humanitarian assistance for the people of Gaza.

The 400 tons assistance consisted of winterized tents, tarpaulins, blankets, medicines and food supplies through sea, the foreign minister posted on his X account. "The shipment will be received by the Pakistani Ambassador at Port Said, Egypt and handed over to the Egyptian Red Crescent for onward delivery to the people of Gaza. Pakistan remains committed to addressing the urgent humanitarian needs of our brothers and sisters in Gaza," he further posted. Ishaq Dar on Sunday said that Pakistan dispatched 8th tranche of humanitarian assistance for the people of Gaza.

Meanwhile National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with Al-Khidmat Foundation has coordinated to send another commercial cargo ship for the 8th tranche of relief assistance in accordance with the government of Pakistan's instructions to provide humanitarian support to the people of Gaza.

Additional Foreign Secretary Ahmed Amjad Ali, Palestinian Ambassador Ahmad Rabaie, Representatives of Al Khidmat Foundation, Senior officials of NDMA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Armed Forces attended the send-off ceremony at South Asia Pakistan Terminal (SAPT) Karachi, a news release said.

The shipment is destined to reach Said Port, Egypt for further distribution to the People of Gaza.

Saudi citizen abducted in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: A Saudi Arabian citizen has been reportedly kidnapped from Sector F8 of Islamabad, prompting swift action from law enforcement authorities.

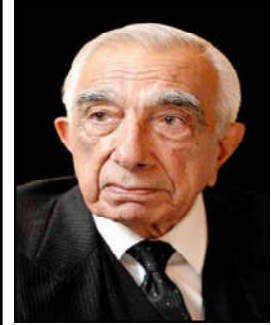
The Margalla police station has registered a first information report (FIR) at the request of an official from the Saudi embassy.

According to the FIR, the accused, identified as Abdul Wahid Shahid Khan, allegedly kidnapped Saudi citizen Hanan Abdullah al-Bashar. The FIR also highlights the urgency of the situation, emphasizing the need for the kidnapper to face legal consequences and for the prompt recovery of the abducted individual.

Former bureaucrat Roedad Khan passes away at 101

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former bureaucrat Roedad Khan passed away at the age of 101 here on Sunday.

Since his entry into the Pakistani Civil Services in 1949, he has held a number of positions, including those of chief secretary of



Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, managing director of PTV, information secretary during Yahya Khan's regime, secretary ministry of labour and tourism, interior secretary of Pakistan, secretary general ministry of interior, federal minister of accountability, and adviser to the prime minister and president.

Iranian President Raisi to reach Islamabad today with a focus on regional dev., connectivity, trade

This will be the first visit by any head of state to Pakistan after the February 8 general elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will reach Pakistan on Monday for a three-day visit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Sunday, to become the first head of state to arrive in the country after the Feb 8 general elections.

During his stay, Raisi will meet President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani and National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the statement said, adding that he was also scheduled to visit Lahore and Karachi, where he would hold talks with the provincial leadership.

The Iranian president would be accompanied by his spouse, the foreign minister and other cabinet members, senior officials as well as a large business delegation.



According to the Foreign Office, the two sides will have a wide-ranging agenda to further Pakistan-Iran ties and enhance cooperation in diverse fields including trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture and people-to-people contacts.

"They will also discuss regional and global developments and bilateral cooperation to combat the common threat of terrorism," the statement read.

Gohar calls by-elections a farce, slams ECP for failing to ensure transparency

GUJRAT (INP) – Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan criticised the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Sunday, accusing it of failing to conduct the by-elections on 21 national and provincial seats transparently.

Speaking to reporters outside the Khattala polling station in Gujrat's PP-32 constituency, Gohar called the by-elections a farce, arguing that parliament should consist of genuine public representatives

with popular support, rather than those installed through electoral malpractice.

Gohar declared that the PTI would not recognise the results of the PP-32 constituency by-polls.

Asked about the death of a political worker from the PML-N in Narowal, Gohar expressed sadness and stressed the importance of respecting differing opinions among political workers from opposing parties.

Pakistan Navy continues rescue, relief operation in flood hit areas of Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): Pakistan Navy in the aftermath of recent unprecedented rain spells in Gwadar, Ormara and adjoining villages of Balochistan, was actively undertaking rescue and relief operation named 'Operation Madad' from past three days.

Immediate relief was provided to affected families on Sunday upon receiving information through local sources that large number of people were stranded into houses

due accumulated water in vicinity and were in immediate need of ration supplies.

Pakistan Navy Rescue teams immediately coordinated the efforts and air dropped ration bags to affected people of Muradi, Dando, Kulanch and adjoining isolated areas of Gwadar District. Pakistan Navy Sea King helicopters undertook multiple sorties to ensure ration supply to hundreds of stranded families.



Pakistan Navy rescue teams air dropping ration bags to trapped people of Muradi, Dando and Kulanch near Gwadar.

Tarar condemns killing of PML-N worker in Narowal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Sunday strongly condemned killing of a senior worker of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Narowal that had the by-polls in one of its constituencies earlier in the day. Deceased Muhammad Yousaf was a worker of Muslim League-N, said the minister in a news statement while expressing condolences for the bereaved family over demise of Yousaf.

The minister regretted that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had resorted to the violence and killing for winning the by-elections through rigging.

Two more customs officials shot dead in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): At least two Customs officials were killed and two were injured in a firing incident near Parking Plaza in DI Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police sources said.

Unidentified assailants opened fire as the Customs officials were targeted near Parking Plaza. DSGV vehicle of a private TV news channel also came under the fire, luckily the staff remained safe.

The attackers escaped the scene after the shooting incident. The bodies and injured were moved to the District HQ Hospital.

On 18 April, at least four Customs officials were killed in a firing incident near Saggi road in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's DI Khan.

Last month, at least two soldiers of Pakistan army embraced martyrdom in DI Khan suicide attack.

According to Inter-Services-Public-Relations,

two security personnel embraced martyrdom as a vehicle-borne suicide bomber exploded himself on a security forces' convoy in Dera Ismail Khan District.

In February this year, at least five cops were martyred and two others sustained injuries as explosion occurred near police vehicle in Kulachi.

Meanwhile Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi strongly condemned the incident of firing on customs officials in the limits of Dera Ismail Khan Police Station on Sunday.

The minister expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of three customs officials in the attack and expressed his heartfelt sympathy to the families of the martyrs. He prayed for the martyrs and for the speedy recovery of the injured. The martyred officers were identified as Inspector Hasnain Tarni, Constable Ziad Khan and the civilian was identified as Amir.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Elections in India

India's mammoth multi-stage elections have begun and the popular issues gripping the voters this time are unemployment, inflation and related economic despair.

This is far removed from the divisive polls of 2014 and 2019, and it is not because pro-Hindutva campaigners are not trying to kindle the fires of communalism. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has personally signalled the intent by using an election speech to attack opposition leaders as Mughal-like meat-eaters, not just ordinary lovers of mutton and fish.

Despite the enormous funds and the hard advertising put into it, the controversial Ram temple inauguration is being listed by analysts as way down in the voters' list of priorities. The perceptible absence of polarisation — usually derived from Muslim-bashing, often by falsely conjuring a Pakistan link — could bring surprises when votes are counted on June 4.

Consider the case of Navneet Rana, a feisty woman candidate for the BJP from Amravati in Maharashtra. She has been unflinchingly reminding her supporters to not rest on their oars in the delusion that there is a Modi wave, or that he would see her through. "There is no Modi wave this time. Stay very vigilant." The Rana video is not the only call to toil for BJP supporters.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is a member of the Rajya Sabha and she has been quoted as turning down the BJP's offer to fight the Lok Sabha polls, saying she simply did not have the kind of money needed for the elections. This is being seen as an oblique criticism of the electoral bonds scam in which the BJP was a major beneficiary.

Ms Sitharaman is tame compared with her political economist husband Parakala Prabhakar. His book *The Crooked Timber of New India: Essays on a Republic in Crisis* is a critique of the Modi years and has predictably baffled many. Mr Prabhakar has claimed in TV interviews there would be no constitution if Mr Modi returned to power. However, he also predicts that the BJP would not cross 200 seats, 72 short of the halfway mark. Similar claims have been made by Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders.

Independent accounts by online media outlets and spot reports circulating on the alternative media channels are at variance with Modi-friendly TV anchors and they do not see easy victory for the prime minister. Parallel accounts share much with the reliable pre-poll survey by the Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. Even as it places Mr Modi ahead of any rival for the top job, the survey lists issues in the elections that make him vulnerable. Barring a game-changing event like Pulwama or the Muzaffarnagar riots, these Indian elections look poised to surprise everyone in the fray and in the galleries.

Plan for Pakistan

Aisha Khan

We are living through a turbulent time in history. The changes that have taken place in the last 100 years are both a cause for celebration and a matter of concern. From the wounds of world wars to the economic transformation, and from the miracles of science and technology to the climate crisis — all are part of a lived experience that has altered the geopolitical and geo-economic landscape of the planet that we call home.

Today, we face a troubling convergence of climate crisis, armed conflict, soaring interest rates, and escalating debt burdens in many nations. The lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges. This complex scenario poses significant obstacles to achieving the global climate objectives outlined in the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Broadly speaking, the challenges are myriad and solution pathways vary. However, there is a need for prioritising actions and coalescing multiple streams into a point of convergence for strengthening resilience. In moving forward, it is important to leverage learning to set priorities for an implementable action agenda. Right now, all actors should focus on designing their diplomatic strategies to increase space for multilateral discussions and action on climate and nature taking into account the need for:

Increasing ambition on Nationally Determined Contributions and implementing commitments through national and subnational policies informed by the Global Stock-take and the findings of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change. Emphasising the

need to move away from current fossil fuel approaches in a just, orderly and equitable manner, making sure that ambition and commitments at the international level are implementable at the domestic level.

Unlocking finance and making it fit for purpose by building a fairer economic and financial system that ensures scaling up public and private finance and making it available equitably to meet the escalating need for mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and nature conservation. This includes negotiations on a 'New Collective Quantified Goal' for climate finance, growing momentum for connecting the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and ongoing focus on the urgency for reform in the global financial architecture.

Accelerating technology development for transitioning to renewable energy and investing simultaneously in technologies for capturing and storing carbon dioxide emissions.

A sequence of events this year will provide opportunities to move forward on these priorities with a focus on implementation. This includes meetings of the G7, G20, UNFCCC work programmes and interessional sessions in Bonn as well as the IMF-World Bank meetings, Clean Energy Ministerial and Summit of the Future on the road to COP29.

The year 2025 will mark the halfway point in this 'critical decade'. It will also be the next forcing moment of the Paris Agreement ambition cycle with the parties expected to submit new and enhanced climate plans.

For countries in South Asia, this is going to be a decade of

difficult decisions. Living on the arc of vulnerability that stretches from the cryosphere to the coast, the impacts on the Third Pole will not remain confined to the two billion people who share water, air and land resources. Its cascading impact will destabilise the global climatic regime, disrupt supply chains, and throw the global economy in a flux, creating conditions for conflict.

A South Asia caught in a climate crisis means pushing one quarter of the global population into turmoil. It also means depriving a large young cohort of a fair future and exposing women, who constitute approximately half the population, to higher risks. Fintech provides yet another opportunity for bringing countries in South Asia on one platform. It is a critical component of any climate solution strategy to ensure a better, brighter and beneficial future. Fintech integration should not be seen only as an instrument for meeting climate targets but as an investment in regional peace, security and stabilisation.

We are living in unusual times where it is imperative to overcome divisions and work together to achieve objectives shared under the Paris Agreement. We need to uphold the spirit of deep cooperation that led to its conclusion in 2015, and see it as essential to any climate-win scenario.

Pakistan needs to plan for a future in which business as usual may not be the best option to cope with a future beset by challenges. This is a realisation that needs to be acknowledged across party lines, society and diaspora to survive this critical decade. -- Courtesy Dawn

No good options

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

For over six months, Israel has been on a killing spree in Gaza, bombing residential buildings, hospitals, mosques, even refugee camps. The overwhelming majority of casualties are civilians, mostly women and minors. Adding to Israel's crimes against humanity are the restrictions on the Gazans' access to humanitarian assistance, including food and medicine supplies, and the killing of aid workers. The harrowing details of the apocalyptic, famine-like conditions in Gaza are heartbreaking.

Initially, after the Hamas attack on Israel last October, Western countries justified the ferocious assault on Gaza's people as Israel's right to self-defence. However, when the bombings intensified and the killings multiplied, massive protests erupted across the world, including in major American and European cities. Public opinion in the West began to swing against the Israeli government for the brutalities it was committing. A series of Security Council resolutions were mooted, calling upon Israel to effect an immediate ceasefire, but the US veto prevented their adoption. In January, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel must take measures to prevent the crime of genocide against the Palestinians. The ICJ is now considering charges against Germany for facilitating Israel's genocide by supplying weapons.

With public pressure growing, the US modulated its position and abstained on the Security Council resolution of March 25 that called for an immediate ceasefire. President Joe Biden's calls for Israel to reach a deal with Hamas

also became more emphatic. At home, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is losing popularity, and has been facing protests from the families of the hostages.

A desperate Netanyahu ordered an attack on the Iran embassy premises in Damascus on April 1, ostensibly to shift global attention from Gaza to Iran, and bring the US into the war. Iran gave a measured three-step sequential response through the launch of drones and missiles, some of which pierced Israel's iron dome defence system and hit the intended target. There are reports of Israel's missile strike near Isfahan, which Iran has downplayed.

The world now waits with anxiety as Iran and Israel weigh their options. Three factors are relevant. First, the US has made it clear to Israel that it is opposed to a wider war, even though the Western countries stand firmly behind Israel and are reinforcing sanctions against Iran. Second, both countries have tested each other's offensive and defensive capabilities and Iran is satisfied that its deterrence has been established. Third, Israel's effort to divert attention from Gaza and drag the US into the war have failed. Global attention will shift back to the situation in Gaza, in particular Rafah.

However, given that the war in Gaza is still continuing, further escalation of confrontation by other means cannot be ruled out. In the days ahead, Israel might carry out a major strike against pro-Iran militant groups, particularly Hezbollah in Lebanon, obliging Hezbollah to respond with force, aided by other militant groups in the area. If this confrontation expands, Iran would again get involved. In

such circumstances, if Israel attacks the Iranian nuclear installations deliberately, covertly, or by mistake, the ambit of conflict would escalate sharply. A nuclear war would engulf not only the region but the entire world. The consequences of this scenario are so horrendous that Israel would be careful not to move in this direction.

A more likely scenario, however, is that Israel will continue its low-key attacks on Iranian regional proxies, coupled with intensified covert operations against Iranian assets, evoking similarly covert responses from Iran. Since Israel's efforts to expand the ambit of war have failed, the US pressure on Israel would grow to end the war in Gaza, and allow humanitarian access, particularly because of America's election dynamics.

In every scenario, Israel emerges as the loser. It has killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians, reminiscent of what the victims of apartheid and the Holocaust faced. Israel's hubris about the invincibility of its military machine has been shattered. Given that Iran could penetrate Israel's high-tech defence, the people of Israel are feeling increasingly worried.

The Arab countries have not been able to exert much pressure on Israel beyond efforts to facilitate negotiations for ceasefire. All said and done, Israel has failed to achieve its objectives of creating a 'Greater Israel' or eliminating Palestinian resistance. For its part, Pakistan can take pride in having extended consistent and unwavering support for the right of Palestinians to have a sovereign state of their own within pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Ambassador Hashmi visits Shouguang Vegetable Science and Technology Expo

BEIJING (APP): As a part of his orientation tour to Shandong, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi paid a one-day visit to Shouguang county, renowned for being China's "vegetable capital" at the invitation of the Shouguang government.

The ambassador also delivered remarks at the opening ceremony of the 25th China (Shouguang) International Vegetable Science and Technology Expo and took a tour of the expo and visited the Pakistan pavilion.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Expo, Ambassador Hashmi praised the Expo's role in promoting global agricultural innovation and

cooperation. He commended Shouguang's leadership in the field of vegetable production, highlighting its international reputation as a center for excellence in facility vegetables.

Ambassador Hashmi also underscored the longstanding partnership between China and Pakistan, particularly in agriculture, recognizing it as a cornerstone of their bilateral relations.

He highlighted Pakistan's agrarian landscape, showcasing its substantial contributions to GDP and employment, and emphasized the country's commitment to enhancing agricultural productivity through

collaboration with Chinese partners. He outlined favorable policies and conducive frameworks for collaboration, emphasizing the potential for mutually beneficial partnerships and continued growth in agricultural trade and technology.

He also highlighted the upcoming Food and Agri Expo in August 2024, where China would be honored, as a platform for deeper collaboration and exchanges in the agricultural sector.

Ambassador Hashmi also extended a warm invitation to stakeholders, experts, businessmen, and investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan's agriculture sector.



GILGIT: A blacksmith busy in making saw in traditional way on his work place at River view road.

PHMA terms rising energy cost major issue of textile exporters

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMA) has termed the high cost of doing business dangerous for the value-added export-oriented knitwear industry, as the ever-increasing gas and power tariffs are the real threat to the economy amidst frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar.

Senior Vice Chairman PHMA North Zone Amanullah Khan stated

this while chairing an interactive session held here at PHMA Zonal office on Sunday to review the challenges faced by the PHMA members.

Participants of the meeting urged the Central Bank to allocate funds for renewable energy schemes, including solar energy financing exclusively to the export-oriented value-added textile sector. This strategic allocation will not only boost apparel sector's growth but also promote a more inclusive and resilient economy.

Excise Dept sends letter to 26 banks for payment of token tax

MULTAN (APP): Excise and Taxation Department Punjab sent a letter to 26 bank heads of Pakistan over not paying token taxes of more than 20,000 vehicles.

According to ETO Adin Khalid Hussain Qasoori, as per the letter, the vehicle registration could be cancelled, 100 percent fine and banks' properties may be seized and auctioned and bank sale.

The letter further stated that banks receive monthly installments of their leased vehicles along with markup but neither they pay token tax of Punjab excise themselves nor encourage those who buy vehicles to pay in installments.

The token tax could not be collected despite repeated notices, meetings and reminders through newspaper advertisements. The token tax with 100 percent fine would be collected along with cancellation of registration and banks sealing in case.



SHOUGUANG: Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi paid a one-day visit to Shouguang county, renowned for being China vegetable capital at the invitation of the Shouguang government. Ambassador Khalil Hashmi also delivered remarks at the opening ceremony of the 25th China (Shouguang) International Vegetable Science and Technology Expo. He took a tour of the expo and visited the Pakistan pavilion.

SAARC Chamber urges Afghan Taliban to fulfill their Doha pledges

LAHORE (APP): The SAARC Chamber has called upon the Afghan Taliban to fulfill their commitment, made in Doha, which was aimed at promoting peace in the region, particularly between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and preventing the Afghan soil from being used against Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of traders, led by Muslim

Khan Bunerri here on Sunday, SAARC Chamber and Industry former president Ifrikhar Ali Malik said the Doha agreement, signed between the United States and the Taliban in February 2020, outlined various commitments from both sides. One key aspect of the agreement was the Taliban's assurance that they would not allow Afghan territory to be used by any group or

individual to threaten the security of other countries, including Pakistan, he added.

By urging the Taliban to honour the commitment, the trade leader emphasised the significance of stability and cooperation between Muslim nations. By preventing Afghan soil from being used for activities that could harm Pakistan, he believed that both countries could work towards maintaining peace in the region.

Dr Wajid Ali here on Sunday while talking to APP. He said that livestock was performing an important role in poverty alleviation in rural areas. He recalled that the government had launched a special initiative to provide buffaloes and cows to widows, especially hailing from rural areas. The government had a very unique idea to provide animals to widows whose children were availing school education. The Livestock Department provided a good number of small and big animals to widows after thorough verification from schools concerned. The widows are now successfully running their kitchen.

PIAF takes strong exception to continued hike in POL prices

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) took strong exception to the continued escalation in the petroleum prices, urging the government to give the solid plan of low cost energy provision in the country to improve economic growth.

In a statement on Sunday, Chairman PIAF Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that oil and electricity consumers were very easy targets for taxation, with the government preferring to levy higher taxes on them rather than expanding the tax net. He said that consumers may face increased taxes in the

upcoming budget due to IMF pressure. There were indications that the government may raise the petroleum levy rate in the forthcoming budget to bolster revenue collection from oil consumers, he added.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the federal government raised the prices of petroleum products by up to Rs8.14 per liter this week, marking the second price hike in petroleum products this month. According to a notification, the price of petrol has been raised by Rs4.53 per liter, from Rs289.41 to Rs293.94 per liter.



HYDERABAD: A vendor displaying the inflatable pools to attract the customers at roadside.

Cattle farming vital to alleviate poverty in rural areas

SARGODHA (APP): Livestock is considered a precious asset not only to run the kitchen smoothly on a daily basis but also help meet expenditures in emergency situations.

About 67 percent of the rural population in the culturally rich region of Sargodha division is directly linked to the livestock sector. The presence of animals is like a cheque which can be cashed at any time.

Livestock has over a 14pc share in gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. It has immense potential not to alleviate poverty in rural areas but can also revolutionize the living standards of the people. Pakistan is ranked fifth in

milk producing country. The production of milk and meat could be enhanced significantly by working on animal genetics. The best semen quality could play a vital role in improving animal health, milk and meat production. Similarly, it could also help generate maximum income for the farmers as well as the country's economy.

At the national level, about 10 million people are rearing cattle. According to the animal census and Economic Survey Report, there are 58.7 million big animals in the country. Similarly, the country has 83.3 million small animals (goats). As per the last Economic Survey Report, the production of milk increased from

63.698 million tonnes to 69.784 million tonnes.

Apart from this, district Sargodha owned 4,611,324 big animals (buffaloes, cows), 2,882,689 small animals (goats, sheep) and 1,975,816 rural poultry. Besides this, the farmers also rear 919 camels, said sources in the Livestock Department. In rural areas, it is easy to rear animals because of the cultural environment, easy access to infrastructure and nutrition. In rural communities, the role of women farmers in cattle rearing is highly important. Without women farmers' participation, the livestock sector could not be managed properly, said Deputy Director Livestock

Dr Wajid Ali here on Sunday while talking to APP. He said that livestock was performing an important role in poverty alleviation in rural areas. He recalled that the government had launched a special initiative to provide buffaloes and cows to widows, especially hailing from rural areas. The government had a very unique idea to provide animals to widows whose children were availing school education. The Livestock Department provided a good number of small and big animals to widows after thorough verification from schools concerned. The widows are now successfully running their kitchen.

Kosar Noreen, a

widow and a resident of Shah Nikdur in Sillanwali, who got a big animal in 2020, told APP, "I own one buffalo and one calf and it is a good source of my regular income".

She said that she had also earned Rs180,000 by selling three calves. She expressed pleasure and thanked the government for the provision of the buffalo which helped her overcome economic woes. Rauf, a resident of Farooqa, said that he was eager to sacrifice an animal on Eid ul Azha. He said that he had purchased a small animal against Rs20,000 and nurtured it for the whole year. He expressed pleasure that he had sacrificed the animal for first time in his life.

Punjab Governor says: Supremacy of constitution and law is vital for the development of country

Independent Report
LAHORE: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedal Khan Nasir met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore. Matters of mutual interest and other important issues were discussed in the meeting. During the meeting, Governor Punjab congratulated Syedal Khan Nasir on assuming the

office of Deputy Chairman Senate. Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the constitution and law is vital for the development of country. He said that uniform development of all units is very important for the strength of the federation. Governor Punjab said that we have

to strengthen our democratic institutions for sustainable development of country. He said that the current leadership is taking concrete steps to address the challenges facing the country. Governor Punjab said that an economically self-sufficient, energetic Pakistan and a socially empowered society with high morals and mutual respect is our destination.



LAHORE: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedal Khan Nasir in a meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

Advisor urges Expedited projects, 100% goal achievement for tourism development

Independent Report
ABBOTTABAD: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture, and Archaeology Zahid Chanzab on Sunday emphasized the urgent completion of tourism projects and activities, as well as achieving 100% of the set goals for tourism development in the province. He conveyed this message during a meeting and briefing held at Pakhtunkhwa House Islamabad, attended by the Khyber Development Authority (KDA) and delegations from Manshra's elite. The advisor made it clear to the authorities that the current PTI-led KP Government will evaluate departmental performance based on target achievement rather than mere claims.

Chanzab stated that funds and staff of underperforming departments or institutions will be reduced, while those demonstrating excellence will receive strong encouragement and funding. During the KDA meeting, Director General Muhammad Shabbir updated the Tourism Advisor on progress regarding the management of hotels from Manshra to Lake Saif Al-Muluk, tourist facilities along highways, and other tourism-related schemes. Presentations were made on ongoing and new projects for tourism development, with managers of various KDA sections highlighting their contributions to promoting the tourism sector in the region.

Two Dacoits Killed - One injured in Police Encounter

Independent Report
SHIKARPUR: Shikarpur police claims for killing of two Dacoits and one injured in two separate police encounters on Sunday in early hours. According to Press Release issued from SSP office Shikarpur that some group of armed men trying to looting the passengers on Dakhan link road in the jurisdiction of Madeji police station on last late night, while receiving the information, area police rushed to the spot and the criminals opened fires upon police mobile while seeing coming to them. Police also fired in return. As an exchange of firing from both sides, police succeeded in killing two Dacoits on the spot. Two Dacoits were killed in an police encounter, SSP Shikarpur Irfan Samo added. The dead bodies of deceased Dacoits sent to Government Hospital for Medico Legal formalities. The killed Dacoits were identified as Rafique Jeffery of Sukkur District and Ali Jan Sabzoi of Garhi Tegho. Further police is collecting their criminal records from various police stations. Similarly an other police encounter took place between three criminals and police at Madd Khosa road in the limit of Jahan Khan Police Picket.



LAHORE: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Mr. Nasir Bosal calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Iqbal gave spiritual energy to Muslims of Subcontinent: Qureshi

SARGODHA (APP): Senior Vice President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Tehsil Sillanwali Makhdoom Shah Kameer Qureshi said on Sunday that Allama Muhammad Iqbal dreamt of a separate country for the Muslims of Subcontinent and gave them spiritual energy and guideline to wage a movement for creation of Pakistan. He said it was Allama Iqbal's dream that the Muslims of Subcontinent should have a country which would be a cradle of peace, political forbearance and brotherhood. Kameer Qureshi, stressing renewal of a pledge to achieve Iqbal's vision, said the Poet of the East wanted the youth to take the country to acme of progress and development with their constructive approach. On the 86th death anniversary of Dr Muhammad Iqbal, the PML-N leader said the entire nation had been praying for high ranks of the departed soul in Heaven. "Dr Muhammad Iqbal, through his thoughts and teachings, stressed the unity of Muslim Ummah," Qureshi recalled.

Commissioner orders beefing up security for Chinese nationals

Faisalabad (APP): Divisional Commissioner Siltwat Saeed has directed the police to beef up security for Chinese engineers, working on various development projects in Faisalabad division. The commissioner paid a visit to Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development & Management Company (FIEDMC) here on Sunday and presided over a meeting there. She took briefing about the security of Chinese engineers in FIEDMC and Allama Iqbal Industrial Estate and said that the police heads were bound to provide foolproof security to the Chinese and other foreigners. She directed the Regional Police Officer (RPO), City Police Officer (CPO) and other police officers to ensure tight security in addition to keeping vigil eye on the suspects in and around the project sites where the Chinese were working.

Minister Zeeshan says: Modern system of waste management to be introduced in Punjab

SIALKOT (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique has said that a comprehensive and modern system of solid waste management will be introduced on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and a uniform sanitation system will be implemented in the entire province. In this regard, orders were issued to the Chief Officers (Cos) of all waste management companies to report on the operational model by working jointly. While introducing a uniform

and modern sanitation system, planning should be done for the quality and sustainability of local government system and municipal services. He stated this while addressing participants in an "Open Kutcheri" at Camp Office Daska. Assistant Commissioner (AC) Daska Anwar Ali Kanjo, Chief Officer (CO) District Council Ulfat Shehzad, SDO Municipal Committee Daska Uzair, officers of relevant departments, political and social leaders of constituency PP-51 were also present.



LAHORE: Police officials stand alert outside the polling station during the election 2024 at Barf Khana Chowk Railway Road.

BISP registration process continues in Sargodha

SARGODHA (APP): The registration process for the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) survey of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is currently underway in Sargodha, as well as other parts of the country. The tehsil offices of the programme have established registration centres to facilitate the process. Deputy Director BISP Sargodha Malik Mazhar Awan while talking to APP here on Sunday, said that low-income groups could register themselves with the BISP by visiting the registration centres, opened from Monday to Saturday. People have been asked to bring their Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) and B forms of their children for registration purposes. Individuals are required to provide their electricity or gas bills to update a database for future government subsidies, he added. The official urged people to provide their accurate data at the time of registration, while those who would provide false information would not be allowed to become part of the programme.

International News

US House okays aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US House of Representatives with broad bipartisan support passed a \$95 billion legislative package providing security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, over bitter objections from Republican hardliners. The legislation now proceeds to the Democratic-majority Senate, which passed a similar measure more than two months ago. US leaders from Democratic President Joe Biden to top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell have been urging embattled Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson to bring it up for a vote. The Senate is expected to pass the measure next week, sending it to Biden to sign into law. The measure includes some \$60.84bn for Ukraine as it struggles to fight off Russian invasion. The unusual four-bill package also includes funds for Israel, security assistance for Taiwan. "The world is watching what the Congress does," the White House said in a statement on Friday.

Zelenskiy says he is grateful for US House approval of Ukraine aid

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy expressed gratitude for the passage by the U.S. House of Representatives of a military aid bill for his country and said the assistance would save lives and "bring a just end" to the war with Russia. "I am grateful to the United States House of Representatives, both parties, and personally Speaker Mike Johnson for the decision that keeps history on the right track," Zelenskiy wrote on X. The president said the bill "will keep the war from expanding, save thousands and thousands of lives, and help both of our nations to become stronger." Minutes later, in his nightly video address, the president said the assistance "will be felt by our soldiers on the front lines" and praised the role of "American leadership" in preserving a rules-based international order.



Lawmakers walk past pro-Palestinian protesters prior to a US House of Representatives vote on legislation providing \$95 billion in security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, at Capitol Hill in Washington, US.

Edmundo Gonzalez, Venezuela's low-profile and last-minute opposition candidate

Monitoring Desk
CARACAS: As time was running out, Venezuela's opposition chose low-profile former diplomat Edmundo Gonzalez to run against President Nicolas Maduro in a July election that political analysts said will require Gonzalez to build name recognition among voters. The stakes are high for

the July 28 vote as the US has made holding fair elections a condition of lifting sanctions on the South American nation. Initially named as a placeholder while the opposition struggled to confirm candidates, Gonzalez's candidacy was finalized a day before a Saturday deadline to replace him with someone else.

Palestinians to reconsider US ties after membership veto

Monitoring Desk
RAMALLAH: The Palestinian Authority will "reconsider" its relationship with the United States after Washington vetoed a Palestinian bid for full UN membership earlier this week, president Mahmud Abbas said on Saturday. "The Palestinian leadership will reconsider bilateral relations with the United States to ensure the protection of our people's interests, our cause, and our rights," Abbas told the official Palestinian news agency Wafa. Wafa said his remarks came "on the heels of the United States' use of veto power" at the UN Security Council. Thursday's vote saw 12 countries on the Council back a resolution recommending full Palestinian membership and two — Britain and Switzerland — abstain. Only the United States, Israel's staunchest ally, voted against, using its veto to block the resolution.



Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan meets with Ismail Haniyeh, leader of the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Istanbul, Turkey.

Israeli strikes on southern Gaza city of Rafah kill 18, mostly children, as US advances aid package

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: Israeli strikes on the southern Gaza city of Rafah overnight killed 18 people, including 14 children, health officials said Sunday, as the United States was on track to approve billions of dollars of additional military aid to its close ally. Israel has carried out near-daily air raids on Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million has sought refuge from fighting elsewhere. It has also vowed to expand its ground offensive to the city on the border with Egypt despite international calls for restraint, including from the U.S. The House of Representatives approved a \$26 billion aid package on Saturday that includes around \$9 billion in humanitarian assistance for Gaza. The first strike killed a man, his wife and their 3-year-old child, according to the nearby Kuwaiti Hospital, which received the bodies.

1 dead, 7 missing after two Japanese military helicopters crash

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: One person was killed and seven people were missing on Sunday after two Japanese military helicopters collided before crashing into the sea, officials said. A spokesman for Japan's Self Defence Force (SDF) confirmed the incident to AFP, adding that one person was rescued but later confirmed dead. Defence Minister Minoru Kihara said rescuers "spotted what are believed to be part of the aircraft in the sea, and we believe that the two helicopters crashed." "At this point the cause is unknown, but firstly we do our best to save lives," Kihara told reporters. Hours later, Kihara told reporters that the crew member who was rescued "was confirmed dead". He also said the ministry "discovered the flight recorders in places close to each other," and so the "possibility is high that (the two helicopters) collided."

Erdogan meets Hamas leader in Turkey, discusses efforts for regional peace

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan discussed efforts to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza and reach a fair and lasting peace in the region during a meeting with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Istanbul on Saturday, his office said. It was the first meeting between Erdogan and a Hamas delegation headed by Haniyeh since Israel began its military offensive in the Gaza Strip. Haniyeh's visit to Turkey took place three days after he met Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in Doha. "Issues related to Israel's attacks on lands of Palestine, particularly Gaza, efforts for adequate and uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, and a fair and lasting peace process in the region were discussed," the Turkish presidency said in a statement. The visit took place amid escalating regional tensions following Israel's reported attack on Iran this week. "Erdogan stressed that Israel should not benefit from the developments (between Iran and Israel) and that it is important to make efforts that will draw attention to Gaza again," the statement added. NATO member Turkey has denounced Israel's offensive in Gaza following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel and called for an immediate ceasefire. Erdogan has called Hamas a "liberation movement" while slamming the West for what he calls its unconditional support of Israel. Ankara has also imposed trade restrictions on Israel.

Russia says US facing humiliation in Ukraine like in Vietnam

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia said on Sunday U.S. lawmakers' support for \$60.84 billion more in aid for Ukraine showed that Washington was wading much deeper into a hybrid war against Moscow that would end in humiliation on a par with the Vietnam or Afghanistan conflicts. President Vladimir Putin's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine has touched off the worst fallout in relations between Russia and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, according to Russian and U.S. diplomats. On Saturday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed with broad bipartisan support a \$95 billion legislative package providing security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, over bitter objections from some far-right Republicans. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said it was clear that the United States wanted Ukraine "to fight to the last Ukrainian" including with attacks on Russian sovereign territory and civilians. "Washington's deeper and deeper immersion in the hybrid war against Russia will turn into a loud and humiliating fiasco for United States such as Vietnam and Afghanistan," Zakharova said. Russia, she said, will give "an unconditional and resolute response" to the U.S. move to get more involved in the Ukraine war. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns warned last week that without more U.S. military support Ukraine could lose on the battlefield, but that with support Kyiv's forces could hold their own this year.

Iran's Khamenei thanks armed forces for attack on Israel

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei thanked the country's armed forces for their operation against Israel, and urged them to "ceaselessly pursue military innovation and learn the enemy's tactics," Iran's official news agency reported on Sunday. Tehran openly targeted Israel for the first time on April 13 with more than 300 missiles and drones in what it said was retaliation for Israel's suspected deadly bombing of its embassy compound in Damascus on April 1.

Maryam denounces political violence

Says PML-N working to solve public problems

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said on Sunday that people, who bring politics to the level of personal enmity and violence are enemies of the nation.

In a statement, she said the PTI's bullying would not be tolerated in any case.

The CM offered condolences and expressed heartfelt sympathies with the family of Muhammad Yousaf, a PML-N worker who was killed in Narowal. She said that politics is the name of service and reform, not violence and intolerance. Turning politics into hatred and personal enmity is a big challenge for society, she added.

The accused involved

in the killing of PML-N worker have been arrested.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said on Sunday that the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, is sincerely trying to solve public problems.

In her message to PML-N voters on the day of by-elections, she said PML-N voters were coming out, which is a welcome sign. "We have given relief, relief and only relief to the people of Punjab in a short span of time," she said.

The CM highlighted that "the Ramadan Nigebhan Relief Package, 20,000 bikes, low-priced

flour and bread are proof of our few days' performance. Labourers, farmers, students and women of Punjab are at the top priority of the government. The Rs 130 billion farmer package reflects Nawaz Sharif's agriculture-friendly vision."

She said, "My team and I always strive to make things easier for the common man. Laptop and iPad schemes are also going to be introduced in Punjab soon."

All candidates of PML-N will succeed with a clear majority, Inshallah, she hoped. "My mission is to carry forward the vision of your and my leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif" she concluded.



RIYADH: Senator Prof. Sajid Mir representing Pakistan in International Conference of Muslim World League.

Pak makes case for infrastructural development to achieve SDGs

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called for the development of infrastructure connectivity to fortify global resilience and promote sustainable development, especially in developing countries.

Ambassador Munir Akram made the call in his capacity as co-chair of the Group of Friends of Sustainable Infrastructure Investment, while delivering a statement during the U.N. General Assembly's Sustainability Week in New York, on the theme: "Informal dialogue on building global resilience and promoting sustainable development through infrastructure connectivity."

"The achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and our climate goals requires a major transition to sustainable infrastructure – in energy, transport, housing, communications and industrial and agricultural production and consumption," the Pakistani envoy said, noting that this was recognized in the "Just Energy Transition" document adopted at COP-28.

"Yet," he said, "pub-

lic and private investments in sustainable infrastructure are not commensurate to realize either the SDGs or the climate goals, pointing out that a majority of developing countries do not have the public resources to finance infrastructure investments nor are they able to secure sufficient private investment. To achieve a "just transition", he called for mobilizing significantly larger concessional finance to mitigate country and project risks, enhance credit quality, improve financing terms and thus incentivize private infrastructure investment in the developing countries. In this regard, Ambassador Akram cited the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which said there was a funding gap of \$2.5 trillion annually in infrastructure, two-thirds of which is in the developing countries.

"Cumulatively, for a 1.5°C Scenario, financing needs for clean energy are estimated to be about USD 4.3 trillion per year up until 2030, increasing thereafter to USD 5 trillion per year up until 2050," he said,

pointing out that investment in renewable energy only reached USD 0.5 trillion in 2022, the majority concentrated in developed countries.

The Pakistani envoy also underscored the need to create a pipeline of viable and bankable projects in the developing countries which can attract public and private investments.

Pakistan, he said, advocates the establishment of a public-private entity under UN auspices to help developing countries formulate and structure such a pipeline of viable infrastructure projects utilizing the UN country offices.

"Such a public private entity could bring together all stakeholders – recipient and donor countries, development institutions and the private sector; develop a template for national and international regulatory frameworks and develop de-risking measures to incentivize private investment in developing countries and present the projects for financing to the appropriate public and private sources of investment capital."

SSDO urges Punjab to conduct LG election as 100 days agenda

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) has urged the Punjab government to prioritize holding local government elections within its first 100 days in office.

"While ending the democratic crisis and forming a new government is a positive step, building a strong democratic system is crucial for long-term progress," Syed Kauser Abbas, Executive Director of SSDO said on Sunday. "Restoring the local government system isn't just a legal obligation, it's a cornerstone of democratic governance."

The SSDO argues that empowering local communities through elected representatives is essential. They propose that instead of allocating development funds to provincial and national assembly members, the government should channel those resources directly to locally elected officials.

This, they believe, would empower local people to drive their own development.

"Pakistan's history demonstrates the importance of local government," Abbas emphasized. "Local bodies have always played a key role in effective governance, citizen participation, and delivering essential services at the grassroots level." International examples further bolster SSDO's argument. Countries with robust local government systems often enjoy better service delivery, reduced citizen problems, increased local business activity, and greater political awareness. By devolving power, Pakistan can unlock the potential of its communities, he argued. The Organization emphasizes that restoring the local government system is not merely an administrative reform, but a strategic necessity for achieving sustainable development.

18 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 18 outlaws from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Aabpara police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Gulraiz and recovered 550 gram hashish from his possession. The Karachi Company police team arrested two accused namely Hamad and Waseem involved in theft activities and recovered theft tools and stole items from their possession.



ISLAMABAD: Capital Police and ATF Officials participating in search and combing operation.



LAHORE: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeemur Rehman addressing "Labaik Ya Aqsa" march.

Normalizing relations with Israel for financial gains not acceptable: Hafiz Naeem

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has said that any attempt to normalize relations with Israel for financial gains and the two-state solution to the Palestine issue is not acceptable at all. Addressing a Palestine Solidarity March in Lahore, he reiterated his stance against the government, which he said came to power through fraudulent means, asserting that the people have lost faith in it to champion the cause of Palestine. Nevertheless, Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman emphasized that the JI demanded the government to raise its voice for Palestine or brace itself for the wrath of the people.

Referring to Quaid-i-

Azam's stance, he denounced Israel as an illegitimate state, formed by seizing Palestinian Muslim land. He said Pakistani rulers now are being offered dollars to recognize Palestine and relinquish Kashmir, warning that the nation would vehemently resist such schemes. The Ameer JI called for a summit of Muslim nations and non-Muslim states sympathetic to the Palestinian cause to advocate for a ceasefire. He urged Islamabad to extend medical assistance to Gazans, especially children, as a minimum gesture of support.

This march marked the first public gathering led by JI Emir after assuming office. Thousands, including

children and women, attended the solidarity rally. Hafiz Naeem condemned the US, Israel, and India as the three foremost terrorist countries responsible for civilian bloodshed and gross human rights violations. He hailed the people of Gaza for their historic resilience, considering it a lesson for the entire Muslim community.

He emphasized that a cowardly life held no honour and respect, foreseeing a not-too-distant future where Palestine would be liberated, reshaping the map of the Middle East. He decried Israel's indiscriminate killing of civilians, lamenting US support for its aggression while Muslim leaders looked to Washington for a ceasefire.

Ahsan alleges PTI activists of killing innocent PML-N worker

NAROWAL (INP): Federal Minister for Planning, Ahsan Iqbal has alleged that activists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have killed innocent PML-N worker and I will call him a political martyr.

Talking to media persons in Narowal on Sunday, he pledged to root out all kinds of oppression and hooliganism from Zafarwal. Ahsan Iqbal said that he strongly condemns the hooliganism that PTI has done against PML-N workers in the country.

He alleged that PTI people have resorted to high tactics after seeing the

defeat of their thuggish domain.

The federal minister said that PML-N workers are our soldiers who started movement for development of peace.

Ahsan Iqbal said, "I will call them political martyrs. They stood for a good cause and were punished for it. Murderers of the party workers can't escape the grip of law."

He said that those who were supervising all what was happening would be brought to book and all kinds of oppression and hooliganism will be eradicated from Zafarwal.

ECP launches swift helpline for election complaints

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has introduced a proactive helpline, 051-111-327-000, for citizens to swiftly register and resolve by-election-related complaints round the clock. Official sources have confirmed that the helpline will assist in registering and resolving complaints, with the goal of improving accessibility and responsiveness in addressing concerns leading up to the by-elections. The ECP has established the Election Monitoring and Complaint Centre (EMCC) to facilitate.



ISLAMABAD: The Constitution Avenue of Federal Capital decorated with Pak-Iran flags and banners ahead of visit of President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, undertaking an official visit to Pakistan from 22 to 24 April 2024.

Wafaqi Mohtasib takes notice of growing complaints in ETO Office

ISLAMABAD (APP): An inspection team from the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Office is scheduled to visit the Excise and Taxation Office located in Islamabad tomorrow (i.e., Monday, April 22) to look into the growing number of public complaints regarding maladministration in the said office.

"It may be pointed out that the Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, responding to a

large number of public complaints regarding delay and difficulties in getting vehicular registration, vehicles' tax assessment, and examination, constituted an Inspection Team to be headed by its Senior Advisor to conduct a thorough probe into the matter," said a press release issued here on Sunday.

These complaints alleged malpractices in the said office, along with the

undesirable activities there and other irregularities that were causing great inconvenience to the general public.

The team would listen to the public complaints on the spot besides interacting and interviewing the people there before finalizing its recommendations for finding a workable solution in coordination with the administration of the ETO Office.

63 persons killed, 78 injured due to torrential rains in KP: PDMA

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) issued a report on Sunday of the loss of lives and property in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) due to heavy rains. So far, 63 people have died and 78 people have been injured, the report added. According to the report, "Around 33 children, 15 men, and 15 women are among the killed, while 17 women, 37 men, and 24 children are among the injured."

A total of 3,202 houses were damaged due to the collapse of walls and roofs in different districts, of which 477 were completely damaged and 2,725 were partially damaged.

Due to heavy rains, life and financial accidents occurred in various districts, including Khyber, Dir Upper, Lower, Chitral Upper, Swat, Bajaur, Shangla,

Mansehra, Mohmand, Malakand, Karak, Tank, Mardan, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Buner, Hangu, Batagram, Bannu, North and South Waziristan, Kohat, DI Khan, and Orakzai. On the special instructions of the Chief Minister of KP, PDMA released Rs 110 million to the administration of the affected districts in the recent rains for financial assistance and relief activities for the affected families.

Apart from this, at least 90 million rupees have been released for relief activities in the tribal districts as well. Along with financial support, PDMA also provided relief materials to the affected districts of Swat, Chitral Lower, Bajaur, Kohistan Lower, Peshawar, Nowshera, Mohmand, Dir Upper, Tank, Shangla, Torghar.

Search and combing operation conducted

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted a search and combing operation at Khanna and Industrial Area police stations jurisdiction, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directives of Islamabad SSP Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), the search and combing operations are being conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens. Following these orders, a search and combing operation was conducted in different areas of Khanna and Industrial Area police stations by CTD and local police teams.

By-elections is 'big message for PTI as supporters did not come out': Sanaullah

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Rana Sanaullah said on Sunday that the voter turnout of today's by-elections is a "big message" for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

"PTI voters have not come out today [during by-elections]," Sanaullah claimed while speaking to a private tv channel, adding that his party was satisfied with the poll results and had always accepted the election outcomes.

Calling upon political parties to use relevant forums for addressing the election-related complaints, he was of the view that the Nawaz Sharif-led party used to raised objections to the election results "within the system" but the PTI founder Imran Khan always tried to "bulldoze" the existing mechanism.

Commenting on today's electoral event, the PML-N stalwart said that voter turnout is usually low in by-polls and only loyal

supporters head towards the polling stations for their parties.

He expressed satisfaction over the by-polls and said that results were pouring in from all polling stations, as well as Form 45 was being issued.

Sanaullah said the complaints would be lodged if any wrong doing was committed on the polling day.

The former interior minister, who faced defeat by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf backed independent Dr Nisar Jutt in the February 8 nationwide polls on Faisalabad's NA-100 seat, urged PTI central leader Ali Muhammad Khan that he should sit with the PML-N to identify and address flaws via reforms in the electoral system instead of "bulldozing" the system.

He added that his party has always worked for the betterment of the country and invited political stakeholders to resolve issues via dialogues.



RAWALPINDI: Ex Servicemen Society President General (Retd) Abdul Qayyum Malik addressing the National Council meeting held at a private hotel.

Finance Minister met to representatives of S-P Global, Fitch Ratings

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb, met with the representatives of S&P Global and Fitch Ratings on the sidelines of the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington D.C.

During the meetings, he highlighted positive indicators of the country on the back of the Standby Arrangement (SBA) signed with International Monetary Fund (IMF), said a press release issued here on Sunday.

He provided details on the government's ongoing reforms in priority areas, including taxation, energy, and privatization over short, medium and long-term horizons. He also referred to his recent engagements with Managing Director of the IMF, President of the World Bank, and heads of multilateral institutions including Asian In-

rastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB). He reaffirmed that the World Bank's agenda aligns with Pakistan's priorities on climate change, digitalization, and human development. The Finance Minister also mentioned potential investments in the pipeline from Saudi Arabia. He also addressed the rating agencies' concerns related to Pakistan's external position, inflation levels, primary fiscal balance, and interest rate regime. Other engagements of Finance Minister included interaction with officers of the Embassy of Pakistan, Washington D.C., media interviews with the Voice of America and The National and Press Conference with Pakistani media. Finance Minister is leading Pakistan's delegation in the IMF / World Bank's 2024 Spring Meetings being held in Washington DC.

Complaints of clashes in Gujrat, Rahim Yar Khan addressed promptly: ECP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The by-election for 21 seats of National and provincial assemblies is underway across Pakistan, with reports of clashes from some areas of Punjab in which one person has been killed.

The ECP said that there were some complaints of clashes among workers from Gujrat and Rahim Yar Khan reported in the media, adding that the polling process was stopped for some time, but resumed after taking immediate action.

The ECP spokesperson said their control room had not yet received any written or telephonic complaints, and the polling process was underway in all 21 constituencies.

The director general of the control room said the polling process remains uninterrupted and peaceful across all constituencies. He emphasized that they are fully prepared to address any issues that may arise.

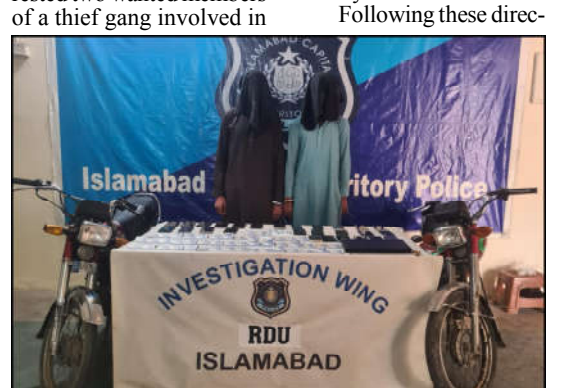
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Two members of thief gang held; stolen cash, mobile phones & valuables recovered

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Anti Robbery and Dacoity Unit (ARDU) police team arrested two wanted members of a thief gang involved in

Bukhari, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.



Following these directions, the Anti Robbery and Dacoity Unit (ARDU) police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of a thief gang involved in numerous theft activities and recovered stolen cash, mobile phones, motorbikes and valuables worth 9.3 million rupees from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Shahzad Nadeem

Following these directions, the Anti Robbery and Dacoity Unit (ARDU) police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of a thief gang involved in numerous theft activities. The accused were identified as Noman Ejaz and Abrar Hassan.