



Senior PPP leadership advises Bilawal, Zardari to 'sit in opposition' Senior leadership of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has advised party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto and Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari against forming a coalition government with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and sitting in opposition, citing sources.



Hafiz Naeemur Rehman quits PS-129 seat Sindh Assembly MPA-elect and Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman on Monday announced to quit PS-129, citing 'rigging'.

Press Conference

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar talks to national and foreign media in a press conference on Monday.

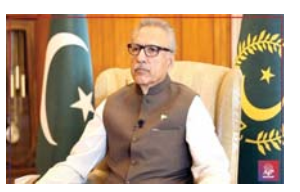


Photo: PID

President congratulates Alexander Stubb on election as President of Finland

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Monday congratulated Alexander Stubb on his election as President of Finland. The president, in a post on X, said, "Congratulations to Alexander Stubb on his election as President of Finland. Look forward to working together to further advance our long-standing and friendly relations, and growing cooperation in education, green energy transition and technical & vocational training."



PM Kakar surprised at rigging allegations despite 'PTI founder's loyalists in lead'

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Monday voiced his surprise over the allegations pertaining to rigging during elections 2024 despite PTI founder Imran Khan's loyalists being in lead.

and contrary to the ground realities", noting that throughout the democratic history, people had always questioned the electoral process. PM Kakar reiterated that the interim setup had provided level playing field to all political parties during the elections 2024 and being 'free and fair' process, a large number of independent candidates backed by PTI emerged as the largest single group on the national and provincial assemblies seats.

transparency and non-interference by any quarters", the caretaker prime minister emphasised. However, Kakar said, there might be shortcomings or other minor issues, but by and large, the elections were held in a manner in which the entire nation and the law enforcement agencies deserved kudos despite various security challenges.

loyalists of jailed PTI leaders have emerged as returned candidates in the general elections but no one was appreciating that aspect of the neutrality of the caretaker government. The prime minister, to a question, said that despite various threats prior to February 8 election day and two terrorist attacks in Balochistan province, all the stakeholders deserved appreciation over the 'big achievement' for the peaceful conduct of the polls.

threats to the integrity of the country due to certain protests and agitations held by certain parties by saying 'It is an absurd chronology' to relate the situation with Dhaka during 1971. "These are the mere rhetoric. Pakistan is a very stable and responsible country. Holding of peaceful protest is the democratic right of the people," he said, however hastened to add that no government could allow the situation leading to chaos or anarchy.

SC accepts federation's appeal for hearing

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday accepted the intra-court appeal (ICA) of the Federation for the hearing, that pertained to the proceedings in the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against the retired judges. A five-member larger bench, headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan, took up the ICA for the hearing.

Bushra Bibi's plea seeking transfer to Adiala jail fixed for hearing

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) fixed a plea filed by former first lady Bushra Bibi, seeking her transfer to Adiala prison from Banigala, the sub-jail for hearing on Tuesday. The IHC bench comprising Justice Gul Hassan Aurangzaib would hear the plea filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder's wife who is serving her jail term in Toshakhana and 'un-Islamic' Nikah cases.

PTI independent candidate for NA 57 Ch Adnan shot dead

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former PTI MPA and independent Candidate for NA 57 Chaudhry Adnan shot dead near Jinnah Park Rawalpindi by unidentified assailants in Rawalpindi. The incident occurred around noon near Rawalpindi's Police Lines and his driver was critically injured, the police said in a statement. According to police, unidentified assailants - riding on a motorcycle - opened fire on Chaudhry Adnan, killing the former MPA on the spot.

Shah Faisal mosque to be renovated: Gohar Ejaz

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior and Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz on Monday said that 40 years ago, the government of Saudi Arabia gave a gift of Shah Faisal Mosque to Pakistan, now the mosque would be renovated to make it more beautiful. He expressed these views on the occasion of visiting Shah Faisal Mosque along with Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf Saeed Al Maliki.

Five independent candidates meet Shehbaz Sharif, join PML-N

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Five independent candidates, who emerged victorious in the general election, called on Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif, here on Monday. Sardar Shamsheer Mazari who won the election from NA-189, Imran Akram from PP-195, Sohail Khan from PP-240, Khizar Hussain Mazari from PP-297, and Sahibzada Muhammad Ghazain Abbasi from PP-249 were among those who met with the PML-N President. All five members expressed confidence in PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif and announced their decision to officially join the PML-N.

Corps Commander House attack: LHC grants bail to PTI activist, others

Bureau House

LAHORE: A Lahore High Court (LHC) division bench on Monday granted bail to 20 accused, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Tayyaba Raja, in a case of attacking Corps Commander House. The court also granted bail to Iftikharul Hassan, Samia Asif, Saeed, Hassan Aziz, and Izharul Haq, besides other accused. The bench headed by Justice Aalia Neelum heard the post-arrest bail petitions filed by the accused and announced the verdict on conclusion of arguments by the parties.

12 women elected MNAs after tough competition

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A total of 12 women having affiliations with four different political parties have been elected directly as Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) after defeating strong male candidates in their respective constituencies in general elections across the country.

Among them, five women have contested polls as independent backed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), four belongs to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), two from Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and only one candidate contested election from Mutthahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM).

stan (MQM)," said an Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) data available with APP. It said that out of the total, four women including Chief Organizer PML-N Maryam Nawaz, Aneeqa Mehdi Bhatti, Ayesha Nazir Jatt and Amber Majeed Niazi would sit in the National Assembly for the first time. PTI backed candidate Shandana Gulzar from Peshawar, Aneeqa Mehdi Bhatti from Hafizabad, Ayesha Nazir Jatt from Vehari, Amber Majeed Niazi from Layyah and Zartaj Gul from Dera Ghazi Khan have won after a tough competition.

The women belonging to PML-N have reached the house by defeating the opposition candidates, Nosheen Iftikhar from Sialkot, Maryam Nawaz from Lahore, Shezra Mansab from Nankana Sahib and Tehmina Doulatana from Vehari. In Sindh, three women have won after the contest, in which Shazia Marri and Dr Nafesa Shah from PPP have won from Sanghar and Khairpur, while Aasia Ishaque of MQM has won from Karachi.

ECP establishes four dedicated counters for election petition filings

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has established four counters at the Election Commission Secretariat to assist and facilitate individuals filing election petitions. According to ECP spokesman, these four counters are located in front of the commission building, with a separate counter designated for receiving applications from each province.

Funeral prayer of cop performed, buried in native area

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: In Wana on January 6, a police constable who was injured in a police vehicle remote control bomb blast died of his injuries.

The funeral prayer of martyred policeman Gulam Khan Wazir was performed with official honors at Police Line Wana.

On this occasion, the civil and military officials placed floral wreaths on the casket wrapped in the national flag and the armed police team saluted the martyr.

After performing the funeral, the body of the martyred police constable corpse was sent to his native



area in an ambulance, where he was buried.

A large number of police officers including Commander Wana Brigade Mohammad Owais Shanim, Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Lower Nasir Khan, DPO Farman Ullah South Waziristan Lower and tribal elders attended the funeral.

Later, DPO Farman Ullah lauded the courage and bravery of the police martyrs for confronting the terrorists, that the sacrifices of those who gave their lives for the security of the country and the protection of the lives and property of the people will not go in vain.

DPO further said that such cowardly attacks by terrorists cannot demoralize the police force.

Poverty

ISLAMABAD: A gypsy boy searching valuable items from garbage in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

IPP chief Jahangir Tareen quits politics

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: In a shocking turn of events, Istekhan-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Patron-in-chief Jahangir Tareen has resigned from the position as party chairman and decided to quit politics altogether.

"I would like to thank everyone who supported me in this election and want to offer my congratulations to my opponents," the sugar baron in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

"I have immense respect for the will of the people of Pakistan," he said, offering his gratitude to all members of Istekhan-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) - formed after May 9 elections.

Furthermore, Jahangir Tareen said: "I will continue to serve my country to the best of my ability in a private capacity. May the next few years see Pakistan prosper."

It is pertinent to mention here that Jahangir Tareen faced defeat in both constituencies of the National Assem-



bly in the Feb 8 general elections. Tareen contested from NA-149 and NA-155 Lodhran-2 but was unable to clinch victory as per unofficial results.

The results from 369 polling stations in Lodhran revealed that PML-N candidate Sadiq Khan Baloch emerged victorious in NA-155 with 117,671 votes, while Tareen garnered only

71,128 votes. Similarly, Tareen suffered defeat in NA-149 Multan where he secured 50,166 votes. PTI-backed independent candidate Malik Amir Dogar triumphed in NA-149 with 143,613 votes.

Reacting to the development, IPP President Abdul Aleem Khan said Tareen will always be the patron-in-chief for the IPP and all of them. He further said that Tareen's

presence in any government was an honour for that government.

"As a younger brother and IPP president, I pay tribute to him and his philanthropic activities. May Allah bless them with health, safety and success Amen," he said in a post on X.

Aleem Khan had emerged victorious in both NA-117 and Lahore's provincial assembly constituency PP-149.

Social problems can be reduced by making women independent: Tahira Najam

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: The President of Anjuman Women Multan Traders and Employment Tahira Najam, has said that Pakistani women are full of hardworking, tenacity and abilities. As more and more women take on household responsibilities Get out in the economic field and play your role in making your family and country economically stable. Addressing the women's event. Parveen Niaz, Shabana Hameed Qureshi, Miss Naghma, Miss Fatima, Tania Abidi, Rabab, Wajaha, Farhana, Ayesha Siddique, Yasmin Akram and others participated in the ceremony. Gaya Tania Abidi and Rabab presented their speech on National Women's Day while Tahira Najam, Parveen Niaz while speaking added that social problems can be reduced by making women independent. If you work for it, it will improve

Multan. Tahira Najam, President of Anjuman Trade, Employment and Agriculture Professional Women, Multan, is speaking at the event organized on the occasion of National Women's Day. Wajaha,

Aga Khan University Hospital, Pakistan launches second opinion service

PNP

KARACHI:-The Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) launched its Second Opinion service platform on Monday, February 12, 2024. With this launch, patients from across Pakistan and around the world will have access to the medical opinions of AKUH doctors, without having to consult them personally.

A second opinion is medical advice taken from a doctor other than the one who made the initial diagnosis or treatment plan for a patient. Patients may seek a second opinion to confirm their diagnosis, get assurance their treatment plan is optimal, explore different treatment options, or simply for peace of mind, especially when dealing with complex diseases.

AKUH's Second Opinion service, hosted on the AKUH Pakistan website, provides a secure and user-friendly platform for individuals seeking medical opinions from AKUH without requiring a consultation. This technology-powered solution allows patients to access AKUH's sought-after medical expertise, regardless of their location.

Dr. Farhat Abbas, CEO AKUH Karachi, underscores AKUH's commitment to enabling informed healthcare decisions, stating, "We are dedicated to empowering individuals worldwide, ensuring access to the exceptional skills and experience of our specialists. I am excited to see the positive impact this service will have on patients dealing with complex medical challenges."

Hussain Zafar Appointed Regional Manager Sui Gas Multan Region

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chief Engineer Sui Gas Pipeline Multan and in-charge task force Syed Hussain Zafar has been appointed Regional Manager Sui Gas Multan Region. His predecessor Rashid Ishaq has been transferred to Sui Gas Transmission. First General Secretary of Sui Gas CBA Union Multan-Arshad Amin Afridi. Additional Joint Secretary Syed Ahmed Kashif Shah. Office Secretary Ghulam Hussain Panwar. Malik Tariq Muhammad Din. Akbar Panwar. Jam Saifdar. Jameel Shaheen. While congratulating Shahid Dehter, he expressed hope that the problems of customers and employees will be resolved soon with the appointment of Syed Hussain Zafar as Regional Manager Sui Gas Multan Region.



Two-Day Annual Women's Exhibition Blue Fair concluded



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The two-day blue fair organized by Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry concluded on the last day, souvenir shields and gifts were distributed while Qawwali was also presented in this regard. The annual Blue Fair exhibition has come to an end. The closing ceremony was held on this occasion, special souvenir shields and gifts were given to the best stalls and especially the talented ones. Said that the aim of the Blue Fair is to provide skills and knowledge of the region. Introducing the work of small entrepreneurs and helping them find business contacts and markets, he said that we want the women and skilled workers of our backward region to be economically stable and their quality of life to improve. Therefore, every effort is made to provide them these opportunities through Blue Fair. Come on and work has been done in this regard for the last 10 years. Today, the 10th Blue Fair is being held and our talented women are successfully running their businesses and in this regard, the Women's Chamber is also providing training opportunities to meet their modern requirements. Masooma Sabtain, Sirat Fatima, Tahira Najam also attended the event. Addressed while Farah Saqib, Farah Faisal, Shahnaz Nasir, Mrs. Mehwish Jilani, Mrs. Nadia Waseem, Hina Chaghatai, Sadia Kirmani and other women members participated while on this occasion, Qawwali was also organized for the participants of the two-day Blue Fair. Many artists, businessmen, women entrepreneurs, social leaders, citizens visited in large numbers.

Multan-Mrs. Mahmood Aamir Sheikh, Mrs. Farrukh Mukhtar, Sirat Fatima, Masooma Sabatin, Mrs. Khetran, Tahira Najam are speaking at the closing ceremony of the two-day Blue Fair organized by the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, while souvenirs are being distributed. While Farah Saqib, Shahnaz Nasir, Mehwish Jilani are also present

Election rigging has violated democratic traditions

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Women's Constituency Secretary General Humira Tariq and Provincial President Tasneem Sarwar have said in a joint statement that the Election Commission did not fulfill its responsibilities in the elections, rigging has violated the democratic traditions. The theft of the mandate of Jamaat-e-Islami's clear superiority in Gwadar and Dir district has opened the citadel of transparency of the Election Commission. Jamaat-e-Islami will continue its protest against this open fraud. Dr. Humira Tariq paid tribute to the Pakistan workers of Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday for their struggle and efforts to stop mandate theft.



HBL Agricultural Services to promote Academia-Industry Relations in Punjab

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: An agreement was signed between the University of Agriculture Faisalabad and HBL Agricultural Services Ltd. to promote Academia-Industry Relations.

The event was attended by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Agriculture Faisalabad Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmed Khan, President and CEO HBL, Muhammad Aurangzeb, CEO, HBL Agricultural Services Aamir Aziz along with other senior members of Agricultural University Faisalabad, HBL, HBL Agricultural Services also participated. As per the agreement, HBL Agricultural Services to promote sustainable agriculture.



ence Centers will be set up across Punjab in collaboration with Agriculture University Faisalabad by integrating Agriculture Dera. The objective of this strategic cooperation is to implement joint efforts to increase productivity by implementing innovative research,

sustainable agricultural practices, and aligning production with global standards. Additionally, this collaboration will involve university faculty members in various research projects, provide training to university students and foster project-based internship facilities. It

will introduce financial inclusion technologies and farmer digital inclusion programs for further enhancement.

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Agriculture Professor Dr. Iqar Ahmed Khan said that these "Farm Research and Excellence Centers" will play an important role in promoting modern agricultural practices in Punjab. He said that agriculture is facing enormous challenges to ensure the attainment of food self-sufficiency and to make agriculture a profitable profession.

The nutritional needs of the population can be met. Mohammad Aurangzeb, President and CEO of HBL, said, "This collaboration is a solid and viable step towards harnessing the enormous potential in Paki-

stan's agricultural sector said that HBL Agricultural Services Limited is committed to bring positive change in the lives of millions of people involved in the agricultural sector of Pakistan.

It will play an important role in increasing capacity and improving the lives of farmers. Director Research Dr. Jafar Jaskani, Principal Officer Farm Dr. Azim Iqbal, Treasurer University Umar Saeed Qadri, Principal Officer Public Relations Dr. Jalal Arif, Director Planning and Development Irfan Abbas, Director Form Dr. Shahid Ibn Zamir, Director External Linkages Dr. Kashif Salimi, Dr. Khuram Zia, HBL Branch. Manager Agricultural University Sufyan Ahmed and other dignitaries attended.

GDA rejects elections results, vacates seats in protest

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Chief Pir Sadaruddin Shah Rashidi, popularly known as Pir Pagara rejected the results of the General Elections 2024 and announced vacate two Sindh Assembly seats.

The GDA chief presided over a meeting after its defeat in the recently concluded General Elections. Other leaders of the GDA were also present in the meeting called to discuss 'rigging' in the 'anti-state' elections. Speaking to the media after the meeting, Pirpagara said that the entire Sindh has been awarded to Asif Ali Zardari. "If all seats of the province were to be awarded to Zardari why were you declared us the winner of two seats," he asked.

Pir Pagara said that his party would stage a peaceful protest against the elections results and announced a sit-in on February 16 at Hyderabad Bypass.

Pir Pagara said these results emerged even after the 'worst' Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government in Sindh.

"I was advised by a friend to abolish GDA and make an alliance with Zardari to get seats in return," Pir Pagara said and added that he refused the offer.

The GDA Chief said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder is not his 'relative' but he saluted the youth who came out and voted for him.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings
Fajr 5:32 am
Zohr 12:22 pm
Asr 4:10 pm
Maghrib 5:49 pm
Isha 7:13 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHO 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883

ACCA survey highlights critical need for diversity and inclusion in the accountancy profession

PPA

LAHORE: In a comprehensive survey, ACCA's Global Talent Trends 2024 highlights a critical diversity and inclusion culture, AI's role in the profession, and mental health concerns in the workplace, with an in-depth look at South Asia's unique market dynamics.

This wake-up call for employers comes in the biggest global talent survey across the accountancy profession, ACCA's (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) latest annual Global Talent Trends survey 2024 provides a unique and vital view of how people feel about their life at work.

Almost 10,000 professional accountants from 157 countries were asked about the concerns they held around work in the future as well as aspirations for their careers. The survey also assessed key workplace issues such as hybrid working, diversity, mobility and mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.

According to the survey, a significant 73% of professionals believe that a robust diversity and inclusion culture is crucial in choosing an employer, signalling an urgent call for organisations to broaden their diversity initiatives beyond traditional dimensions to include aspects such as age and neurodiversity.

Assad Hameed Khan, Head of ACCA Pakistan, comments, "The shortage of talent and cost of meeting pay rise demands, together with the many job opportunities available to professional accountants, mean that attracting and retaining talent presents a huge ongoing challenge for employers."

ACCA Pakistan's focus on these key areas reflects a broader commitment to addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the global talent trends. By aligning with the insights provided by the Global Talent Trends 2024 survey, ACCA Pakistan aims to contribute to the development of the finance profession towards a more inclusive, technologically adept, and mentally healthy future.

Nawaz Sharif telephones Fazlur Rehman to discuss unity govt

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supreme Nawaz Sharif on Monday telephoned Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazlur chief Mualana Fazlur Rehman to discuss matters related to the formation of a unity government.

The General Elections 2024 brought a split mandate as not a single political party was in a position to form a government single-handedly.

Both the leaders discussed matters related to the formation of a unity government in Pakistan. The sources said the meeting between Nawaz Sharif and Fazlur Rehman is expected to take in the upcoming two days.

Earlier on Sunday, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) discussed a 'power-sharing formula' to bifurcate the prime minister's tenure between the two parties for the next five years.

The PML-N delegation led by Shehbaz Sharif reached PPP's office in Lahore



where they were received by PPP leadership including Bilawal Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari and others. The sources close to the development revealed that during the meeting a suggestion was put forward that the PML-N and the PPP might get their respective nominee elected as the prime minister for two and

a half years each. "One party's nominee would be the prime minister for the first two and half years while another party's nominated member could get the prime minister slot for the next two and half years," as per the suggestion, sources claimed.

National Day

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori, Caretaker Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi, Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddom, and others stand in honor of both countries national anthem during National Day of Iran ceremony at a local hotel, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

ECP restrains winning result of Khawaja Asif in NA-71

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The election commission on Monday restrained result of the NA-71 Sialkot over a petition of the PTI-backed independent candidate Rehana Dar.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) served notice to returning officer over Rehana Dar's petition and summoned his reply.

The ECP while restraining result of winning candidate Khawaja Asif adjourned hearing until February 14.

The counsel of Rehana Dar said that "We had won the election with 50,000 votes lead according to form-45 from 353



polling stations." "We were defeated with 47,000 votes in the form 47 prepared by the returning officer," the lawyer said.

"Another form 47 has been uploaded at the election commission's website, half-an-hour ago," lawyer said.

"Still, you are pleading that the new form 47 made no difference," ECP member questioned. "Yes, my Lord on our application the new form 47 made no difference," the counsel replied.

PTI-backed independent candidate Rehana Dar, mother

of Usman Dar, had announced to move court against alleged rigging after unofficial results showed she lost to PML-N candidate Khawaja Asif.

She alleged that Khawaja Asif and the returning officer have robbed the people's mandate and manipulated results.

She claimed that Khawaja Asif had lost from all polling stations. "The returning officer didn't provide the results; we were not allowed to enter the RO office," she added.

According to unofficial results of 353 polling stations, PML-N candidate Khawaja Asif bagged 118,566 votes whereas Rehana Dar secured 100,272 votes.

Me and I

Sara Jabeen

Do you know what is the beauty of being an adult. Sometimes the solace keeps its doors so tight that a single beam of light struggles to pass through it. It is the anxiety of future. It is the hope to see what coming years will bring to you.

How far is the time to get plucked, does reality it will bring content or it is mere speculation. Either I shall be able to stand at the throne which I have been making since childhood or it will get stacked by my own hands with responsibilities.

Does the dreams I see in spectacles will be able to reach the depths of my eye. It is a long distance though in a fast moving life.

My right eye asks all such questions to the girl in the mirror.

My brain even haunts that girl by making her believe as an ultimate looser who is indecisive. My skin color suddenly fades, features feels heavy on me, hair seems rough and confidence sleeps right at the spot.

As soon as tears pop up, light coming from the bulb right above the mirror reflects on the tears to create a sparkle. The sparkle illumine the eye ball.

I remained motionless in astonishment for certain moments as it is her left eye. I suddenly forgot its presence. Suddenly light disappears but I can still feel it inside me. I can sense a movement of wavering, opening the ajar doors of heart to its full.

I could feel the confidence rising up from my shoulder

and hugging me so tight that the pores of my skin which I intentionally closed got open with a sudden jerk.

I could sense rapid changes, rendering me motionless, unable to do anything but gaze. Her skin took its shine back, her lips smiled, her hair started to sway. I sensed that she is blessed with the most elegant height.

She seems so content and satisfied now. Every move she made was praised by confidence itself.

She has both eyes now but left one dominates with sparkle which brings hope, self love and audacity to beat the perplexing thoughts generated by brain.

Not many girls are privileged enough to catch that sparkle. You need to find it within yourself and adulthood teaches you all such wars of 'ME AND I'

Webinar on 'Women in Science: Shaping Tomorrow's Innovations'



PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) commemorated the International Day of Women and Girls in Science by holding a Webinar titled "Women in Science: Shaping Tomorrow's Innovations." The event, held in a hybrid format at the COMSATS Secretariat in Islamabad, brought together a diverse panel of speakers to explore the pivotal role of women in Science, Technology, Innovation, and Engineering. Participants from around the globe joined the webinar.

Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director of COMSATS, delivered the opening remarks, stressing the importance of women's equal participation alongside men in addressing global challenges. Dr. Zakaria reiterated COMSATS' commitment to advocating for and promoting gender equality in the realm of science, technology, and innovation worldwide.

H. E. Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar, a distinguished member of the Senate of Pakistan and recently appointed CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, expressed appreciation to COMSATS for organizing this significant event. In her video message, Dr. Sania underscored that achieving gender equality in science, technology, and innovation is not only a matter of social justice but also essential for fostering economic prosperity and sustainable development.

Prof. Dr. Quarraisha Abdool Karim, President of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), shared valuable insights into her three decades of research contributions that have significantly influenced the global HIV prevention efforts. She highlighted that the developing countries must maximize the potential of their Research and Innovation systems while promoting gender equality in scientific fields. Integrating gender considerations into the Science, Technology and Innovation landscape can provide developing countries with a significant competitive edge.

Professor Dr. Rana Dajani from Hashemite University in Jordan emphasized the importance of nurturing an inclusive environment in academia and research. She shared with audience her experience of introducing a simple yet impactful model and activity 'We Love Reading' an inter-generational initiative, promoting healing, connection, and positive self-development through the joy of reading.

The webinar not only honored the accomplishments of women in science but also spurred transformative action, reigniting the dedication to fostering a supportive atmosphere for women and girls in scientific disciplines. The insightful discussions underscored the necessity for ongoing endeavors and partnerships to ensure that women and girls have integral roles in shaping the future of science and innovation.

ECP refutes allegations of rigging during elections 2024

PPA

ISLAMABAD:

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday refuted allegations pertaining to rigging during the February 8 general elections, acknowledging the occurrence of a few irregularities.

In a statement issued today, the electoral watchdog acknowledged that it does not deny the occurrence of a few irregularities and that relevant forms were available for investigation. "Immediate decisions are being taken on complaints filed," it added.

However, the election commission said, the electoral process was peacefully organised despite 'difficulties and issues'. The ECP noted that conducting the elections smoothly was a 'major operation' which was completed successfully.

Referring to the delay in election results, the election commission said that the suspension of mobile services on February 8 created some hindrances in the sending of electronic data by presiding officers (POs).

Pakistan witnessed a countrywide shutdown of internet and cellular phone services on Feb 8 during the polling process with the authorities attributing the move "to maintain law and order" in the wake of the violence.

Today, the ECP said that the move had severely affected coordination and transport of election material.

Read More: Huge number of candidates challenge election 2024 results

According to the election commission, the first result of elections 2024 was received at 2am compared to the 2018 election result which was received at 4am.

"Except for some constituencies, the results of the elections were completed within one and a half days," the statement said, adding: "The delay in results in some constituencies did not benefit or harm any specific political party."

The polling was held for 265 seats of the National Assembly (NA) and 590 seats of provincial assemblies.

Voting took place on 51 seats of the Balochistan Assembly, 128 out of 130 seats of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, 296 out of 297 seats of the Punjab Assembly, and 130 seats of the Sindh Assembly.

Independent candidates consolidated their lead in the general elections 2024 over mainstream political parties, especially in the National and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assemblies, throughout the result announcement process.

According to the results announced so far, independent candidates have managed to win 101 seats. It is worth mentioning that out of these 101 independent candidates, 92 are supported by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf while nine are general independent candidates.

PML-N is in the second position with 75 seats, while the PPP has won 54 seats. The MQM-P won in 17 constituencies, JUI-F in four, PML-Q in three, while IPP and BNP won two seats each.

Moreover, the MWM, National Party, PML-Z, Balochistan Awami Party, Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party and Pashtunkhwa National Awami Party have won one seat each.

The polls were held overall smoothly and peacefully as no major untoward incident was reported throughout the country on Election Day with active participation of citizens who came out in droves to exercise their right to vote for electing candidates of their choice.

AIOU announces results of B.Ed

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University has announced the results of all B. Ed programs offered in the spring semester 2023. Results have been uploaded to the CMS portal.

Results for Matriculation, FA and Associate Degree programs have already been announced. As per the Controller of Examinations, the results of postgraduate programs will be announced soon.

Moreover, the last date for admissions to matric and FA programs for the spring semester 2024 is February 20, while the last date for admissions to BS, MS, MPhil and PhD programs is February 15. The details of admissions are available on the university website.

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PTI's Challenges: Stolen & reserved seats, and shifting loyalties - I

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) finds itself embroiled in a multifaceted crisis, grappling with significant challenges that threaten its political standing and influence in both the National and Provincial Assemblies. At the heart of this turmoil is a contentious legal struggle to reclaim seats that PTI alleges were unjustly wrested from its grasp, amidst accusations of a biased Election Commission and state machinery ostensibly arrayed against it. This situation is further compounded by the unsettling trend of PTI-endorsed candidates, who secured their victories largely through the party's support and the charismatic appeal of its former chairman, Imran Khan, now defecting under the pressures of coercion or the allure of incentives.

Faced with this precarious scenario, PTI's ability to retain its elected representatives is severely constrained, leaving the party in a vulnerable position. The shifting allegiances of its candidates not only undermine PTI's legislative strength but also pose profound questions about party loyalty and political integrity in Pakistan's tumultuous political landscape.

In response to these daunting challenges, PTI must tread carefully, adhering scrupulously to the stipulations of the Elections Act, 2017 (Section 104). This legal framework, while offering a pathway to address grievances, also demands meticulous compliance and strategic acumen from PTI as it seeks to navigate these turbulent waters. The party's journey ahead is fraught with legal, political, and ethical hurdles, requiring a delicate

balance between legal recourse, political strategy, and the maintenance of its core principles and public image.

Given this legal context, PTI's options to prevent defections are primarily political rather than legal. They may engage in negotiations or employ party-level strategies to retain their members. It may rely on internal rules or moral suasion to influence members' loyalty. Legally, the party should rely on pre-election agreements, if any, or party constitutions that candidates may have agreed to, which might include clauses related to party loyalty or penalties for defection PTI could explore enforcing these agreements.

However, the enforceability of such agreements is contingent upon their specific terms and compatibility with Pakistani law. Additionally, PTI could consider filing election petitions if there is substantial evidence of electoral fraud or malpractice associated with the defection. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of these legal measures is uncertain, given the lack of clear statutory provisions addressing post-election party loyalty. In Pakistan's political landscape, such issues of defection and party loyalty have historically been more amenable to political resolutions rather than legal interventions.

In the case of reserve seats, PTI has limited options. Since PTI could not file the initial list submission reflecting the party's eventual electoral strength or diversity, PTI could explore forming alli-

ances or negotiating coalition agreements with other parties. These political maneuvers would involve discussions around policy concessions or legislative support in exchange for backing PTI's nominees for key positions, thereby indirectly enhancing their representation in the assembly. Such alliances not only require adept negotiation skills but also a willingness to engage in give-and-take, balancing the party's immediate needs with its long-term policy objectives.

in a precarious position, necessitating a multifaceted strategy that goes beyond conventional legal challenges. It requires mobilizing public support, international advocacy for fair play, and engaging in diplomatic channels to highlight the perceived injustices. The party's endeavor to overturn the alleged manipulation and secure its rightful place in the political arena is a testament to the turbulent nature of democratic processes in contexts where the impartiality of electoral bodies and state institutions is called into question.

The electoral framework in Pakistan, as delineated by the Elections Act, 2017, is structured to uphold the sanctity and integrity of the voting process through a series of meticulous procedures and checks. From the initial step of voter identification, which leverages both traditional ID cards and advanced technologies like biometric verification, to the methodical issuance and tracking of ballot papers marked with indelible ink, the system is designed to mitigate the risks of impersonation and double voting. The public announcement of provisional results, followed by a transparent consolidation process in the presence of contesting candidates or their representatives, further enhances the credibility of the electoral process. These procedural safeguards, coupled with the option for any grievances to be thoroughly investigated by Election Tribunals, including the verification of thumb impressions against electoral rolls, form a robust framework intended to deter and detect malfeasance.

To be continued



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awcat)

11 February: International Day of Women and Girls in Science - I

It's not overpopulation that plagues Pakistan; the true hurdles are Corruption and Injustice.

Overpopulation has long been identified as a significant global issue, often associated with strain on resources, environmental degradation, and economic instability. However, in the case of Pakistan, it is crucial to recognize that overpopulation is not the core problem. Instead, the country faces significant challenges related to corruption and injustice, which overshadow the impact of population size. By addressing these underlying issues, Pakistan can work towards a more sustainable and equitable future.

The term "overpopulation" refers to the accumulation of too many people in a given area, resulting in economic and social problems. Pakistan's population was 240,485,658, up 1.88% from 2022. Pakistan's population was 235,824,862, up 1.91% from 2021, according to the Council of Common Interest (CCI). The results of the 2023 digital census were "unanimously" accepted on August 5th, 2023. According to the census results, Pakistan's population has increased to 241.49 million with an annual growth rate of 2.55%.

In recent months, reports of corruption and injustice within government agencies have raised serious concerns about the integrity of public institutions. From bribery and embezzlement to

abuse of power and lack of accountability, the scourge of corruption and injustice appears to be undermining public trust and confidence in the government.

Corruption has deeply entrenched itself in various aspects of Pakistani society, permeating government institutions, business transactions, and public services. It erodes trust in the public sector, stifles economic growth, and perpetuates inequality. In a corrupt system, resources are often misallocated, hindering the potential for sustainable development. As a result, the true impact of overpopulation is obscured by the ramifications of systemic corruption.

According to Transparency International: Pakistan is the 133rd least corrupt nation out of 180 countries, according to the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International. Corruption Rank in Pakistan averaged 113.04 from 1995 until 2023, reaching an all-time high of 144.00 in 2005 and a record low of 39.00 in 1995.

The NCPS 2023 comprises the perception of levels and frequency of corruption perceived by the Pakistani Citizens. TI Pakistan conducted National Corruption Perception Survey 2023 through its Partner Organizations, in all four provinces from 13 October 2023 to 31 October 2023 with 1,600 respondents (400 respondents from each Province).

Former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan was found guilty of corrup-

tion and sentenced to 14 years. In the case known as Toshakhana, Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, was also sentenced to 14 years in prison. Khan and his wife were reportedly given 108 gifts from heads of state and foreign officials, some worth millions of rupees, by the pair during his tenure as prime minister, according to the anti-corruption watchdog, and many of them were illegally kept or sold by the pair. The two will be barred from running for public office for ten years, as well as slapping a 787 million rupee (\$2.8 million) fine on each of them.

Pakistan's buzzwords for 2018 were corruption and "accountability." Nawaz Sharif was found guilty of two corruption charges. On July 6, Nawaz was found guilty of owning assets that were beyond the scope of his knowledge of the law, while his daughter Maryam Nawaz was sentenced to seven years in prison for abandonment.

Maryam's husband, a retired captain Mohammad Safdar, was sentenced to a year in prison for non-cooperation with nab and abetting his wife and father-in-law. Nawaz, on the other hand, was convicted of another offence in December by the accountability court, this time in the Al-Azizia steel mills corruption case, bringing him back to prison. The court found him guilty of possessing more money than his means, imposing a seven-year jail term as well as a \$25 million fine. In the \$14 billion Ashiana Iqbal Housing Society corruption lawsuit, NAB snared the Younger Sharif, who held the prominent positions of pml-n president and leader of the opposition in the parliament.

To be continued

Remarkable Role of Government, Election Commission and Pak Army in Conducting the Fairest Elections - II

Nonetheless, the significance of elections faces its share of obstacles. From voter suppression to electoral malpractice, numerous threats lurk that could undermine the fairness and integrity of the electoral process. Additionally, the proliferation of misinformation and foreign interference presents novel challenges to the legitimacy of elections, corroding public trust and faith in the democratic mechanism. Furthermore, low voter turnout and apathy can diminish the credibility of election results, fostering feelings of disillusionment and disengagement among the electorate.

Confronted with these hurdles, it is imperative for citizens to remain vigilant and actively engage in the electoral process. By familiarizing themselves with pertinent issues, exercising their right to vote, and holding elected representatives accountable, citizens can help fortify the integrity of elections and champion democratic principles. Furthermore, governmental bodies, civil society organizations, and international stakeholders must collaborate to fortify electoral systems, combat misinformation, and advocate for transparency and accountability throughout the electoral process.

In the tapestry of democratic governance, electoral transparency emerges as a linchpin, indispensable for nurturing trust, responsibility, and legitimacy within the democratic framework. At its essence, transparency ensures that elections are conducted openly, impartially, and in adherence to established laws and principles, thus safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process and upholding the foundational principles of democracy. As nations worldwide navigate the intricacies of contemporary democracy, the significance of electoral transparency cannot be overstated, serving as a barrier against corruption, malpractice, and the erosion of public confidence.

The essence of transparency in elections lies in fostering openness and inclusivity at every stage of the electoral process, spanning from voter registration to result announcements. Electoral laws, procedures, and regulations must be open and readily accessible to all citizens, ensuring they comprehend

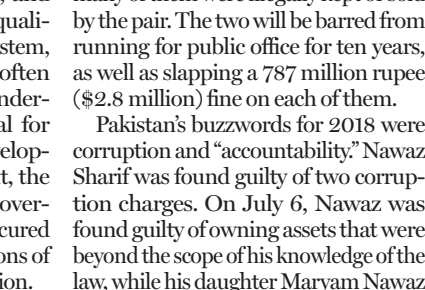
their rights and obligations as voters. Furthermore, electoral management bodies should operate with transparency, furnishing regular updates on electoral preparations, voter education endeavors, and logistical arrangements to guarantee the integrity and impartiality of the electoral proceedings.

Moreover, transparency in elections demands accountability and oversight mechanisms to identify and address irregularities, fraud, and misconduct. Independent electoral observers, civil society organizations, and media entities play a pivotal role in scrutinizing the electoral process, reporting any infringements or disparities, and holding electoral authorities and political figures accountable for their actions. By spotlighting potential abuses and ensuring consistent and impartial enforcement of electoral regulations, transparency bolsters public trust in the electoral process and deters malpractice.

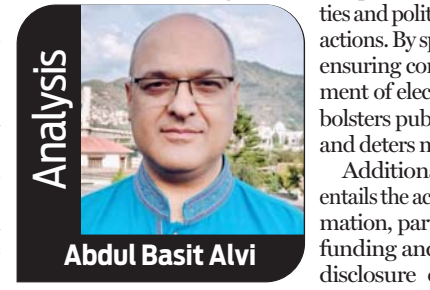
Additionally, transparency in elections entails the accessibility and openness of information, particularly concerning campaign funding and political expenditures. Clear disclosure of campaign donations and expenses empowers citizens to evaluate the impact of financial influence in politics, recognize potential conflicts of interest, and demand accountability from elected officials regarding their financial dealings. Furthermore, stringent disclosure requirements help forestall undue influence and corruption, ensuring elections reflect the populace's will rather than the preferences of affluent donors or special interest groups.

Furthermore, transparency in elections encompasses the integrity and security of electoral infrastructure, especially in the digital era. Given the escalating reliance on technology in electoral processes, safeguarding the security and integrity of electronic voting systems, voter registration databases, and ballot counting mechanisms is paramount. Transparency in the development, testing, and audit of electoral technology aids in identifying vulnerabilities and mitigating the risk of cyber threats or manipulation, thus safeguarding the legitimacy and credibility of election outcomes.

To be continued



M. Ameer Hamza



Abdul Basit Alvi

UN chief urges Pakistanis to resolve all post-election issues through set legal mechanisms

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday called on Pakistani authorities and political leaders to resolve the issues related to last week's election through established legal procedures and to avoid any action that raise tensions. The UN chief also urged them to maintain a "calm atmosphere" in the country.

"The Secretary-General is monitoring the situation in Pakistan and calls



for the resolving all issues and disputes through the established legal frameworks, and for human rights and the rule of law, to be fully respected in the interest of the people of Pakistan," his spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, said in response to a question at the regular noon briefing in New York. "The Secretary-General urges the authorities and political leaders to maintain a calm atmosphere, and to reject and refrain from all forms of violence and avoid any actions that could increase or inflame tensions."

Israeli occupation in Gaza Strip imposes strict siege on Gaza Strip civilians—Palestinian Center for Human Rights

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The occupying state continues to tighten its grip on Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and imposes a strict siege on them in their areas in light of the comprehensive unjust siege on the Strip. It continues to deprive them of their most basic humanitarian needs, especially those in the north of the Gaza Strip, and is trying to repeat the same tragedy on civilians in its center and south, so that more than 2.3 million Palestinian citizens are suffering from all manifestations of humanitarian catastrophe and famine due to their kidnapping by the occupation forces and turning them into hostages imprisoned in their areas that are exposed to bombing, the policy of starvation and thirst, and deprivation of medicines and fuel, in the absence of any safe place to resort to, especially for 1.3 million citizens live in Rafah and its area, the majority of whom live in dilapidated tents and suffer from a great scarcity of food and potable water. The occu-



pation forces also continue to besiege civilians wherever they are, especially those in shelter centers in Khan Yunis, such as the Haroun Al-Rashid School in the Al-Amal neighborhood, which contains 1,200 besieged civilians. They expelled the displaced from the Siham School in Khan Yunis and fired shells at the school, turning the entire Gaza

Strip into a health hazard, including... This includes hospitals, as is the case with Nasser Hospital, which began to leak sewage, and as is the case in the filled sewage pond in Gaza City, with what it means of the spread of epidemics and infectious diseases, in light of the difficult situation and the erosion occurring in the entire medical infra-

structure, if not its collapse. Not only that, but reports continue from the Hebrew media and credible international bodies about Israel's mistreatment of prisoners and detainees in the Gaza Strip, clarifying the extent of the humiliation, cruelty, oppression and abuse against them, including allowing Israeli civilians to witness this torture and film it, as reported by the Hebrew media. All of this confirms that Israel is exposing the option of death for Palestinian civilians in various forms or displacement, ignoring all international demands and appeals to protect civilians and secure their basic humanitarian needs.

The Ministry affirms that what is required is an urgent, immediate and without delay humanitarian response that rises to the level of the great humanitarian needs of Palestinian civilians, through a binding international resolution issued by the Security Council that guarantees their protection and ensures the arrival of aid in sufficient quantities, which requires an immediate ceasefire.

Dellson Group to help Nepal form freelancers' association

PPA

KARACHI: Dellsons Group has signed an agreement with the Nepal Internet Foundation to build the freelancing ecosystem in Nepal, including a nationwide association, capacity-building programs, and conferences for freelancers.

Chairman of Dellsons Group Ibrahim Amin said, "We have gained tremendous expertise to facilitate freelancers in Pakistan along with collaboration with various stakeholders, including commercial banks, broadband internet providers, and universities, which ultimately empower freelancers and enhance their contribution to the economy of South Asia. And now, we are delighted to share the expertise with the regional country."

President Nepal Internet Foundation Bikram Shrestha said accessibility to the Internet is indispensable for every country to adopt it for faster growth in the economy; hence, our



think tank is committed to introducing every essential and emerging trend among the masses in Nepal. There is immense potential

for the youth of Nepal to contribute to the national economy while providing services to their clients on global freelancing platforms.

In Nepal, young people account for approximately 20.8 percent of the total population of the country (age group 16-25 years), while 40.68 percent of the population lies in the age group 16-40.

CEO of Dellsons Group, Tufail Ahmed Khan, said, "Freelancing is the emerging way of earning money in South Asian economies in the last few years, which needs talents in a multitude of fields. The representation of freelancers in any country is essential to advocating their rights and addressing issues and challenges at a national level. Similar to Pakistan, Dellson will build a National-level platform for freelancers in Nepal to support South Asian countries and their human talent.

Besides the formation of a freelancers' body, the group will also engage different corporations in the public and private sectors to help them promote the digital economy and establish remittance channels in Pakistan with different countries.

GKI hosts conference on climate change, emerging trends

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The 1st International Conference on Climate Change and Emerging Trends in Civil Engineering (CCETC-2024) began in Ghulam Ishaq Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology on Monday.

The conference marked an important gathering where experts from around the world participated to talk about climate change in the context of Civil Engineering. The event brought together scholars, researchers, industry leaders, and policymakers to discuss the challenges posed by climate change in civil engineering.

The Executive Director of the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Sciences and Technology in Pakistan (SOPREST) Shakil Durrani was the chief guest of the conference whereas Vice Chancellor of Mehran University of Engineering and

1st International Conference on Climate Change and Emerging Trends in Civil Engineering



Technology, Jamshoro Prof. Dr. Tauha Hussain Ali and Vice Chancellor, Karakoram International University Prof. Dr. Atta Ullah Shah were the guests of honor.

The inaugural day featured keynote speeches, panel discussions, workshops, and setting the stage for important knowledge-sharing sessions.

The speakers talked about the urgency of civil engineering

to respond the climate change challenges and stressed the need for new and innovative solutions to protect the environment for sustainable development.

Shakil Durrani emphasized the harmony to make engineering solutions more climate-friendly.

The Rector of GIK Prof. Dr. Fazal Ahmad Khalid highlighted the significance of the conference in addressing climate change challenges, and

its impacts on infrastructure. He mentioned that the discussions and ideas shared in the conference would help to build infrastructure that would withstand the challenges of climate change.

Prof. Dr. Tauha Hussain Ali emphasized the role of civil engineering in the integration of climate resilience into infrastructure projects. He explained the advanced techniques for assessing natural hazards, modeling their impacts, and

implementing risk mitigation measures.

Pro Vice Chancellor, Mehran University Dr. Aneel Kumar and Dr. Shazim Ali Memon from Nazarbayev University Kazakhstan also spoke as keynote speakers on the occasion.

The Chair, Prof. Dr. M. Ashraf Tanoli expressed his satisfaction over the active participation and enthusiasm of the participants on the first day of the conference.

He said that the collective efforts of the civil engineering community would help in tackling climate change.

Throughout the day, participants had the chance to connect with others, learn from experts, and explore new technologies and solutions. The conference also provided a platform for young researchers and students to showcase their work and learn from experienced professionals.

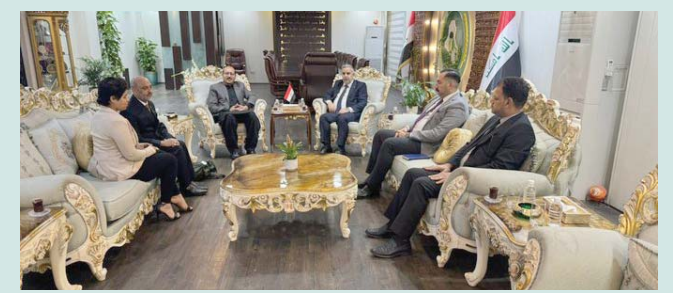
Pakistani, Slovenian envoys discuss bilateral ties



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's ambassador to Belgium Anma Baloch called on Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the European Union ambassador Boskovic Pohar in Brussels on Monday and discussed ongoing engagements in the European Union. In a post on X, the ambassador wrote they reaffirmed commitment to extend cooperation in bilateral matters.

Pakistan, Iraq explore avenues to increase cooperation in agriculture sector



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iraq on Monday discussed ways and means to enhance bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture, with a special focus on research and development.

The discussion came during a meeting between Pakistan's Ambassador to Iraq Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed and Iraq's Minister for Agriculture Abbas Al Maliki, Pakistan's Embassy in Iraq posted on X. Meanwhile, Sheikh Ali Najafi son of Grand Ayatullah Bashir Hussain Najafi called on Ambassador Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed.

During the meeting, they discussed issues pertaining to Pakistanis residing in Najaf and Karbala, as well as ways and means of facilitating Pakistani Zaireen.

IMF to hold talks with Pakistan's new govt for loan tranche

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will hold talks with Pakistan's newly elected government for disbursement of the final loan tranche under SBA.

Under SBA, Pakistan will receive a final loan tranche of \$1.1 billion. The targets set by the IMF have already been met by the caretaker government of Pakistan.

The international lender is not 'interested' in holding talks with the caretaker government for the final loan tranche under the SBA and has decided to hold negotiations with the elected government only, the sources said.

They further said the talks between IMF and Pakistan's newly elected government can be held in the last week of February or the first week of March.

Earlier, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) 'approved' a debt rescheduling plan for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) privatization.

According to details, the negotiations between the officials of the Ministry of Privatization, the Ministry of Finance, and the IMF were successful.

The IMF agreed to pay the interest on the PIA loan to the government of Pakistan for one year. The government will pay the Rs280 billion loan to the banks at 12 percent interest for one year.

Pakistani expert installs research equipment at University in Mauritania

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In a remarkable achievement, Pakistani expert, Engr. Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi has installed research equipment at the Nawakchott University in Mauritania.

Engr. Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi is visiting Mauritania under COMSTECH-Mauritania Science and Technology Cooperation Program.

The installation of this equipment is a new initiative of the Agence Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique et de l'Innovation (ANRSI).

It is aimed at promoting and supporting scientific research, logistics, and technical support with the resources needed to achieve the maximum benefit from laboratories.

Where the ANRSI seeks to provide valuable, versatile, research equipment to the researchers of all disciplines.

Engr. Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi, had previously visited Nawakchott, in the same context last year.

His competence and experience in evaluating and maintaining research equipment in a number of countries such as Yemen, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Saudi Arabia, is well known.

His work has been recognized with awards by Bruker AXS Germany and outstanding technical support shield by KRL, Islamabad.

COMSTECH signed a memorandum of understanding with ANRSI last year, since then it is supporting visits of experts to Mauritania to develop institutional capacities. The visiting experts install and repair the scientific instruments, and impart training to Mauritanian manpower on the use and maintenance of the equipment.

ANRSI is the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation of Mauritania. It aims to make scientific research a lever for overall economic and social development.

Its mission is to implement State policy for the promotion of scientific research and innovation. It is notably responsible for supporting all research and innovation activities in Mauritania.

COMSTECH aims to enhance cooperation among OIC member states in the field of science and technology, and improves capabilities through training in modern fields.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
61,065.31	62,943.74
Day's High	Day's Low
62,634.37	60,647.67
Index Value	Change
9,793,515,635	-1878.43
Percentage	Time
-2.98%	12 Feb, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,573.69	+1.11
Percentage	Time
+0.015%	12 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,893.55	+221.86
Percentage	Time
+0.57%	12 Feb, 1:06 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
36,897.42	+34.14
Percentage	Time
+0.093%	9 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	180	182
Bahrain Dinar	751.09	759.09
Canadian Dollar	206.5	208.5
China Yuan	39.49	39.89
Danish Krone	40.65	41.05
Euro	302.5	305.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.74	36.09
Indian Rupee	3.48	3.59
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	915.92	924.92
Malaysian Ringgit	59.21	59.81
New Zealand \$	171.12	173.12
Norwegians Krone	26.43	26.73
Omani Riyal	734.28	742.28
Qatari Riyal	77.46	78.16
Saudi Riyal	74.65	75.4
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.85	27.15
Swiss Franc	323.85	326.35
Thai Bhat	7.93	8.08
U.A.E Dirham	76.8	77.5
UK Pound Sterling	353.5	357
US Dollar	280	282

Learn360 LMS
Takes Center Stage
at Prestigious
EdTech Event
#Bett2024 in
London



PPA

LAHORE: Learn360, a leading provider of Learning Management Systems (LMS), made waves at the Bett 2024 education technology conference in London, UK, earlier this month. Learn360 not only showcased its award-winning platform to an international audience but also forged key partnerships and secured new business opportunities, setting the stage for its global expansion.

Bett, known as the world's leading education technology event, brought together over 850 exhibitors and 35,000 attendees from 137 countries. Learn360 stood out amidst this global gathering with its innovative and user-friendly LMS, which impressed educators and industry leaders.

This milestone event served as a catalyst for Learn360 to embark on an ambitious journey of international expansion. Recognizing the global demand for advanced e-learning solutions, the company is poised to position Pakistan as a leader in the global EdTech sector.

"The response at Bett 2024 was phenomenal," said Hamza Abdul Haq, CEO of Learn360. "We had educators from across the globe stopping by our booth, eager to learn how our platform can empower their students and transform their teaching practices. We also had the opportunity to connect with potential partners who are excited about Learn360's potential to disrupt the global LMS market."

Reforms and privatization can be affected: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Monday the coalition government will have a hard time making the economy better.

The political unrest will continue, and the economy will continue to head towards catastrophe as privatization and reform processes in several sectors will be hampered, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the split mandate has disappointed the masses and the business community, and now they are looking forward to a messiah.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that it is worrisome that no party gets a complete and clear majority in the elections. Now a coalition government will be formed, which has

reduced the hope of improvement in the political and economic situation.

He said that due to the coalition government, the pace of tax reforms may slow down and the process of privatization may stop, due to which failed state-owned companies will continue to lose trillions of rupees annually.

Moreover, the business leader said that electricity and gas losses will remain, and the public will continue to bear the burden.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the coalition government will not be able to get the economy and the people out of the problems in the way that is needed; it will be more focused on dealing with the allies and political opponents.

Many people fear that the new government will not be able to continue the tough decisions of the current caretaker government, which are very important for the economic future of the country.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that during the election campaign, the PPP had promised to



give free electricity to the people, while the PML-N had promised to give cheap electricity to the people. How will these promises be implemented when it is evident that electricity will become more expensive at the behest of the IMF, he questioned.

He noted that it is enough to gauge the seriousness of the political parties, as none of them mentioned the new program of the IMF in its manifesto, while the ground situation is that the survival of the country is impossible without the new program of the lender.

As part of the coalition government, the political parties will not be able to fulfill their tall claims and promises, and the political forces, including PTI and institutions, will not be able to ignore the harsh economic realities for long, he remarked.

Mian Zahid Hussain added that the new government will have to increase exports in any case because the policy of paying off old debts through new debts cannot last long.

The tax system also needs to be improved so that government revenue can be increased without increasing the burden on the public, as debt servicing is higher than revenue; thus, at least doubling the tax-to-GDP ratio has become necessary.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Muhammad Sohail Rajput, Board of Investment, meeting with Mr. K. K. Ah-san Wagan Ambassador Designate to Turkmenistan at Prime Minister's office, Board of Investment on Monday.



Photo: PID

Faysal Bank supports 9th Special Olympics Pakistan Unified Marathon 2024

PPA

KARACHI: Promoting its mission of inclusivity, Faysal Bank Limited, one of the leading Islamic banks in Pakistan, was the platinum sponsor for the 9th Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP) Unified Marathon 2024. The Bank has been the lead sponsor of this event for the last five years and keeping up with its commitment to promote an equal and just social system, strives to instill tolerance and acceptance of differently abled people within the society.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Hussain said, "Health, diversity and social inclusion are at the heart of our Islamic values and today we are honoured to contribute to the promotion of a healthier lifestyle among our people and to create an inclusive environment that uplifts everyone regardless of their race, religion, gender or any



other element."

He further added, "The participation of persons with special needs showcases their resilience, courage and the hope that their community will rally behind them on their path towards achievement and excellence. It is my aspiration that these initiatives extend beyond the realm of sports, to offer opportunities for continu-

ous learning, so that optimism of the children is not restricted, allowing them to bring forth great enterprises."

Ronak Lakhani, Chairperson on the Board of SOP said, "I take immense pride in the ongoing unity fostered by the Special Olympics Pakistan team, now spanning over nine remarkable years. Witnessing individuals with special needs

and the mainstream community unite is truly inspiring. A heartfelt 'Thank You' to Mr. Yousaf Hussain President & CEO Faysal Bank for his unwavering support over the past five years. Our commitment remains steadfast in cultivating an inclusive culture, empowering everyone to flourish and succeed in every facet of life."

NAVTTTC and ICCI to collaborate to produce skilled manpower for the industry

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Gulmina Bilal, Chairperson, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) along with her team visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and discussed collaboration with the Chamber to produce skilled manpower for the local industry. She agreed with the proposal of Acting President ICCI for formation of an Advisory Council giving representation to major stakeholders and said that its modalities will be further discussed with ICCI.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that

the role of NAVTTTC is important for improving industrial growth. He said that NAVTTTC should form an Advisory Board representing all major industries to meet the skilled manpower needs of various industries. He said that all training programs should be developed in consultation with the stakeholders to achieve win-win results.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan stressed for the skilled development of women for various industries including pharmaceuticals for their economic empowerment.

Mian Akram Farid, former President ICCI said that ICCI has already worked with NAVTTTC on various



projects and it would like to further collaborate with it to produce skilled manpower.

Ch. Muhammad Ali, Hamayun Kabir, Mohsin Khalid, Mian Waqas Masud and others also spoke on the

occasion and gave useful proposals for the skilled development of people as per needs of the business entities.

SECP all set to launch 'eZfile', a new corporate registry

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) is all set to launch a new corporate registry, "eZfile", a more sophisticated, advanced, and user-friendly online portal for company registration and post-incorporation filings.

The new corporate registry is envisioned in SECP's digital transformation program, namely LEAP—Leading Efficiency through Automation Prowess, launched to position SECP as a role-model regulator through end-to-end automation of its business processes.

eZfile, a modern corporate registry with a user-friendly interface and several advanced features, is ready to replace the SECP's existing online filing system, 'eServices'. The "eZfile" portal offers comprehensive ease to its users while doing incorporation, filing statutory returns through built-in checks, and pop-up guidance messages.

The SECP has considerably simplified the regulatory framework by reviewing existing regulations and merging multiple forms, reducing the number of filing forms from 75 to 28, eliminating duplication, and ensuring clarity.

The consolidated single set "Companies Regulations 2024" is issued, covering the regulations for company incorporation, post-incorporation compliance and reporting, issuance of license under Section 42 of the Companies Act, 2017, further issue of share capital, group registration, easy exit of companies, buyback of shares, registration of intermediaries, etc. The regulations also contain standard forms and application samples for ease of compliance.

The Companies Regulations, 2024 will be implemented in a phased manner starting from the launch of the LEAP project, as per the Commission's notification.

FPCCI Congratulates to Mirza Ikhtiar Baig Wins NA - 241

PPA

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has congratulated Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig on winning his national assembly seat of NA - 241; and, pinned his hopes in his leadership skills to facilitate business, industry and trade community of Pakistan through advocating for enabling, conducive business and economic policies from the august platform of National Assembly of Pakistan.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh added that Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig is not only a highly-respected former Senior Vice President of FPCCI; but, also a seasoned and accomplished governance leader as he has previously served as Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Textiles. Further-

more, he has been active in social, philanthropic, economic and political circles for the past many decades.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh proposed that the new government should capitalize on his expertise and network in export markets and diplomatic circles. It is a testimony of his diplomatic credentials that he is an Honorary Consul General of Yemen in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has also conferred upon him the prestigious civil awards of Sitara-e-Imtiaz & Tamgha-e-Imtiaz.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon highlighted that the election of Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig will facilitate the representation of trade and industry in the government setup at this crucial juncture in Pakistan's economic history.

Mechanism being devised to award stipends to top athletes: DG Sports

Sports Desk

LAHORE: DG Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail presided over an important meeting regarding formation of Punjab teams and devising a roadmap to award monthly stipend to top performing athletes of recently concluded Rising Punjab Games at National Hockey Stadium on Monday.

Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum, Deputy Director Atta ur Rehman, Assistant Director Waseem Asghar and other officials attended the key meeting in person while all Divisional Sports Officers of the province participated through video link.

Addressing the meeting, Dr Asif Tufail said that several talented players have emerged from Rising Punjab Games 2024. "We are devising a mechanism to award scholarships to

the high performing players from March this year," he added.

He said that the top performing male and female athletes of Inter-Division sports competitions will be given Rs 70,000, Rs 50,000 and Rs 30,000 per month in three categories Diamond, Gold and Silver for one year. "Definitely, these stipends will play a key role in creating great inspiration among the rest of the young athletes to improve their game skills."

Dr Asif Tufail informed that the training camps for top athletes will also be set up soon to polish their sports skills and prepare them for bigger national sports events including 35th National Games. "The Under-16 Talent Hunt Programme and Annual Sports Calendar have great significance in the development of sports culture across the province".



He directed all the conveners of six sports disciplines of Rising Punjab Games selection committee to give their

complete output regarding selection and categorization of players for scholarships and formulation of Punjab teams. "The selection of athletes for scholarships and formulation of Punjab teams must be purely on the basis of their performance in the Inter-Division Rising Punjab Games sports events".

Dr Asif Tufail said that Sports Board Punjab's effective measures will have long lasting and durable impact on the future of sports in the Punjab province. While reviewing the process of club registration, Dr Asif Tufail said that there is no doubt that the registration of sports clubs is a unique and most important campaign for the growth of true sports culture in the province. "It is for the first time in Punjab's sports history that thousands of genuine sports clubs are being registered from all tehsils of Punjab".

Performance of Karachi teams proved that there is immense talent in Karachi: Dr Junaid Ali Shah

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The performance of Karachi teams proved that there is immense talent in Karachi. In this season, the players of Karachi won the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy, T20 and U-19 tournament with their excellent performance, while the U-19 three-day and National ODI Cups were also runner-up. Despite this excellent performance, the players of Karachi are not given the place they deserve. Like other players of Karachi, Sarfaraz Ahmed has also been subjected to injustice.

These views were expressed by Dr. Junaid Ali Shah, the caretaker provincial sports minister of Sindh. Speaking as the chief guest at the celebration ceremony for the wonderful victories of the Karachi region in the season held at the local hotel, he appreciated Nadim Omar President Regional Cricket Association Karachi for his services in cricket and said that a person like him is Pakistan needs right now, who work with out any greed. Nadim Omar, the host of the event, Pres-



ident Regional Cricket Association Karachi, said, "I wish that the players of Karachi become part of the national team as much as possible."

He further said that by forming a Karachi team, it will be sent on a tour to other countries so that they can improve their game. Syed Irshad Ahmad Gilani,

Vice President of RCAF, said at the ceremony that under the leadership of Nadim Omar, Karachi cricket will be given its original place and Karachi team will be provided opportunities to play cricket in America. Javed Ahmed Khan Secretary RCAF said that the way Nadim Omar has encouraged the teams in the past

former captain of the national team Sarfaraz Ahmed and captain U-19 Saad Baig, Khalid Nafees, chairman of the tournament committee RCAF, Iqbal Imam, head coach of Karachi Whites also addressed the ceremony.

Chief guest Dr Junaid Ali Shah distributed 15 lakhs cash prize and shield to the players and team officials on behalf of Nadim Omar while former president KCCA Syed Siraj-ul-Islam Bukhari was presented with Lifetime Achievement Award by former president KCCA Prof. Ejaz Faruqi and Commemorative shields were distributed to zonal presidents, secretaries and treasurers.

Test captain Shan Masood, former test captain Sarfaraz Ahmed, Anwar Ali, Muhammad Azam Khan, Mahmood Hamid, member junior selection committee, Tauseef Siddiqui, joint secretary of RCAF, Asim Umar, Sohail Wajahat, Shariq Haseeb, Tanvir-ul-Haq, presidents of seven zones, secretaries, treasurers and other distinguished guests were also present.

Young players display potential at Khawar Hyat Memorial World Junior C'ship

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The ITF Pakistan Khawar Hyat Memorial World Junior Championship Leg-1 continued at the PTF SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad on Monday with young players from around the world showcasing their skills and talent. A total of 45 players, including boys and girls from countries including Kazakhstan, Turkey, USA, Hong Kong, China, Russia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Romania, Switzerland, Sri Lanka, and Thailand are competing in the Championship.

Additionally, 27 Pakistani boys and girls are also taking part in the tournament. In the Boys Singles Main Draw 1st Round matches, several thrilling encounters took place, with players exhibiting their determination and competitive spirit. In some of the notable contests, Thailand's Papangkorn Bunyarit defeated Pakistan's M. Kashan Tariq 2-6,6-1,6-4 in a hard-



fought match. Pakistan's Ahtesham Humayun emerged victorious against Ye Chan Choi of South Korea after a grueling three-set match 4-6,7-6(5),6-4. China's Zhe overcame Pakistan's Bilal Asim in straight sets 6-2,6-2.

Ivan Makarov of Belarus secured a win against Pakistan's M. Hamza Aasim

6-4,5-7,6-4 in a closely contested match. Pakistan's Ahmed Nael Qureshi cruised to victory over Daniil Varaksa of Russia 6-1,6-1.

Pakistan's Hamza Roman delivered an impressive performance in his match against Par Chandragholic of Thailand, winning in straight sets 6-0,6-0.

Results in brief:

Papangkorn Bunyarit (THA) bt M. Kashan Tariq (PAK) 2-6,6-1,6-4; Ahtesham Humayun (PAK) bt Ye Chan Choi (KOR) 4-6,7-6(5),6-4; Zhe Jiang (CHN) bt Bilal Asim (PAK) 6-2,6-2; Ivan Makarov (Belarus) bt M. Hamza Aasim 6-4,5-7,6-4; Shijie Chen (CHN) bt Ege Avcı (TUR) 7-5,6-1; Ahmed Nael Qureshi (PAK) bt Daniil Varaksa (RUS) 6-1,6-1; Hamza Roman (PAK) bt Par Chandragholic (THA) 6-0,6-0; Jiwan Park (KOR) bt Doruk Elbirlik (TUR) 6-2,6-1; Xiuyuan Guo (CHN) bt Amir Mazari (PAK) 6-1,6-2; Ju Hun Choo (KOR) bt M. Salar Khan (PAK) 6-2,6-1; Akmal Arabdjanov (UZB) bt Kaigaoge (CHN) 6-0,6-2; Ilya Kryukov (RUS) bt Asad Zaman (PAK) 6-1,3-6,7-6(3); Howard Chan (HKG) bt M. Haider Ali Rizwan (PAK) 3-6,6-3,6-2; Dong Hyeon in Nuom (KOR) bt Shehryar Anees (PAK) 6-1,6-0; Hamid Israr (PAK) bt Narathip Rueangsri (THA) 6-2,4-6,6-0

Steve Waugh criticizes ICC over South Africa naming seven uncapped players in Test squad

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Former Australian captain Steve Waugh has blamed the International Cricket Council (ICC) and leading cricket boards for not 'caring' about Test cricket after South Africa named their squad for the tour of New Zealand.

Steve Waugh's criticism came in the wake of South Africa announcing a depleted squad, featuring seven uncapped players for the two-match Test series against New Zealand, commencing from February 4, 2024.

South Africa announced uncapped batter Neil Brand as the captain for the New Zealand tour which will be played at the same time as SA20 league,

featuring the frontline Proteas players.

Steve Waugh voiced his concern for the future of Test cricket while putting the blame on ICC and major boards for not taking proactive steps for it.

"Obviously they don't care, but if the ICC or someone doesn't step in shortly then Test cricket doesn't become Test cricket because you're not testing yourself against the best players," Waugh said.

"I understand why players don't come. They're not getting paid properly. I don't understand why ICC or the top countries who are making a lot of money don't just have a regulation set fee for Test matches which is a premium, so people are incentivised to play

Test Cricket," he further added.

Steve Waugh furiously stated that not sending a full-fledged team is disrespectful to Test cricket as well as the opposing team.

"If I was New Zealand I wouldn't even play the series. I don't know why they're even playing. Why would you when it shows a lack of respect for New Zealand cricket?"

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Steve Waugh also expressed concerns that if the same tradition persisted, then Test cricket would not remain as competitive in future as it should be.

"The West Indies aren't sending their full-strength side [to Australia this summer]. They haven't picked a full-strength

Test team for a couple of years now," stated the former Australian skipper.

"Someone like Nicholas Pooran is really a Test batsman who doesn't play Test cricket. Jason Holder, probably their best player, is not playing now. Even Pakistan didn't send a full side [to Australia]."

"The public are the ones who are going to suffer because it's not the full side playing, so it's not Test cricket," Waugh concluded.

South Africa will play the first Test against New Zealand in Mount Maunganui from February 4 to February 8, while the second Test will be played from February 13 to February 17 in Hamilton.

South Africa squad for New



Zealand series

Neil Brand (c), David Bedingham, Ruan de Swardt,

Clyde Fortuin (wk), Zubayr Hamza, Tshaped Moreki, Mhlangeni Mpongwana, Duanne Olivier,

Dane Paterson, Keegan Petersen, Dane Piedt, Raynard van Tonder, Shaun von Berg, Khaya Zondo

Nayza Armwrestling Championship Season 2 advances to Grand Finale

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The enthralling second phase of the Nayza Armwrestling Championship Season 2 concluded at Nayza Amaan Square, Gulberg, setting the stage for a grand finale on February 24, 2024 at Nayza G1 Market Johar Town.

The grand finale promises to be a thrilling contest with a double elimination format, featuring top contenders from the initial rounds across various weight categories. In the second phase competitions, emerging victorious in the -60 kg youth category were Murtaza, Sajjad, Shams, Danish, and Mian Ahmed, all securing their spots in the finale.

The -75 kg youth category saw Haider King, Abdullah Nisar, Muhammad Umair Iqbal, and Moosa Butt advance, showcasing their strength and skill. In the -85 kg division, Hammad Butt and Hamza Butt earned their places in the final round, while the 85+ kg category will see Shazil Ali and Muzammil Khawar vying for the title.

Additionally, Usman Ghani triumphed in the 80+ kg senior category, adding to the roster of talented athletes set to compete in the championship's culmination. With contenders now preparing for the ultimate challenge, the Grand Finale of the Nayza Armwrestling Championship Season 2 is poised to be a spectacular display of power, technique, and determination.

PCB announces match officials for PSL 9

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board has announced the match officials for HBL Pakistan Super League 9, scheduled to take place across four venues from February 17 to March 18.

A total of 14 matches would be played from February 17 to 27 across Lahore and Multan while Karachi and Rawalpindi will stage 16 matches from February 28 to March 12, said a press release.

The match officials for the Qualifier, two eliminators and final, to be held in Karachi from March 14 to 18, would be announced in due course.

Four members of the ICC's elite panel of umpires - Richard Illingworth, Chris Gaffaney, Ahsan Raza and Michael Gough - would be accompanied by Abdul Moqet, Aleem Dar, Tariq Rasheed, Shozab Raza, Rashid Riaz, Faisal Afridi, Ruchira Palliyaguruge, Asif Yaqoob, Alex Wharf, Nasir Hussain, Imran Javed and Muhammad Asif.

Among the foreign umpires, Illingworth, who has previously officiated in six editions of the league, has served as an umpire in 48 matches in HBL PSL. England's Gough, who has appeared in four editions previously, has officiated 34 matches, followed by Wharf (11 matches) and Sri Lanka's Palliyaguruge (three matches). New Zealand's Gaffaney would make his league debut, officiating his first match between Multan Sultans and Karachi Kings at the Multan Cricket Stadium in Multan on February 18.

Roshan Mahanama, who has officiated 97 HBL PSL matches and was also a former member of the ICC's elite panel of match referees, would be in his ninth successive year and will lead a team of three match referees with other members being Ali Naqvi and Muhammad Javed.

The opening match between defending champions Lahore Qalandars and Islamabad United in Lahore will be officiated by veteran umpire Aleem Dar and Michael Gough on the field. Tariq Rasheed would be the TV Umpire while Shozab Raza will perform the duties of reserve umpire during the game. Muhammad Javed will perform duties of match referee in the match.

Zimbabwe call-up uncapped 33-year-old spinner for Sri Lanka ODIs

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Zimbabwe included uncapped Tapiwa Mufudza in the ODI squad for the three-match series against Sri Lanka, scheduled in January.

The 33-year-old was called up by caretaker coach Walter Chawagata after Dave Houghton quit last month, saying he had "lost the changing room" following a series of disappointing results. Off-spinner Mufudza got the nod after consistently impressive performances at the domestic level in the southern African nation.

Pace bowler Faraz Akram, who has only played international cricket in the Twenty20 side, is also in line to make his ODI debut.

Zimbabwe will also play three T20I matches in Colombo with Mufudza, Akram and Takudzwanashe Kaitano dropping out and Brian Bennett, Carl Mumba and Ainsley Ndlovu taking their places. The ODI matches are scheduled for January 6, 8 and 11 and the T20I matches for January 14, 16 and 18.

Zimbabwe ODI squad

Craig Ervine (c), Faraz Akram, Ryan Burl, Joylord Gumbie, Luke Jongwe, Takudzwanashe Kaitano, Tinashe Kamunhukamwe, Clive Madande, Wellington Masakadza, Tapiwa Mufudza, Tony Munyonga, Blessing Muzarabani, Richard Ngarava, Sikandar Raza, Milton Shumba



Called on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, comprising of Raof Hassan and Umair Niazi, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Monday.



Photo: PID

Senior PPP leadership advises Bilawal, Zardari to 'sit in opposition'

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Senior leadership of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has advised party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto and Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari against forming a coalition government with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and sitting in opposition, citing sources.

The PPP's Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting was held in Islamabad under the leadership of Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, a party statement said.

According to the statement, the participants of the meeting expressed their confidence in the leadership of the party and discussed a myriad of topics including the general elections and the way forward.

Sources told that majority of the committee members proposed to sit in opposition,



rather than forming a coalition government. Ostensibly, a strong coalition government will not be formed, the participants suggested.

The CEC members were of the view that PPP should sit in the opposition by respecting the mandate of independent candidates - who according to ECP election 2024 results were in lead in National Assembly (NA).

The participants dubbed making PPP's prime minister a

'political loss', sources claimed, adding that some also proposed to hold talks with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) instead of PML-N.

Meanwhile, some CEC members suggested to become part of the government on getting important positions including the premiership. If Bilawal becomes prime minister and PPP secures important ministries, the party can show his ability to deliver, sources

quoted meeting participants as saying.

Separately, PPP leader Nadeem Afzal Chan proposed to sit with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), rather than joining PML-N. "We should sit with the party which secured the real mandate", he said.

A day earlier, it was reported that PML-N and PPP discussed a 'power-sharing formula' to bifurcate the prime minister's tenure between the two parties for the next five years.

The PML-N delegation led by Shehbaz Sharif met PPP's leadership including Bilawal Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari.

Sources revealed that during the meeting a suggestion was put forward that the PML-N and the PPP might get their respective nominee elected as the prime minister for two and a half years each.

"One party's nominee would be the prime minister for the first

two and half years while another party's nominated member could get the prime minister slot for the next two and half years," as per the suggestion, sources claimed. The sources said that no final decision was made during the meeting as both parties sought time to consult with their respective executive boards or committees.

Earlier, PML-N 'offered' presidency, NA speakership and Senate chairmanship to Pakistan People's Party, to get support for the formation of governments in the centre and Punjab.

Sources claimed that PML-N has offered three constitutional positions to the PPP to gain its support in the centre and Punjab. PPP was offered positions of president, speaker National Assembly and Senate chairman, while PML-N also agreed to give Balochistan CM ship to the Bilawal-led party.

PTI mulls strategy to form govts in Punjab, KP and Centre

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has started mulling over a strategy to form governments in Centre, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) after independent candidates secured lead in Feb 8 general elections.

According to a statement issued after the party's core committee meeting, the PTI has constituted special committees to strategise on government formation in the Centre, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The committee agreed to the early completion of the nomination process for important government and parliamentary positions as per the recommendations and strategies proposed by the

committees.

The party lauded the people of Pakistan for 'showcasing' their political and democratic maturity by casting votes on February 8. "PTI will resist unethical efforts to hand over Pakistan to criminals," it said.

A day earlier, PTI demanded the immediate resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja.

According to PTI spokesperson, the CEC and ECP members should immediately resign from their posts for violating the constitution.

The spokesperson stated that after gaining a majority in the general election 2024, PTI has the right to form government in the center.



He maintained that PDM-2 is being imposed on Pakistan after rigged elections but people have rejected the dishonest parties through their vote.

Voting took place on 51 seats of the Balochistan Assembly, 128 out of 130 seats of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, 296 out of 297 seats of the Punjab Assembly, and 130 seats of the Sindh Assembly.

PTI-backed Independent candidates consolidated their lead in the general elections 2024 over mainstream political parties, especially in the National and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assemblies, throughout the result announcement process.

According to the results announced so far, independent candidates have managed to win 101 seats. It is worth mentioning that out of these 101 independent candidates, 92 are supported by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf while nine are general independent candidates.

PML-N is in the second position with 75 seats, while the PPP has won 54 seats. The MQM-P won in 17 constituencies, JUI-F in four, PML-Q in three, while IPP and BNP won two seats each.

PM Kakar surprised

Continued from page 1

Responding to a query, PM Kakar maintained that over 60 million voters had exercised their constitutional right to elect their favorite candidates under a 'pressure-free environment'.

The caretaker prime minister said that the delay in the announcement of official results were caused by the specific procedures regarding compiling of results at 92,000 polling stations and credited the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for conducting the massive exercise in a smooth manner.

He said the official results were announced within 36 hours while during 2018 elections, it took almost 66 hours. There might be irregularities but the relevant forums were available to address these grievances. In Sweden, a similar exercise almost took 10 to 11 days while in Indonesia, almost a month was consumed to furnish results, he added.

To another question, the prime minister said that mobile phone services were suspended on the poll day due to security threats as the government could not compromise on the security of people. On the other hand, broadband internet services were available on that day, enabling people to get connected; he said and rebuffed the allegations that the move was aimed at managing social media.

He said there were other occasions throughout the year, when the mobile services had been suspended to avert security threats.

PM Kakar, responding to a question regarding statements of certain countries over the recently held elections, said that if there were any allegations, they would look into them according to the laws of the land and not on the demands of any country.

"We will do it if it is required under the country's laws," he said, adding that

the demands of his countrymen were more important to the government and advised that certain statements by certain US Congressmen should not be taken as 'sacrosanct' or gospel truth as they were not speaking on part of the government. The elections in Pakistan were held in a free and fair manner and there was no institutional mechanism to favour any group, he stressed.

Responding to a query about prospects of forming a commission to investigate the polls allegations, he maintained that it would be up to the upcoming elected government to make assessments over such demands and decide, but he would not speculate about it.

The caretaker prime minister also agreed with the President's views over the need of introduction of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and said that according to his personal view, the political parties should hold threadbare

discussions in the next parliament over this issue and legislate if required so that the new electoral system could be more acceptable to all.

He expressed the optimism that after the current transitional period was over and the new government was formed, there would be a positive wave hitting the markets and businesses, adding that economic challenges would still await the next government.

The prime minister also hailed the entry of new voters and said that they would make positive contributions to the democratic process in the future.

To a question, he said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had no issue with the privatization process of the caretaker government. Restructuring of the PIA had almost been done, and it was in the implementation process, however, it was up to the upcoming government to decide either way.

Two terrorists killed in Mardan IBO: ISPR



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The security forces on Monday killed two terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted in Mardan District. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), after intense fire exchange, the two terrorists were killed during the conduct of operation.

Weapons, ammunition and explo-

sives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area, it said. "Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area."

Local populace appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to security forces in eliminating the menace of terrorism," the ISPR said.

Absar Alam attack: Suspect reveals details about planners



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police informed the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan that senior journalist Absar Alam was attacked at the behest of individuals based in France.

In a report submitted to the SC in the journalist protection suo moto case, the Islamabad Police said that six people who attacked the senior journalist have been arrested.

"An accused Hammad has confessed to attacking Absar Alam in return for money at the behest of individuals based in France," the report added.

The report quoted accused Hammad as saying that he had received the amount from Shah Nawaz and Mirza Zain Ghiyas through the bank.

The Islamabad police maintained that it submitted the challan on June 9, 2022, but the accused have

not been indicted yet.

The report read that arrest warrants have also been issued for the suspects based in France.

"Journalist Asad Toor was also attacked at the behest of Shah Nawaz and Mirza Ghiyas. Further investigations will be done on the arrest of the accused residing abroad," the Islamabad police maintained in the report.

Regarding abduction of another journalist Matiullah Jan, the Islamabad police said that the complainant in the case did not cooperate with the investigators.

The case of Matiullah Jan's abduction was registered on complaint of his brother. "Matiullah Jan did not name anyone in the police statement nor did he express suspicion on anyone," the report read.

The report said that journalist Amir Mir and Imran Shafiqat did not lodge any case with Islamabad police.

Sirajul Haq resigns as JI chief after election defeat



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Ameer Sirajul Haq on Monday announced to resign from the party position following the defeat in February 8 general elections.

"I accept responsibility for the election defeat and have resigned from the post of party ameer," said Sirajul Haq in a short post on X (formerly Twitter).

The development was also confirmed by Qaiser Sharif - JI's Central Secretary Information. He said that JI's Secretary General Ameerul Azeem summoned an emergency session of the central shura on February 17 at the party's headquarters - Mansoorah Lahore.

"The central shura's session will commence at 10am and mull over the post-resignation of the JI Ameer," he added.

It is pertinent to mention here that after Jamat-e-Islami (JI), a religio-political party failed to secure any seats in the National Assembly (NA).

The party won two seats in Sindh, three in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and one in the Balochistan assemblies.

Sirajul Haq was elected as the new ameer of JI in 2014, replacing the then-outgoing chief Syed Munawar Hassan. Out of 31,311 office-bearers of the party, 25,533 people voted which Sirajul Haq managed to secure a majority of votes in 2014.

Haq remained JI chief for a tenure of five years and he was re-elected in 2019. Now after serving the JI for 10 years, he finally resigned from his post.

Earlier in the day, Sindh Assembly MPA-elect and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi chief Hafiz Naemur Rehman announced to quit PS-129, citing 'rigging' in elections 2024.

Hafiz Naemur Rehman said according to FORM 45 he received 26,000 votes but was 'declared winner with 30464 votes'.

PTI-backed independent candidate grabbed more votes than he, JI Karachi chief said and added he dares to quit the seat over 'rigged' results.