



Commissioner Rawalpindi's name should be placed on ECL: Marriyum Aurangzeb

Following the statement related to 'rigging in general election 2024', the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb demanded that the name of Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatha should be placed on the Exit Control List (ECL). (Details on Page 8)



Marwat says Supreme Court can fix election issue in 'one day'

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Sher Afzal Marwat said on Friday that the party's protest on Saturday will not be joined by any other party. He also said that the Supreme Court can settle the controversy over elections in a single day if it wants to. He acknowledged that ties between Maulana Fazal ur Rehman and Imran Khan had always been strained because of a lot of different reasons. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Disclosure

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatha speaks at a press conference at his office in the city.



Photo: Online

Disclosure

Rawalpindi commissioner resigns over alleged election rigging

Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatha on Saturday resigned from his post over alleged rigging in elections 2024. Addressing a press conference the Rawalpindi commissioner surrendered to police saying "I accept responsibility for rigging election 2024". Chatha admitted that the rigging took place in election and candidates who were leading in their constituencies with

over 70,000 votes were converted to losers with the help of fake seals under his watch. He apologized from his subordinates for compelling them to rig elections saying that they were crying when they were directed to carry out the rigging. Commissioner Rawalpindi claimed that Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja was also involved in carrying out rigging in election 2024 and everyone involved in the wrongdoing must be convicted. Chatha revealed that on

Saturday morning he thought of committing suicide but then he decided to 'expose' the entire rigging fiasco. "I want to die a peaceful death" he added. Following his press conference, police arrested Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatha and was taken to the commissioner office. It is pertinent to mention here that uncertainty looms over Pakistan's political future as none of the major political parties - PML-N, PPP or the PTI-backed independent candi-

dates - secured a simple majority in the National Assembly in the February 8 general elections. Political stakeholders were making efforts to forge alliances and secure 169 seats in the 336-member lower house of parliament. 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.

Barrister Gohar demands inquiry of Commissioner's election allegations

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has demanded declaring election in Rawalpindi division as null and void. It is to be mentioned here that Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatha has resigned from his post over accepting responsibility of alleged rigging in elections 2024. Chatha admitted that the rigging took place in election and candidates who were leading in their constituencies with over 70,000 votes were converted to losers with the help of fake seals under his watch. Barrister Gohar demanded an immediate inquiry of rigging allegations claimed by the Commissioner Rawalpindi division.

Govt formation not just PML-N's responsibility, says Saad Rafique

Bureau Report

LAHORE: PML-N leader Khawaja Saad Rafique has reminded politicians that the formation of a federal government was a joint responsibility of all political parties in Parliament, not just his party. "No one has [an] absolute majority in the present National Assembly," he said in a post on X on Saturday. His statement comes after an inside story from the PML-N meeting revealed that party leaders have informed former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif they "should not take the government".

It is expected that the South Asian country would see a Pakistan Democratic Movement redux in the Centre—similar to the one that ruled the country for 16 months after the ouster of ex-PM Imran Khan. PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif has emerged as the joint coalition candidate for the prime ministerial position. The old coalition partners in the assembly would support him. Unlike in the past, this time the PPP has refused to join the future government, but had assured the PML-N of its support in the formation of the government and election of the prime minister.

In the meantime, the PTI, along with religio-political parties, has announced its decision to protest against alleged rigging in elections. The party has also stated that it would sit in opposition in Centre and Punjab. Sources told Aaj News that the third round of meetings between the PPP and the PML-N coordination committees was postponed to Saturday (today) from Friday. The decision was made due to the N-league committee meeting with the party leadership. Leaders are expected to finalise the formation of the government.

Salman Akram Raja, PTI women supporters arrested in Lahore during protests

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab police arrested PTI leader Salman Akram Raja and several women protesters on Saturday in Lahore as supporters of the party gathered in the city for the protest against alleged election rigging. "They are illegally arresting me. I am with the people and we will continue to raise voices for justice," he said as police whisked him away from the area. He was among eight PTI workers arrested by the police from outside the PTI office in the city. The party called off the protest in the city after the arrest. There were reports that women supporters of PTI were also arrested by police. Aaj News correspondents cited that it was a peaceful protest.

Legal path only way to address electoral irregularities: PM Kakar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar asked political parties and individuals having concerns regarding electoral 'irregularities' to adopt legal course through the available channels. In a statement on X (formerly known as Twitter), PM Kakar said that the recently conducted General Elections 2024 is a step towards promoting the democracy. He said that 'significant' turnout from all segments of society, including both genders, has been acknowledged internationally. "Post elections, it is imperative that all stakeholders realise that victory and defeat are inherent aspects of the democratic process," PM Kakar added. He said that Pakistan's legislative, judicial, and executive branches are resilient and stand ready to deliver impartial justice to all. PM Kakar said that peaceful protest and demonstration are fundamental rights, but any form of violence would not



tolerated. He said that agitation or incitement for vigilantism cannot be overlooked. "Anarchy and disorder would not be tolerated at this crucial time and law and order to take its course without any hesitation. This (violence) only serves to advance the agenda for hostile forces, both domestic and foreign, to exploit and create grave law and order challenges," PM Kakar added. He said that the caretaker government implores patience, as political parties engage in consultations to form governments at both the federal and provincial levels, in accordance with democratic traditions and norms. "We (caretaker government) hope that this process concludes as early as possible with mutual understanding and respect," PM Kakar added.

CJP Isa rejects Pindi commissioner's election rigging allegations

Spokesman Report

Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa on Saturday rejected the allegations regarding his involvement in the alleged election rigging on February 8, sources said. CJP Isa called a meeting of the Supreme Court judges in the chief justice chamber soon after Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatha accused the chief election commissioner and CJP Isa of being involved in election rigging. "These are baseless allegations without any proof and evidence. You can accuse me of anything," he told journalists in Islamabad. According to CJP Isa, the accuser will need to provide proof and evidence in support of their allegations. Earlier today, Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali



Chatta stepped down from his post, saying he made returning officers under him to change results for at least 13 MNA candidates in Rawalpindi Division. Chatta said he was handing himself over to the police for election rigging and he deserved capital punishment. In a rather dramatic way, he said he should be hung at Rawalpindi's Ketcheri Chowk. The Rawalpindi commissioner also claimed that candidates who were losing the election were declared winners with a lead of 50,000 votes each.

Social media platform X reportedly down in Pakistan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, was reportedly down across Pakistan on Saturday. Users faced slow or non-existent accessibility to the platform as Netblocks, an independent observer, confirmed that there was 'national-scale' disruption to X. "Live metrics show a new national-scale disruption to X/Twitter in #Pakistan amid escalating unrest and protests over allegations of election fraud," a post on X read. On January 20, social media platforms were down in Pakistan as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was holding its second online power show.

Former Rawalpindi Commissioner gets new order after resignation

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab government appointed new Commissioner Rawalpindi after the resignation of Liaquat Ali Chatha who stepped down from the post, admitting 'rigging' in the General Elections 2024. As per the details, Liaquat Ali Chatha, a grade-20 officer, has been ordered to report to the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD). A 19-grade officer Saif Anwar, who was serving as Director General (DG) of Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), has been appointed as Commissioner Rawalpindi. Earlier in the day, Liaquat Ali Chatha resigned as Commissioner Rawalpindi over alleged rigging in elections 2024.

JI's central body rejects Sirajul Haq's resignation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-i-Islami chief Sirajul Haq addresses the Haripur district bar association on July 15, 2022. Photo via X/Jamaat-i-Islami Twitter. The Jamaat-e-Islami has rejected the party chief Sirajul Haq's

resignation, saying that the religio-political party has "complete trust" in him. "The Central Majlis Shura unanimously rejected the Sirajul Haq's resignation," party spokesperson Qaiser Sharif said in a statement on Saturday. Earlier this week, Siraj had tendered his resignation to the

party, but it was not accepted immediately. The decision had come after the party's lacklustre performance in the elections. But many party leaders believe that polls were rigged, prompting Hafiz Naeemur Rehman in Karachi to abandon his Karachi seat. He claimed that an independent

candidate backed by the PTI had won the seat. The JI failed to win a single seat in the National Assembly in the 2024 election, where PTI-backed independent candidates emerged as the biggest group. The statement said that Siraj had arrived at his place and would address the party

soon. As per the party's constitution, it added that the JI chief would continue his duties. "The failure in the elections was not due to JI chief. It was due to rigging," the spokesperson said. The party said that it rejected the poll results and demanded the CEC to step down from his position.

AJK Minister had Meeting with Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Azad Kashmir Minister for Sports Youth and Culture Asim Sharif Butt and Advocate Masood Arif Butt had a detailed meeting with Governor Punjab Balighur Rahman, informed. Asim Sharif Butt said that the refugees Pakistan made immense sacrifices during the establishment of Pakistan and left their homes and settled in the Kingdom of God, Pakistan.

However, despite the passage of 75 years, the refugees did not get their rights. Even today, families living in different cities of Pakistan live in one room. are special scholars for the children of refugees living in Pakistan SHIP program should be issued Quota should be allocated in technical education Government of Azad Kashmir Rehabilitation Department is establishing housing colonies for refugees living in Pakistan in various cities of Pakistan who are facing numerous problems Local inside Punjab Issued instructions to the administration for cooperation. On this occasion, there was a detailed discussion, especially on



the housing scheme of Mureed, Governor Punjab Balighur Rahman listened to all the proposals very carefully and assured full cooperation to solve all the problems and continued the series of meetings from time to time. Agreed to keep up to date with progress on

resolved issues.

Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman appreciated the struggle of Kashmiris for the freedom movement of Kashmir and also reiterated that the Pakistani nation is standing with the Kashmiri people like a lead wall behind them,

against the usurpation of India. Full condemnation and full political and diplomatic support till the independence of Kashmir. We will continue, the victims of Kashmiris are eternal and we value them. Inshallah Kashmir will be free one day. What did

Press Conference

HYDERABAD: President PPP Sindh Nisar Ahmed Khoro addressing a press conference along with Senator Moula Bux Chandio, at Qureshi House.



Photo: Online

District and Sessions Court Sujawal gets Digital law library

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

SUJAWAL: The first ever digital law library of the district was inaugurated by Advocate Supreme Court and head of Mangrio foundation Saleem Ahmed Mangrio on Saturday at District and Sessions Court Sujawal.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by office bearers and members of district bar association Sujawal. Speakers at the ceremony termed it a substantial headway in the field of legal research.

Addressing the gathering secretary general DBA Sujawal Abdul

Latif Khatti expressed his gratitude to Advocate Saleem Mangrio and his team for taking commendable measures to promote legal education.

He said that it was a revolutionary move in the history of Sujawal district, an otherwise remote area of Sindh. The initiative he said would encourage young lawyers to explore new dimensions of law and undertake quality research work. Mr Saleem Mangrio said that he and his team had played a vital role in launching digital law libraries in remote areas of Sindh to make legal research easy. Rise in the standard of advocacy

was only possible if all bar associations of the province would get equal facilities; He suggested and added that this step would pave the way for authentic and verified research in the field of law. Former Vice President of DBA Mr Ayaz Ali Khawaja highlighted the importance of book reading in the life of a lawyer and said that since young lawyers were much inclined towards technology, the digital library would help them work more effectively.

President of District Bar Association Sujawal Advocate Liaquat Ali Jamari during his speech said that

his team had made the opening of a digital law library possible in Sujawal. "We will take measures to make the District Bar Association a hub of learning for young lawyers"; he vowed.

It is pertinent to mention here that Sujawal was declared a separate district in 2013 but its courts were under administrative control of sessions judge Thatta till 2023.

In March last year it also got the status of a separate judicial district. Towards the end traditional gift Ajrak was presented to all guests and contributors.

Seed processing industry in Pakistan hindrance to achieving food self-sufficiency: speakers

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: There is no seed processing industry in the country, which is a hindrance to achieving food self-sufficiency. By promoting the seed processing industry, it is possible to ensure the supply of quality seeds as well as to increase productivity. These views were expressed by the speakers while addressing a seminar organized by the PSDP Seed Project team at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad on the challenges of seed processing and quality seed production. Engineer Shabaha Hassan, Provincial Project Manager of Punjab Seed Corporation and Dr. Aslam Yusuf, Seed Tech-



nology Consultant were the guest speakers and Dr. Irfan Afzal, Lead Principal Investigator, Quality Seed Project from Agricultural University also spoke. Engineer Shabaha Hassan said that only a few of

the 1700 seed companies in the country has seed processing technology. He said that seed processing ensures quality in the seed stock. He said that the processing technology unit carries out seed drying,

cleaning, moisture retention (which is essential for shelf life), providing weed-free seed and other functions.

Dr. Aslam Yusuf said that processing can include uniformity in seed size, stor-

age life and seed treatment. Dr. Irfan Afzal emphasized on taking concrete steps to promote seed processing units. He said that he is working with various universities on quality seeds and processing including Karakoram University Gilgit-Baltistan, Lasbela University of Agriculture and others. He said that seed centers are also being established in Narowal and Quetta. He said that the best research is being implemented under the PSDP SEED project under the enthusiastic leadership of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Iqar Ahmed Khan. While this SEED program is also being implemented in four partner universities.

Killed by firing at a wedding ceremony

Waqar Paracha

KHANEWAL: According Imran Chaudhry Public Relations Officer to District Police Officer Rana Umar Farooq's Said Police strict notice of the incident.

After receiving the information about the incident, DSP Jahanian reached the scene with a heavy contingent of police.

53/10R Abdul Basit, 12/13 years old, was killed by Shehbaz Pathan's firing at Amir Habib's wedding.

03 people including a woman were injured during the firing.

The dead body of Abdul Basit and the injured have been shifted to DHQ.

Raid continues by forming police teams to arrest the accused.

The accused involved in the murder will be arrested soon and punished, said DPO Rana Umar Farooq.

Chamber of Small Traders says inflation to be disastrous for business, public

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chamber of Small Traders South Punjab President Chaudhry Tariq Karim, General Secretary Sheikh Aamir Saleem, Senior Vice President Atif Ghaffar, Chairman Mirza Ejaz Ali, Vice Presidents Chaudhry Ishtiaq Ahmed, Rana Fahad Ali Sher, Information Secretary Sheikh Tariq Ismail Said Increase in prices of gas and petroleum products 25% sales on the purchase of vehicles. The increase in taxes has been declared disastrous for the business community and the public. It is creating difficulties for the public and the business community that earlier. Due to inflation, there has already been a clear decline in the sales of vehicles. Most of the traders associated with the auto sector have left this business and many others. Families have become jobless, due to increasing prices of electricity, gas, petroleum products, increase in sales tax rate, the common man as well as the business sector are also being severely affected. The incoming governments are constantly giving gifts of inflation to the people. He added that the Chief Justice of Pakistan should take notice and issue orders to stabilize the prices of electricity, gas and petroleum several times in the last one year to stop the increase in inflation. The prices of the products were increased and affected the public budget. Due to which public peace and corruption problems increased, he further said that there is no system for increasing the prices and increasing the rate of taxes, the institutions of the government impose mountains of hardships on the people whenever they want and there is no relief.

Multan Police arrest the former district president of Tehreek-e-Insaf, Khalid Javed Waraich

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Despite the call given by the central leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf against election rigging, Tehreek-e-Insaf Multan failed to hold a protest for the second time. No workers including local leaders reached Multan's famous Chowk Nangana



All the workers were given a call to demonstrate against rigging at Nangana Chowk. The police arrested former district president Chaudhry Khalid Javed Waraich from Shah Rukn Alam Colony, on which panic spread among the workers and no worker or local leader reached Nangana Chowk. Last week, such a call for demonstration was also given by Tehreek-e-Insaf Senator Aoon Abbas Bapi at Chongli No. 9, which happened in the same way. At Nangana Chowk, the police team was waiting for the Tehreek-e-Insaf people all day, but no one came, on which frustration spread among the workers and they kept criticizing the local leadership. Workers of Tehreek-e-Insaf say that according to the decision of the central government, action should be taken against the district and tehsil officials of Tehreek-e-Insaf who did not demonstrate in Multan despite the protest call of the central organization of Tehreek-e-Insaf after the allegations of election rigging.

Shortage of insulin vaccine in DHQ Wana hospital

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: District Lower South Waziristan District Headquarter Hospital Wana and including other health centers, including insulin injections, are facing severe problems due to lack of all kinds of first aid medicines.

The provincial caretaker government had also approved the grant of medicines for all major hospitals of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but the procurement of medicines could not be done till now.

On this occasion, Gul Nawaz Wazir said while talking to the media that my five-year-old daughter is suffering from diabetes since childhood, for which doctors have recommended insulin injections.

He said that without insulin injection, it has become difficult for the daughter to pass from moment to moment and she is in the struggle of life and death. He said that for the last several weeks, all the government hospitals have gone behind the insulin injection but no insulin injection was found in any hospital.

Gul Nawaz further said that the above mentioned injections are available in private hospitals, but the cause of poverty is beyond my control.

On the other hand, DMS Dr. Zain Ullah Wazir said that a demand has been made from the provincial government to provide insulin injections. Insulin injection will be provided to diabetic patients soon after supply gets from the provincial government.

In this regard, all the government BHUs and dispensaries in the outskirts of Lower South Waziristan district have become non-functional for the last several months due to lack of medicines.

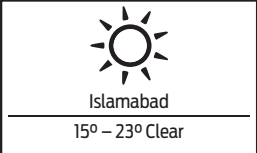
CBD Punjab geared up to complete Walton Road Upgradation Project before monsoon

PPA

LAHORE: The Chief Executive Officer of Central Business District Punjab, (CBD Punjab), Imran Amin chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of the Walton Road Upgradation Project. The meeting emphasized clear directives to expedite the project's completion before the onset of the monsoon season.

During the session, Imran Amin, CEO CBD Punjab alongside Technical Executive Director Riaz Hussain, Director Construction Asif Babar, Director Architecture Sameer Aftab, Project Director NESPAK Jamshed Janjua, and senior officials of NLC participated. Imran Amin issued clear instructions to the technical team of the CBD Punjab, NLC officials, and contractors to ensure the project's completion before the upcoming monsoon season. NLC and the contractors are instructed to work collaboratively with all machinery and workforce resources available.

Executive Director Technical, Riaz Hussain, briefed on the project's progress, indicating that backfilling work is ongoing after conduit excavation and concrete pouring. Additionally, roadworks have commenced alongside backfilling. Backfilling is expected to conclude in the next few days, after which work on ADA Nullah upgradation will commence. The work on Major Ishaq Shaheed Flyover Piles Caps is ongoing.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings
 Fajr 5:27 am
 Zohr 12:22 pm
 Asr 4:14 pm
 Maghrib 5:53 pm
 Isha 7:17 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
 Bomb Disposal 15
 Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad 1122 & 16
 Emergency Ambulance 1122 & 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
 Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
 DHQ 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

Nature-based solutions help better adapt, protect more lives: Speakers

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The speakers Saturday called for integrating anticipatory disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) approaches with climate science to make sure that more lives are protected from climatic disasters.

Speaking at a panel discussion organized at the World Social Forum in Kathmandu today by Pakistan's leading think tank 'Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Oxfam in Pakistan, the speakers said that the incidence of climatic hazards and disasters are increasing which plunge communities into vulnerability to disasters and are causing losses and damages.

Speaking on the occasion, globally acclaimed climate justice expert Harjeet Singh said that the temperatures are the determining factor of climate change which calls for analyzing science so that we can better adapt and prepare our communities against climatic hazards and disasters. He called upon the humanitarian

sector to keep in mind the future warming levels and slow on-set disasters while designing humanitarian programmes.

The Deputy Executive Director of SDPI Dr. Shafiqat Munir said that climatic hazards are now putting cities and towns at risk urging the needs for risk sensitive urban planning through applying both Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) strategies. He said preparedness and anticipatory DRR approaches can better equip the vulnerable communities at local levels to cope with ensuing disasters/climatic hazards. The localization of DRR-CCA strategies and implementation plans can help save and protect more lives. He called for urgent collective action to achieve the Paris Agreement's objective on Global Goal on Adaptation and Sendai Framework for DRR.

Oxfam's regional humanitarian coordinator Mr. Jermaine, from the Philippines, said that effective climate action requires a balanced approach, considering

both adaptation and mitigation efforts. Similarly, there is a need to ensure equity, right, and justice in line with the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) framework that prioritizes fairness and equitable adaptation strategies. Quoting from Cyclone Haiyan 2013, he said due to inappropriate early warning messaging, the communities could not prepare against the Tsunami. He said that there is a need to train communities on DRR and early warning messaging should be clear.

Programme Manager ARTS Foundation, Ms. Saira Falak, from Pakistan, narrated about the losses and damages occurred in Pakistan during the floods 2022. She specifically mentioned the plight of women and girls. She said during the emergency, the women lost their livelihood and plunged into further poverty. She said that there is a need to build the capacity of women on disaster risks and preparedness. She spoke about the non-traditional losses which impact people and the economy badly.

Civil society expert from Nepal,



Ram Sharan Sedhai said disaster creates, perpetuates and aggravates poverty which

people more vulnerable to disasters and weakens their coping strategies. Once hit by disaster,

the community needs resources, time and patience to recover from the impacts.

In Federal Capital

ISLAMABAD: Women are sitting in traditional cable cars (Dolly) crossing a Nallah at Pindorian area in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Health Minister commended by PANAH and Civil Society for banning the consumption of unhealthy Sugary Drinks

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan has implemented a comprehensive ban on sugary drinks, recognized as a significant contributor to non-communicable diseases, within the Ministry and its subordinate entities. Dr. Nadeem Jan has issued an advisory urging other ministries to follow suit and implement bans of sugary drinks within their respective domains. This proactive measure is appreciated by the Pakistan National Heart Association and other civil society organizations, recognizing it as a positive step towards reducing the prevalence of non-communicable diseases in Pakistan.

Secretary General of PANAH, Sanahullah Ghaman, conveyed during a media interaction that the commitment made by Dr. Nadeem Jan during the National Dialogue held in collaboration with PANAH three weeks ago has now materialized into a concrete action. Dr. Nadeem Jan, in his brief tenure, has demonstrated a dedication to public health by taking significant measures and reforms, including the prohibition of sugary drinks. PANAH and other civil society organizations extend their appreciation for his efforts in curbing NCDs, highlighting the importance of his contributions to promoting a healthier Pakistan.

CCPO reviews PSL security arrangements

PPA

LAHORE: Capital City Police Officer Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana chaired a meeting at his office to review security arrangements for the peaceful conduct of matches of Pakistan Super League-9.

It was informed in the meeting that nine matches under PSL Season 9 will be played in the provincial capital. More than 7,000 policemen have been deputed for the security of these matches. CCPO said that Lahore police is fully committed to ensuring comprehensive security for PSL matches. Lahore police are providing foolproof security to national and international players as well as enthusiasts, he added. Mr Kamyana expressed his determination to ensure holding matches in a peaceful and secure environment, adding that high alert security will be maintained throughout the city during PSL matches.

es. CCPO directed to maintain continuous coordination with line departments and instructed to ensure implementation of security plans for cricket stadiums, accommodation of players, and routes, ensuring thorough checking of every individual entering the stadium and women spectators to be checked by lady police.

Bilal Sadiq Kamyana directed effective measures to maintain traffic flow during PSL matches and ordered prompt action against fake certificates, electricity theft, and pending investigations, as well as a crackdown on POs and silent culprits.

The meeting was attended by DIG (Operations) Ali Nasir Rizvi, DIG (Investigations) Imran Kishwar, SSP (Operations) Syed Ali Raza, SSP (Admin) Atif Nazir, SSP (Investigations) Anooch Masood Ch., SSP Security and Divisional SPs.

Seminar on diabetes screening held in Bahawalpur

PPA

BAHAWALPUR: A seminar was organized here to raise awareness about the importance of diabetes screening to save people from the disease.

According to a press release issued here, the seminar was jointly organized by the Faculty of Social Sciences, Getz Pharma and others here at Bahawal Victoria Hospital.

On the occasion, over 100 faculty members were provided with free-of-cost laboratory tests including diabetes screening, lipid profile, blood sugar and HbA1.

Speaking on the occasion, Professor of Medicines, Prof-Dr. Qazi Masroor Ali urged people to have their diabetes screening test to remain aware of this disease.

"Diabetes has been reported in our society at a large scale and only laboratory tests, especially diabetes blood screening tests inform us about the presence of the disease in our body," he said.

AIOU announces results of BS (ODL) programs

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the results of BS (ODL) programs for Semester Spring 2023. The results have been uploaded on the CMS portal. Students can conveniently check their results on the portal. It is pertinent to mention that the results of Matric, FA, BA, and B. Ed programs have already been announced earlier. To ensure compliance with the academic calendar, Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, had directed the examination department to announce the results of all academic programs as per the calendar.

Admissions for BA (Associate Degree), B. Ed, and BS (ODL) programs will start on March 1st.

Nitasha Syed's Shaam Ki Chai Season 3 Premieres

PPA

LAHORE: Shaam Ki Chai, the acclaimed digital series conceived and hosted by Pakistani-Canadian media entrepreneur Nitasha Syed, premiered Episode 1 of her latest season, featuring poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz's daughter, Moneeza Hashmi - a pioneer of the media industry herself.

The episode chronicled insights into Moneeza's relationship with her father, and the sheer gravity and resonance of the 1947 Partition on their lives as a family. She shared insight on the nascent stages of Pakistan's media landscape and her involvement in the media at this time, highlighting the different trials and tribulations associated with a young media landscape.

The episode delves into Moneeza's inspiring personal and professional journey, starting with her role as an Assistant Producer at PTV, rising through the ranks to ultimately helm the prestigious position of General Manager PTV in 1998.

Indeed Moneeza has been instrumental in breaking barriers and shaping the role of women in the industry.

The episode went live on Shaam Ki Chai's official YouTube channel www.bit.ly/shaamkichaichai at 6 PM Pakistan Standard Time on the 16th of February 2024.



Informatics college of Allied Health sciences Gujrat Campus holds Knowledge Fest 2024

Anwar Chohan

KHARIAN: Informatics college of Allied Health sciences Gujrat Campus has organised Knowledge Fest 2024, providing students with the opportunity to learn from Senior International Faculty including Orthodontist, Operation Theatre Managers, Senior Nurses and world renowned Professor Abdul Rasheed Gatra OBE Lt. UK, Shafina Shah Miss Pakistan World and Rabia Ijaz Chief Ambassador WASUP Pakistan. Lectures on Patient Safety, Patient Care, Operation Theatre rules, Oral health and Hygiene, Impact of Climate change and Plastic Pollution on environment were delivered.

Miss Shafina Shah apprised the efforts of ICAHS Gujrat Campus and showed keen interest in joining future endeavors of the college.

Students also enjoyed Plantation activity where they planted more than 50 plants and played their part in environment protection. At the end, The Director and Principal of Informatics College Gujrat has promised students that such events will be organised on a regular basis to strengthen the knowledge and training of these future professionals.

Cold, dry weather expected in most parts of country, dry weather

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mainly cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country during the next twelve hours. However, partly cloudy weather with rain-wind, thunderstorm and snowfall is likely at isolated places in Gilgit-Baltistan, upper Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and adjoining hilly areas. Gusty winds are likely in coastal areas of Balochistan, according to the Met office.

Temperatures of major cities recorded this morning, Islamabad, Gilgit and Muzaffarabad eight degree centigrade, Lahore eleven, Karachi fifteen, Peshawar ten, Quetta six, and Murree three degree centigrade.

Two-Day inclusive education capacity building training

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan) jointly organized a Two-Day Inclusive Education Capacity Building Training from February 14-15, 2024, at AIOU, Islamabad. Over 25 participants from various stakeholders, including IDEA, UNHCR, CAR, CWSA, FGEI, FDE, DGSE, AIOU and NCRC, actively participated in this training.

The purpose of the training was better understanding of the concepts of inclusive education, including the role schools and school leaders play in ensuring schools become more inclusive, and a demonstrated commitment to learn more about the KIX research project and scaling activities, current-



ly underway in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nepal. The AIOU Project team, in collaboration with the CW4WAfghan

team, conducted an activities-based training for key education sector stakeholders in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Training experts from AIOU, CW4WAfghan, Sightsavers, and NCRC shared their expertise, knowledge, and best practices to enhance the output of the GPE/KIX project. Notably, the project stands out as a unique initiative where three countries collaboratively developed an open course on inclusive education, applying the NICs (Networked Improvement Communities) approach through course facilitators.

Participants, including school leaders from UNHCR schools in Peshawar, FDE, and schools under the Department of Schools, Government of Punjab, appreciated the approach. The three-country project team plans to share the final reports with major stakeholders in their respective countries to further scale up the project's outputs and achievements.

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‘Chatta’s Statement and Pakistan’s Deepening Instability’ - I

As the political landscape unfolds, the challenges of forming a government in the center become starkly apparent. PML(N) faces the dilemma of compromising its principles by aligning with PPP, leading to its refusal to accept the premiership. Similarly, PPP shows reluctance in vying for the top position. Despite PTI’s claim to over 170 seats, reduced to 93 amid allegations of rigging, it finds itself sidelined, allegedly due to the establishment’s hostility towards Chairman PTI.

This unprecedented situation sees no party willing to seize power at the center, focusing instead on provincial governance. Both PML(N) and PPP hesitate to lead due to political uncertainty and economic challenges. While concerns about inflation, balance of payments, and trade persist, the elephant in the room—that is, the underlying political instability—casts a long shadow over the nation’s future.

The call of nationwide protest against alleged massive and rampant rigging across the country, by a formidable alliance of PTI, JUI, JI, and GDA, has added another thick layer to the already complex and highly unstable political scenario.

At this critical juncture, the public statement from Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaqat Ali Chatta, added yet another layer of turmoil to the country’s already unstable political landscape.

His shocking admission of forcing subordinate officers and staff to engage

in large-scale election rigging during the 2024 elections in Rawalpindi division sent shockwaves throughout the nation. Chatta revealed how he allegedly aided thirteen candidates by unlawfully securing their victories, even resorting to adding 50,000 forged votes and declaring rightful winners as losers with a lead of 70,000 votes. Driven by his troubled conscience, nights of restless sleep compelled him to step forward and publicly confess to his role in the mass rigging.

This revelation marks the fourth resignation in as many months by individuals who dared to defy the oppressive might of the state. Their courage to stand up for justice and truth, despite the personal sacrifices of their careers, privileges, and prestige, highlights a deeper struggle against the looming threat of economic, financial, and political collapse. Each resignation serves as a testament to the enduring battle for integrity and accountability in a nation teetering on the brink of crisis.

The recent spate of resignations, including those of two Supreme Court judges, one Lahore High Court judge, and now a top bureaucrat like the Commissioner of Rawalpindi Division, has plunged the nation into turmoil. In a startling press statement, the Commissioner admitted to committing heinous crimes that destabilized the country,

likening it to a betrayal of one’s own nation. He revealed how many of his subordinates, despite their reluctance, were coerced into participating in these nefarious activities.

The glaring question that arises is why the perpetrators who pressured him into these actions remain untouched while he bears the brunt of the consequences. It prompts deep reflection on the motivations, compulsions, and thought processes of those masterminding such despicable acts. What drives them to manipulate elections, undermine democracy, and strip the people of Pakistan of their rightful voice and power? These are questions that demand answers and shed light on the darker underbelly of our political system.

There are four power bases which could have leverage, means and weapons to force the entire administration of the country to allegedly do disservice to the country to the extent of jeopardizing the very soul of the county and pushing the country to the brink of internal chaos, economic and financial collapse and political instability. These four bases of power are: the Interim government, Election Commission of Pakistan, PML(N) and the establishment.

The blame for the alleged rampant, audacious, and shameless acts of election rigging, which have robbed a

political party of its rightful mandate and undermined the sanctity of votes, falls squarely on the interim government, bearing approximately 90% of the responsibility. Under the constitution and the law of the land, the entire bureaucracy, whether civilian or military, is subordinate to the interim government, granting it significant leverage over civil servants. The interim government possesses the authority to transfer, sideline, or suspend civil servants, thereby depriving them of their duties and benefits. They can subject them to inquiries, suspension, or even dismissal from service. Yet, despite these intimidations, the interim government does not yield enough power to coerce civil servants into unwillingly committing such egregious acts of betrayal against the nation. strike at the very heart of democracy and undermine the collective will of 250 million people.

In the intricate web of power dynamics during elections, the Election Commission emerges as the second force or institution with some semblance of authority over District Returning Officers (DROs). However, having been ingrained within the civil bureaucracy for over three decades, I can attest with absolute certainty that the Election Commission, despite its perceived power, lacked the influence or clout to compel the civil administration—the most potent institution within the civilian sector—to perpetrate such a heinous and outrageously shameless act of election rigging.

To be continued



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Double standards

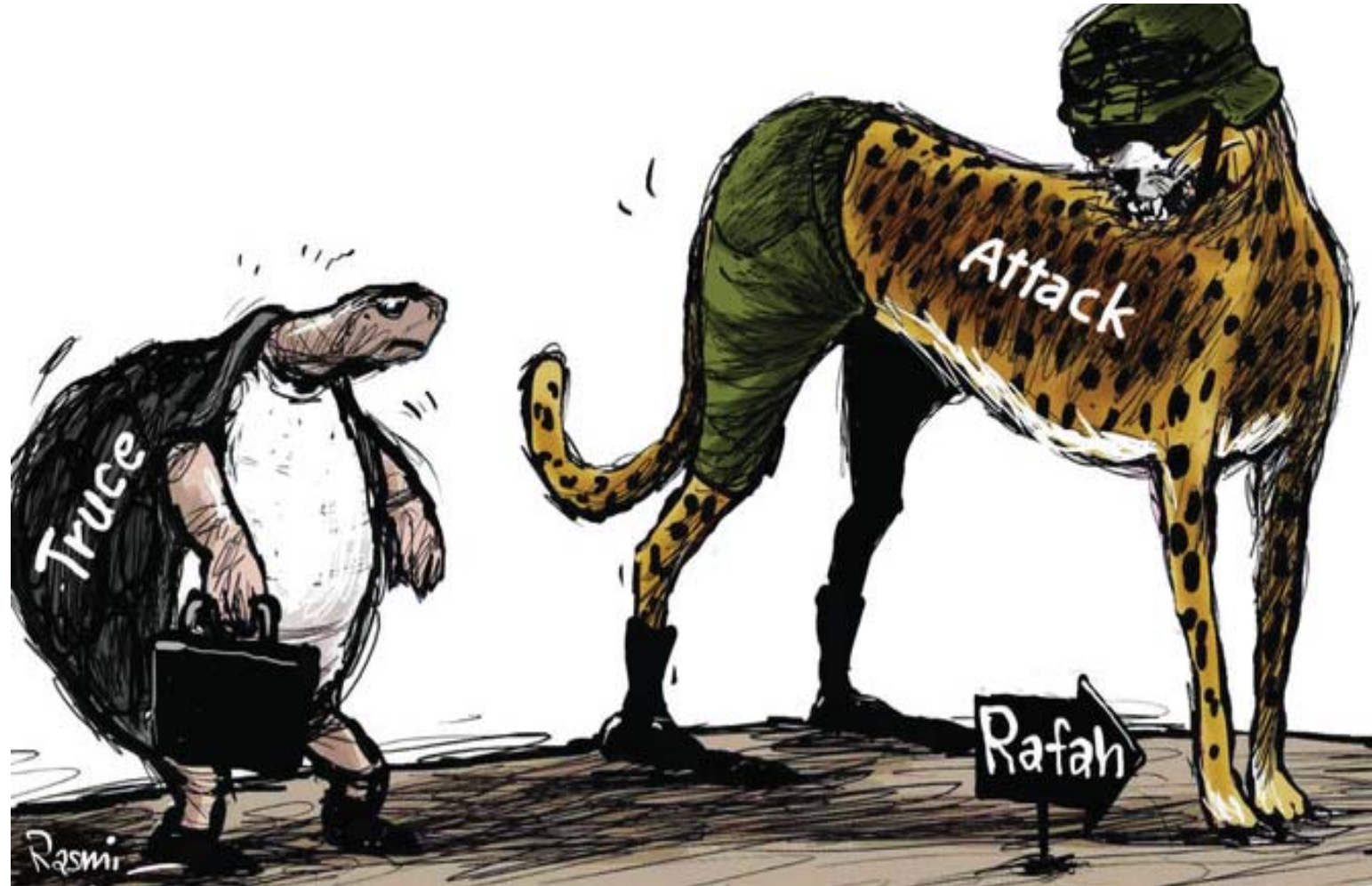
Pakistan has called on the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to shift its attention to economic, social and cultural rights instead of “disproportionately” focusing on human rights situations in developing countries. “The Council and human rights mechanisms should also address historical and current phenomena such as racial discrimination, xenophobia, social inequalities, Islamophobia, and hate crimes,” Ambassador Munir Akram said in a discussion on the future of the Geneva-based Council.

“While some situations are prominently projected and amplified at the HRC; other, more serious situations — Jammu & Kashmir — are ignored,” he said, underscoring the need for avoiding double standards in addressing rights “situations” at the U. N. The 47-member Council, armed with more powers, was created in 2006 following the failures of its predecessor — the 1946 Human Rights Commission.

“Today,” the Pakistani envoy said, “the HRC is also the target of serious criticism and suffers from many of the same deficits as the Commission; in particular due to the Council’s political biases, selective and partial approach, and structural issues — which seriously jeopardize its credibility.” “There is a greater emphasis on civil and political rights, while economic, social and cultural rights — as well as the right to development — get short shrift,” Ambassador Akram told participants.

The Council’s agenda, he noted, has been overloaded with some subjects that should be dealt with by the UN’s specialized agencies. “There is a concerted effort by Western countries to impose norms which are clearly incompatible with the national laws and cultures of other countries — sexual orientation, gender identity,” the Pakistani envoy said, pointing out that some of its mechanisms as also the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are largely staffed by nationals from developed countries. “There is a need to rationalize the entire human rights structure — the agenda, meetings and special sessions, mandate holders and the High Commissioner’s Office.”

Pakistan, he said, believes that the promotion of human rights is a shared responsibility that can only be achieved through an objective, transparent, non-selective, constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized manner. “There is a need to strengthen cooperation, technical assistance and support to the developing states on human rights issues at their request, in a non-confrontational and cooperative manner.”



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

Leadership void in US fuels the carnage in Gaza

Ray Hanania

US President Joe Biden’s administration has been a failure across the board when it comes to foreign policy, and that failure has helped fuel the intensity of Israel’s violence in the Gaza Strip.

No one would fault Israel’s government, even one as extremist and right wing as that of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for responding forcefully to the Oct. 7 attacks by targeting Hamas militants and the organization’s leadership.

But Israel’s blanket bombing of Gaza with no consideration for the safety of civilians has gone far beyond any legitimate military response to an international crime. This issue of proportionality is important.

Hamas militants killed about 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians but also many military personnel. Israel, in response, has killed more than 30,000 Palestinians in Gaza and destroyed nearly all of the enclave’s mosques, schools, hospitals, businesses and homes. Israeli soldiers have stolen money, jewelry, even Western clothing. After taking over villages and cities, Israeli armored vehicles have intentionally rolled over and crushed vehicles.

The Israelis have gone out of their way to maximize destruction for the sole purpose of making it impossible for Christian and Muslim Palestinians to return to their former lives. That was their real goal from the beginning.

At the same time, Israeli authorities have launched smaller-scale, mini-Gaza-type carnage in the West Bank, destroying homes, arresting people without charge and killing Palestinians there. Clearly, the Israeli government sees this conflict as an opportunity to reset the disparity in which the Palestinian population has grown much more quickly than the Jewish population.

It has declared this policy openly, urging Pales-

tinians in Gaza to flee to Egypt and elsewhere so that it can establish Jewish-only settlements and confiscate Palestinian land.

What made Israel feel so empowered that it could proceed with its military assault on Gaza without any restraint? Why did Israeli authorities unleash the maximum destructive power of their military against a predominantly civilian, nonmilitary target?

The blame for this falls on the shoulders of the US, which has treated Israel as if it were its 51st state. Washington set aside morality and the law, allowing Israel to act without concern for international accountability.

At the UN, the US defends Israel from sanctions. It even provides funding to support the carnage inflicted by Israel’s military, and the expansion of illegal settlements that Americans claim to question.

Every year, Israel receives \$3.8 billion from American taxpayers, almost like a utility tax paid to a foreign country. In response to the Hamas attack, Congress approved \$32 billion in aid to cover the costs of the excessive disbursements for the bombs, bullets and missiles used to kill Gazans and destroy civil society.

Despite all that America does for Israel, and the favoritism displayed by Washington in relation to Israeli policies, previous presidents would have urged restraint on Israel, leveraging the vast largesse the US provides.

The US has the right to scold the Israeli government for its actions, demand it exercises restraint, withhold support, and publicly express views that expose and criticize Israel’s violence.

But the US does not have a strong president. It has one of the nation’s weakest and most ineffective presidents, whose international authority is undermined even further by the political polarization he vowed to heal but has instead fueled.

America is a divided and weak nation. Biden is too weak to tell the bully leader of a foreign

nation, and an ally at that, to restrain himself. Biden is a weak president whose image is further tarnished by his frequent cognitive lapses and constant memory lapses.

This weak image of the president is aggravated by the weakness displayed by Biden’s presidential rival, Donald Trump, whose own lack of diplomatic finesse while president fueled the concerns of other nations.

Trump’s problem is less about degraded mental acuity and more about his personality flaws. He cannot stop himself from responding to petty issues with even greater displays of pettiness. This deflects from the substance of major policies, programs and issues he has tried to promote, making him appear more like a bully himself.

Trump cannot handle criticism. Biden is cognitively ambivalent to it. American politics is polarized. There is nobody occupying the center ground who can offer reasoned, parental-like, common-sense leadership.

Many people believe this is one of the reasons Russia proceeded with its invasion of Ukraine: President Vladimir Putin simply was not worried about a strong response from the US. In the event, Biden’s response to Putin’s invasion was delayed and dulled. By the time Washington reacted, Russia was in too deep.

Five months after the Israeli carnage in Gaza began, Biden is only now shifting the official White House policy, calling in obscure language for recognition of a Palestinian state and urging Israel to exercise restraint its military response to the Oct. 7 attacks, as he responds to the worldwide anger over Israel’s inhumane onslaught in Gaza.

Ray Hanania is an award-winning former Chicago City Hall political reporter and columnist. He can be reached on his personal website at www.Hanania.com. X: @RayHanania

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect Arab News’ point of view

Rigging Allegations and Anti-Establishment Narrative - IV

The role of the media in fueling despondency and amplifying rumors through speculative analysis on round-the-clock shows was highly detrimental. However, the Army and Rangers ensured the complete security of ballot boxes during transportation and while in the custody of ROs. Despite attempts by charged crowds to breach RO offices in certain areas, the Army and Rangers successfully intervened to prevent mayhem.

Unfortunately, the police proved to be ineffective, highlighting their incompetence in maintaining order without the support of the Army. Instances where the Army intervened to disentangle clashes between political activists were exploited through misleading videos shared on social media. These videos, along with unfounded claims of tampering with Form 47s, exacerbated perceptions of rigging, particularly among fervent supporters of PTI.

It was evident that the ECP was not adequately prepared for such a massive electoral exercise, especially concerning polling station staff. The live transmission of results contributed to false perceptions and enabled biased analysts to manipulate public opinion. It is essential to realistically assess the speed of counting, transportation of ballot boxes to ROs, counting by ROs, and confirmation of results, rather than rushing announcements.

The perception of rigging, fueled by false claims of victory by political party agents, must be addressed. The ECP should counter social media-generated narratives of rigging with factual information during interactions with the media.

Recommendations include reviewing the live transmission of results during electoral exercises and improving communication between the ECP and the media to dispel doubts propagated by social media misinformation campaigns.

False narratives are being spread, suggesting that PTI is poised to secure a two-thirds majority and effortlessly lead the central government, alongside criticisms aimed at the Pakistani Army and its leadership. Additionally, these narratives draw parallels between the recent election outcomes and those of the 1970 elections, followed by the Fall of Dhaka. However, according to FAFEN, PTI-backed independent candidates received approximately 17 million votes, marking a decrease of 800,000 compared to the 2018 elections.

Contrary to PTI’s expectations, other parties collectively garnered 40.5 million votes, representing a significant 250% increase over PTI’s vote count. Independents supported by PTI secured 94 seats, a reduction of 24 seats compared to the 2018 elections, while PMN obtained 74 seats, an increase of 9 seats, and PPP secured 54 seats, up by 11 seats from the 2018 results. Overall, PML-N and PPP have expanded their presence in electoral politics, while PTI has experienced a notable decline. Calls for protests risk undermining Pakistan’s national interests, especially amidst the country’s challenging fiscal year ahead. In March, Pakistan faces the task of negotiating with the IMF, and in May, the new government will be tasked with announcing a stringent budget with minimal public subsidies. Given this context, PTI’s response should reflect maturity.

Readers, it is imperative for all political parties and leaders to acknowledge these facts. It is time to move beyond controversies, accept the election results and realities, and collaborate for the betterment of the nation. The state’s interests should take precedence over political agendas, and all actions and statements must be carefully considered to align with the broader interests of the country.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Euro Village:

A Celebration of EU-Pakistan Dosti - Stronger Together, Sustainable Forever



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Thousands of people gathered at the Jinnah Convention Center Islamabad on Saturday to participate in "EuroVillage," a family-focused festival organized by the European Union and its Member

States. This year's celebration centered on the theme of co-creating a sustainable future, entitled "Stronger Together - Sustainable Forever." The event showcased the 60+ years strong connection between the EU and Pakistan, highlighting the collaborative partnership

in development, trade and investment, culture, education, environment and a wide array of other areas.

In her welcome remarks, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, H. E. Dr. Riina Kionka, noted: "EuroVillage is a special event for us; we cherish the people-to-people



connections it offers. This year, we want you to experience our journey of co-creating a sustainable future. Europe has the ambition to be the first climate neutral continent, but also wants to support its partners towards the green transition. Pakistan is one of the countries at the greatest risk from climate change. The EU is working with Pakistan to help address challenges and create a sustainable future for all."



The fifth edition of EuroVillage hosted the residents of Islamabad and Rawalpindi to experience European sustainability and enjoy an afternoon of culture, music, and food. The festival featured interactive information displays by the EU and Member States, offering games, quizzes, food and various activities, providing visitors with an afternoon of learning, interaction, and entertainment. The event featured live performances by Pakistani artists including Farhan

Saeed and Quratulain Balouch. As a symbol of this partnership, an EU-Pakistan Dosti truck was displayed at the event blending the well-known Pakistani truck art with European symbols and designs. Euro Village was co-organised by the diplomatic missions of the European Union and of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Spain.

Illegal Occupation

People visit a lantern show held in Taiyuan Ancient County scenic spot in Taiyuan, north China's Shanxi Province.



Photo: Xinhua/Zhan Yan

Gazan artist uses face painting to encourage children amid Hamas-Israel conflict

Xinhua

GAZA: Menna Hamouda, a 20-year-old Palestinian artist in the Gaza Strip, is busy every day with painting the faces of displaced children in the central Gaza city of Deir al-Balah amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas.

About a month ago, Hamouda decided to use face painting to help Gazan children in overcoming their fear in the bloody conflict, after she learnt that efforts to achieve a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas had failed.

"It is too hard for innocent children to go through such a tragic event as the ongoing bloody war. They are constantly under pressure because of the killings and other incidents they are witnessing," she said.

Hamouda, who was displaced from her home in the city of Beit Lahia about four months ago to a school-turned-shelter in Deir al-Balah, paints about 50 children for free in a day. Every day, Hamouda would walk from one shelter to another to paint for children, using



the tools that she had brought with her from her home in northern Gaza.

Because of the ongoing Israeli attacks and siege of the coastal enclave, Palestinians are unable to access daily necessities and recreational facilities. Hamouda said she decided to use face painting as a way to help children go through the difficult time.

She said she had painted a lot of moving things to "let children believe that life will go on."

Among the most popular images Hamouda paints on children's faces are birds, olive branches, small houses and the Palestinian flag.

"I want to send my message to the world that our people are looking forward to living a normal life as soon

as possible. I hope all people around the world will take actions and step up pressure on Israel to end its war against us in Gaza," she said.

Israel launched a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate the movement's surprise attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people in Israel were killed and more than 200 were taken hostage.

The Palestinian death toll from ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip has risen to 28,775 with 68,552 others wounded, the Hamas-run health ministry said on Friday.

"We have never witnessed a conflict as bloody as the one in Gaza. Everyone is under Israeli attacks, and nobody can save himself from death," said the artist.

Mohammed Abu Daher, a Palestinian child who was displaced after the conflict, was overjoyed when Hamouda drew an olive tree and the Palestinian flag on his face. He has not had his face painted since the conflict broke out in Gaza more than four months ago.

Experts urge inclusive economic reforms implementation, broader tax base and political maturity

PPA

ISLAMABAD: An inclusive political economy shall be the top priority of the Pakistan government without any political fiddling by any of the stakeholders. Politicians shall sit in the parliament to do the legislation and ensure its implementation in letter and spirit. Whatever party comes into power shall limit the federal ministries count to ten. The ministers shall pass on the vision and mandate to the teams of the technocrats as they know their job well. The performance of the governments world over depends on the technocrats based on 'right person for the right job'.

The IMF is not a villain but a fiscal regulator. We need to listen to their proposed measures and take

them accordingly. All the political parties and other stakeholders shall come together to handle the budget deficit, increase tax base, to get rid of the subsidies and reduce the state expenses.

Shrinking the bureaucracy and implementation of civil service reforms is a must to reduce burden on the national exchequer. The sluggishness and red-tapism are the hallmark of Pakistan's bureaucracy. The other one is the politics of agitation that shall come to an end. Public at large shall say no to such protests that are carried out for the vested interests of the political figures.

The webinar on the subject "The Prospects of Charter of Economy for the new government and the new IMF deal" was organized by

the Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications Network) and DTN. The keynote speakers included former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of Pakistan and Vice Chancellor Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Dr. Nadeem ul Haq, and the former Senior Economist at US Treasury Department's Office of Economic Policy. Others who spoke on the occasion included Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed, political activist Amina Sadaf, Anousha Hikhar, Ateeqa Mazhar and Esha Bashir.

Dr. Nasir Khilji said Pakistan is a victim of generosity of friends such as the USA, China, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar. Their support has been misunderstood and misused



in Pakistan. The country has also been a victim of vested interest of leadership across the board where, in many cases, the integrity lacked and reigned over the motivated objectives. Pakistan is a library of recommendations but no implementation of any proposed frameworks. Dr. Khilji said: All the stakeholders of the country have to

take the responsibility of inclusive economic reforms and their true implementation. The reforms shall include a comprehensive strategy to handle the budget deficit and reduce the nonproductive and operational costs. Pakistan has to broaden its tax, wipe off subsidies and reduce the financial burden of bureaucracy that produces hurdles only. Some major surgery is required for Pakistan's entire financial management and governance system. It is not possible without having all the stakeholders on the same page. They have to come on the same page if they care about 250 million people.

Dr. Nadeem ul Haq said: Pakistan is facing the brunt of political immaturity, inefficient governance system, bureaucratic negligence

and stagnancy. Public expenses are huge for no output. The economic crisis cannot be addressed without addressing the cartel of banks, stock market malpractices, and the absence of technocrats in the governance decision-making. There is a crisis of social contract and distrust among the politicians and other stakeholders. Pakistan's economic issues cannot be resolved without a larger consensus on an economic framework. This will not be done by the politicians alone.

Dr. Haq said we need to talk about the foundation issues for a larger national interest. Transparent and inclusive deregulation and an open market policy perhaps would help a lot to attract domestic and foreign investment in the soaring infrastructure. He urged

to abolish 40 federal ministries which are no longer needed after the 18th amendment, and to limit the federal cabinet to only 10 ministers. Parliamentarians shall work in the house on legislation, and let the relevant technocrats to design and implement the development agenda with the minimalist bureaucratic system. Pakistan cannot overrule the IMF observations and recommendations.

Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed urged the need of civil society observers in the political governance as a watchdog. They should have a role of oversight on the performance of the governance system, and their suggestions and recommendations shall be incorporated into the implementation of policy frameworks.

Longer Spring Festival holiday sparks travel frenzy among Chinese

Xinhua

BEIJING: For the Chinese people, the eternal theme of the Spring Festival, or Chinese New Year, remains family reunion, yet an increasing number of Chinese are choosing to integrate travel into their holiday traditions.

The change was seen this year as the Spring Festival holiday spanned eight days — possibly nine with a flexible one-day paid leave — surpassing the usual one-week holiday in previous years.

According to data released Saturday by Chinese travel website Mafengwo, Monday and Tuesday saw peak travel activity.

"We made a random decision to drive to the historic city of Datong (in northern China) on Monday but were surprised to see a large number of tourists. Local hotel

chains are almost always full, and restaurants almost always have a waiting line," said a tourist surnamed Li.

New Trends In Domestic Tourism

According to Mafengwo, family travel accounted for 45 percent of all trips during the holiday, reflecting a trend that young people return home for family reunions before embarking on trips with their families, taking advantage of the extended holiday period.

Beijing, Xi'an and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area were among the most popular tourist destinations, said Mafengwo, adding that visiting museums, grottoes, temples and other historical and cultural places was another highlight of this year's Spring Festival travel after temple fairs and folk activities.

A report by travel portal Tuniu.com showed an emerging trend

for cross-regional travel between the northern and southern parts of the country during the holiday.

Harbin, capital of northeastern Heilongjiang Province, maintained its growing popularity among people from the South who are eager to explore an ice-and-snow world, while tropical cities such as Sanya, Xishuangbanna, and Beihai remained favored destinations for northlanders seeking winter getaways.

Surging Outbound Tourism

Data from multiple online travel platforms showed that on the first day of the eight-day holiday, outbound travel bookings already surpassed the 2019 figure, with Southeast Asian countries, particularly those with visa-free policies for Chinese nationals, emerging as red-hot destinations.

From Feb. 10 to 13, bookings for hotels in Bangkok tripled

year on year, while reservations for Singaporean hotels reported a stunning growth of 800 percent, according to the travel platform LY.com.

Several European destinations have introduced unique strategies to attract Chinese tourists. A Michelin-starred restaurant in downtown London has launched a menu specially designed for the Year of the Loong (Dragon), while a railway for the well-known scenic spot Jungfrau in Switzerland has been decorated with Chinese elements to greet Chinese tourists between Feb. 8 and 20.

With a substantial rise in outbound tourism, this holiday is projected to see a daily port clearance of 1.8 million people nationwide, more than triple that of the previous year and nearly reaching the level of 2019, according to the National Immigration Adminis-

tration.

According to a market forecast by Ctrip, a leading travel platform in China, the eight-day holiday would mark the country's first travel rush of the year, with a notable increase in international travel being one of the highlights.

"Destinations in Southeast Asia have continued to gain traction as many in China opted for the region for an escape from the winter season," said Gao Tao, from Tuniu. "The tourism industry has gone through a rough patch in the past three years due to the pandemic. But it is now poised for a growth spurt, particularly in outbound tourism."

In 2023, China saw its outbound passenger trips exceed 87 million, and this figure is projected to reach 130 million in 2024, according to a paper



published by the China Tourism Academy.

Upward Momentum

Experts believe that the revved-up Spring Festival tourism consumption heralds an upward momentum in the tourism sector in 2024.

In a recent report, the China Tourism Academy estimated that over 6 billion domestic trips will be made in 2024, and the total number of inbound and outbound

travelers is expected to exceed 260 million.

"With the recovery of the economy, the resumption of international flights and the relaxation of visa policies, it is expected that the scale of domestic tourism consumption will continue to grow in 2024, and the scale of outbound tourism will be comprehensively advanced," said Qi Chunguang, vice president of Tuniu.

Peshawar Traders Chamber warns against 'catastrophic' rise in car prices



PPA

PESHAWAR: Ghulam Bilal Javaid, President of the Peshawar Traders Chamber, along with General Secretary Anas Rasheed, Senior Vice President Abdul Haseeb Chughtai, Chairman Major Arshad, Chief Amin Hussain Babar, Vice Presidents Muhammad Aqeel, Mukhtar Hussain, Nisar Babar, Haseeb Shabir, Khawaja Laeeq, and Information Secretary Tauseef Istiaq, stated in a joint statement that the continuous increase in electricity, gas, and petroleum product prices, along with a 25% increase in sales tax on car purchases, is devastating for both the business community and the public. They emphasized the persistent rise in electricity, gas prices, and sales tax rates, stating that the outgoing government, by adding to the factors contributing to inflation, is creating difficulties for both the public and the business community.

In a joint statement, they expressed concern over the continuous increase in electricity, gas, and petroleum product prices, as well as the 25% increase in sales tax on car purchases, deeming it detrimental to both business fraternity and the public. They highlighted that the government, by continuously increasing prices of electricity, gas, and sales tax, is exacerbating inflation and causing hardships for the public and business community, who are already grappling with inflationary pressures. The problems for traders associated with the auto sector have intensified, resulting in a noticeable decline in car sales due to inflation. Moreover, with further increase in sales tax rates, the situation will worsen, causing many families to become unemployed.

They stressed that there is no system in place to regulate the increase in prices and tax rates. Governments, at their discretion, impose mountains of hardships on the people without providing any relief.

They demanded that caretaker governments and policy-making institutions formulate policies after consulting stakeholders so that they are practical and do not burden any sector unnecessarily. Otherwise, the business fraternity and the public will be compelled to take to the streets in protest.

PTA cracks down on illegal SIMs activation, unlicensed ISPs



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Offices in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) conducted several raids against franchises involved in the illegal activation of SIMs and illegal Internet Service Provider (ISPs) on Saturday. 56 suspicious SIMs were confiscated in the Sukkar, and during the raid in Kasur, 26 active SIMs were confiscated. The accused individuals have been apprehended by the FIA and First Investigation Reports (FIRs) have been lodged against them, said a news release.

Moreover, two raids were conducted to target illegal ISP setups in Chichawatni. During the raids, a significant amount of equipment was recovered at different locations in Chichawatni which included 12 Optical line terminals (OLT), 04 dish antennas, 01 UPS, 2 batteries, 350 meter OFC cable, 01 Optical Network Terminal, 01 OLT charger, and a manual billing book. Additionally, an illegally erected tower carrying numerous dish antennas was dismantled by the FIA team. Ongoing investigations are in progress. These raids are part of the PTA's ongoing efforts to eradicate the illegal issuance of SIMs and illegal ISPs.

ICCI and KCCI show concerns over further hike in gas tariff

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), and Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh, President, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) during a meeting at ICCI have shown great concerns over the federal cabinet's approval of 67 per cent increase in gas tariffs as it would increase production cost, reduce industrial activities and badly hurt exports. They demanded that the government should reconsider this decision and take solid measures to ensure competitive energy tariffs for the industry to boost industrialization and exports.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI said that the economy of Pakistan is in deep trouble as the manufacturing sector is still struggling to recover, exports of the textile sector have declined by around 3% during July-January 2023-24, foreign exchange reserves of US\$ 8 billion are insufficient to cover only 6 weeks of imports and Pakistan needs US\$ 22 billion in external financing during 2024-25 to meet its financing needs. He said that to cope with these challenges, Pakistan urgently needs to boost industrial-



ization and exports. However, the repeated hikes in electricity and gas tariffs have made the cost of doing business very high, hurting production activities and making our exports uncompetitive in the international market. He stressed that the government should reconsider its decision to further hike gas prices to

save the private sector from further problems.

Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh, President, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the industry of Karachi was demanding a reduction in gas tariffs to improve industrial activities, but instead of meeting their demand, the government has further

increased the gas tariffs, creating more problems for the industry that would slow down the economic growth of the country. He urged that the new government in consultation with the private sector should fix the utility tariffs for the next 10 years to enable the better growth of business activities and revive the economy.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG stressed that the government should privatize all loss-making utility companies to reduce their burden on the national exchequer and improve their performance.

Both Chambers called for political stability in the country, which is the key requirement to achieve economic stability. They urged that the new government should give top priority to promoting ease of doing business to make Pakistan a hub of business and investment activities and enable it to emerge as a strong economy. Both chambers agreed to work in close cooperation to address the key issues of the business community and create a conducive business environment.

Muhamad Ejaz Abbasi former President ICCI, Maqsood Tabish, Khalid Chaudhry, and others were present on the occasion.

Car Show

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Akbar Nasir Khan cutting the ribbon during inauguration ceremony of Car show at a shopping mall in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

New govt to face challenges in securing consensus to pursue reforms: DFPA

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Disposable Food Packaging Association (DFPA) has said that the new government will have to face challenges in securing consensus to pursue difficult but necessary reforms, including revenue raising measures.

These views were expressed by DFPA President Ahsan Shahid, stating that this observation is unlikely to resonate with domestic political and economic pundits for one simple reason: the Special Investment Facilitation Council staffed by federal and provincial members of the executive and senior most civilian and military personnel has shown

ample capacity to deliver on all politically challenging pledges to the International Monetary Fund under the ongoing Stand-By Arrangement – a capacity that may overtly be seen as decisions that have been taken by the caretaker cabinet but without the full support of SIFC members such decisions would not have been possible.

Ahsan Shahid said that Moody's conclusion that overall uncertainty around Pakistan's ability to quickly negotiate a new IMF program after the current one expires in April 2024 remains very high has been a mitigating factor in securing an IMF program loan in the past, before SIFC was established in late June 2023.

Tetra Pak demonstrates packaging circularity at Euro Village 2024

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Tetra Pak showcased its commitment to packaging circularity at Euro Village 2024, hosted by the European Union in Islamabad. The event provided an excellent platform for Tetra Pak to demonstrate its ongoing efforts towards creating a sustainable future.

Distinguished dignitaries and guests, including the Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka visited the Tetra Pak booth and engaged with company representatives. She appreciated Tetra Pak showcasing its innovative approach of repurposing used cartons and promoting the idea of packaging circularity to foster a greener environment in Pakistan.

During the event, Noor Aftab, the Head of Public Affairs and Government Relations at Tetra Pak Pakistan remarked, "At Tetra Pak Pakistan, we are proud to showcase our initiatives for packaging circularity at Euro Village 2024.



Euro Village is an annual cultural celebration that highlights European influence globally. The event features a range of family-centric cultural and entertainment activities, promoting interactions

between locals and European representatives. Tetra Pak's participation in this event underscores its commitment to promoting packaging circularity and advancing towards a more eco-friendly future.

FRIA seeks need for raising country's export base

PPA

LAHORE: Raising serious concern over the constant falling trend of Pakistan exports the Ferozpur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has said that the country's exports declined by around 2.99 per cent during the first seven months of July-Jan of the current fiscal year and stood at \$9.738 billion compared to \$10.038 billion during the same period of 2022-23.

The FRIA Senior vice chairman and PIAF EC member Shahbaz Aslam advocated the need for raising the country's export base so that tax-to-GDP ratio improves from current poor level. He urged the trade

officers to explore opportunities to diversify exports of goods and services in their respective areas, asking them to meet the challenges faced by Pakistan in European markets. He also suggested the ministry to devise strategies for promotion of Pakistani products, calling upon trade officers to take advantage of opportunities offered by China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Shahbaz Aslam said that the country's overall exports during July-January 2023-24 totaled \$17.778 billion (provisional) against \$16.481 billion during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 7.87 per cent.

Businessmen call for commercial activities at Ghulam Khan, Kharlachi border posts

Commerce Desk

PESHAWAR: Businessmen dealing in Pak-Afghan trade have demanded Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Ministry of Commerce to open Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi borders with Afghanistan for full-fledged commercial activities in the wake of the excessive transportation burden on the Torkhem border post.

In a joint press statement issued here on Saturday, Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi and former Senior Vice President (SVP) Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Engr Manzoor Elahi said due to closure of Chaman

border for the last three months and limited operation at Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi border posts, all the workload of trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been shifted to Torkhem border.

"Excessive transportation of goods from Torkhem to Afghanistan and Central Asian Countries (CARs), ensued in prolonging travel duration of goods laden trucks from ten days to around one and a half month and excessive increase in charges," they explained.

Transportation charges for trucks nowadays has been hiked to an exorbitant level of Rs. 1.1 million (1100,000) because of prolonged travel duration of around one and a half months which makes

it almost impossible for businessmen to bear the expense, they went on to say.

Zia said a truck carrying goods to Afghanistan returns to Pakistan after around 45 days and the owners are now preferring local transportation within the country, instead of sending their vehicles to Afghanistan which is creating an acute shortage of vehicles.

He said the Chaman border has been closed for the last three months, Kharlachi is confined to only import and export operations which does not allow the transportation of transit goods, while the Ghulam Khan border is operational only for a few hours till 5:00 p.m.

In such circumstances, all the burden has been shifted



to Torkhem resulting in the accumulation of huge traffic, prolonged travel duration, and exorbitant increase in transportation charges.

As a result of workload and accumulation of loaded trucks, the return of empty trucks from

Afghanistan is also held, exacerbating the problem, they added.

Both Zia Sarhadi and Engr. Manzoor also suggested shifting the entry of trucks carrying soapstone and coal from Afghanistan to Kharlachi and

Ghulam Khan.

They said daily around 70 to 80 trucks of coal and around 150 to 200 trucks of soapstone arrive from Afghanistan through the Torkhem border which creates traffic jams in the parking areas and on the main highway. Ongoing work on the NLC terminal at Torkhem is also creating space shortage and delays in the passage of trucks, they added.

Both the businessmen reiterated their demand from FBR and the Ministry of Commerce and Trade to take notice of hardships being faced by the business community due to excessive transportation charges and prolonged travel duration due to the rush of vehicles at the Torkhem border post.

Invitational Golf Tournament

No country aspires to achieve progress sans public participation: President

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Saturday said that no country could aspire to attain progress and prosperity without the participation of its people and Pakistan being the fifth populous country in the world, possessed immense potential to excel in every field of life.

Addressing an awards distribution ceremony of the annual Invitational Golf Tournament held at Margalla Greens Golf Club, the president said that the people were a vital driving force for making contributions to the overall progress of a country.

"About 250 million people of Pakistan with their collective efforts can make a difference; they can transform and rebuild Pakistan by utilizing their potential and intellect," he observed.

Under the 'Sports Diplomacy' initiative, Serena Hotels hosted the tournament in collaboration with the Margalla Greens Golf Club. A number of golfers, diplomats and sports buffs attended

the event.

In his address, President Alvi further underscored the significance of promoting active lifestyles and outdoor pursuits, emphasizing the positive impact on national well-being and the betterment of communities.

Congratulating the organizers, he said that the event was enjoyable amidst the natural verdant atmosphere.

He observed that due to the modern lifestyle, people were accustomed to the latest facilities and moving away from hectic physical activities which were not beneficial for health.

The human body responds to different exercises daily and they continue to decline with the passage of age, if no proper physical activity was adopted, he added.

The president further said that during Covid 19, Pakistan emerged as the third most successful performing country in the world due to the collective efforts by all the institutions and compilation of data.

He said that precedent could be taken



as a guiding event that could help overcome different issues being faced by the country, adding that about 26 million children were out of school besides, the numerous issues of malnutrition and stunting being faced in the health sector.

The president stressed that Pakistan should also learn from the experiences of different developed countries that waste through diverse challenges.

"Things in Pakistan will turn around, I have firm belief as the people have huge potential," he opined.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani said that they would continue to utilize sports as a platform to connect with people from different segments of society to foster stronger relationships and cultivate a spirit of teamwork.

In the closing ceremony, the president gave away prizes to the winners and runners-up across all four categories.

Golfers from a diverse range of categories, including diplomatic, government, and armed forces officials, corporations, and women participated in the event.

With approximately 110 golfers in attendance, including a notable contingent of women players, the competition showcased an impressive display of skill and technique across the course.

Bank Alfalah National Open Polo Championship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup: BN Polo, DS Polo victorious

Sports Desk

LAHORE: BN Polo and DS Polo recorded victories in the Bank Alfalah National Open Polo Championship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup 2024 matches, held at the Lahore Polo Club on Saturday.

The opening match was a gripping contest that extended into a sudden death chukker, where BN Polo edged out FG Polo with a narrow 8-7 victory. Santiago Loza was the star for BN Polo, scoring seven goals in a stellar display of skill, while Hamza Mawaz Khan added another to their tally. FG Polo's effort was led by Raul Laplacette with three goals, Fernandez Llorente with two, and Raja Mikayil Sami and Mian Abbas Mukhtar each contributing one.

The match was a rollercoaster from the start, with the teams tied at 1-1 and 2-2 in the initial chukkers. FG Polo briefly pulled ahead 3-2, but BN Polo



fought back to lead 4-3. The match was tied again at 4-4, setting the stage for a dramatic conclusion. FG Polo appeared to take control in the fourth chukker with a 7-4 lead, but BN Polo's remarkable comeback in the fifth chukker forced the game into sudden death, where they

emerged victorious with a slim margin of 8-7.

The day's second match saw DS Polo dominate Diamond Paints/Master Paints, securing a 10-6 victory. Max Charlton was the standout performer for DS Polo, netting eight goals, with

Daniyal Shaikh and Ahmed Ali Tiwana also scoring one goal each. Diamond Paints/Master Paints' effort was led by Martin Gandara with four goals and Juan Zubiaurre with two.

DS Polo started the match with two back-to-back goals to gain a 2-0 lead, while Diamond Paints/Master Paints made it 2-1. DS Polo dominated the second chukker with 5-2 lead, while Diamond Paints/Master Paints struck two to reduce the margin to 4-5. DS Polo then hammered three goals to take 8-5 lead while in fifth and decisive chukker, DS Polo cracked a brace against one by their opponents to win the match by 10-6.

The matches were enjoyed by a large crowd of spectators and families, highlighting the enduring appeal of polo. The championship continues with two more critical matches scheduled for Monday, promising more action and excitement.

HBL PSL Matches start on 18 Feb in Multan: All Security arrangements are completed

Asim Tanveer / Kiran

MULTAN: According to Mohammad Waseem Yusuf, spokesperson of Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Rizwan Qadeer, Deputy Commissioner Multan Rizwan Qadeer has said that the colorful festival of PSL Season 9 will start from February 18 at the Multan International Cricket Stadium. Multan Sultan's team Karachi Kings. In this regard, the district administration and the police will collude with all arrangements including security have been completed. He expressed these views while visiting the control room along with CPO Police Multan Sadiq Ali Dogar. Deputy Commissioner and CPO checked the direct monitoring system with the cameras of the routes. Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Rizwan Qadeer said that the record sales of tickets in view of this, ideal arrangements will be made at the traffic and entry points, while representatives of the police and district departments will be on duty 24 hours a day in the control room. Rizwan Qadeer said that a foolproof security plan has been created for the security of foreign players. CPO Sadiq Ali Dogar said that more than 10 thousand police personnel will perform the duties on the stadium and routes. Strict legal action will be taken on the complaint of sale of fake tickets. Person SNA Muhammad Asif also gave a detailed briefing.

HBL PSL 9th edition kicking off in Lahore with spectacular fireworks and mesmerising laser show



Tahir Amin Malik

Lahore hosted the opening ceremony first time of HBL Pakistan Super League 9th edition (PSL-9) at Gaddafi Stadium Lahore before start the opening match between Lahore Qalandar and Islamabad United. The excellent performance showed from the artists Arif Lohar, Ali Zafar, Aima Baig, Natasha Baig and Pop Band Noori. After the performances from the artists the fans was also treated to a spectacular fireworks and mesmerising laser show. The excitement from the fans decked in team colours and sporting celebrating banners to fill the stadium to commemorate on this occasion.

PSL-9: Karachi Kings captain keeps high hopes with new players

Sports Desk

MULTAN: Karachi Kings captain Shan Masood, said on Saturday that his team eyeing on future and would try to play well in the first match of Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 9 against Multan Sultans tomorrow Feb 18 at Multan cricket stadium.

While holding a press conference at Multan cricket stadium, Shan Masood said that Karachi Kings was starting a new beginning with new players and management. He said that they would try to play well and make their identity.

Karachi Kings captain further said that Rizwan was a great player and you get a chance to learn a lot while playing with him or against him.

He said that Karachi Kings couldn't perform better in the last two years and hoping to play well this time as our young talent is very great.

He claimed that the PSL title would be Karachi Kings in future as the team consists of young players.

PSL-9: Rizwan vows to give tough time to opponent teams

Sports Desk

MULTAN: Multan Sultan Captain Muhammad Rizwan vowed to give tough times to opponent teams in PLS-9 by pursuing different strategies.

While holding a pre-match press conference here, Captain Multan Sultan Rizwan hinted that he was well aware of the weaknesses and strengths of Karachi King.

He however maintained that it was important for the top four players to perform in order to secure victory.

Annual sports, family festival at Punjab University



Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Punjab University Officers Welfare Association (PUOWA) organised annual sports and family festival at Hailey College of Commerce ground, here on Saturday.

University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood, Principal HCC Prof Dr Hafiz Zafar Ahmed, Registrar Dr Ahmad Islam, President PUOWA Dr Touqeer Ali, General Secretary Rana Muzaffar Ali and

other administrative officers were present. Cricket, tug-of-war and athletics competitions were held between the officers at the event.

The teams of Registrar Tiger, Old Campus Thunder, Controller Badshah and IT Eagle participated in the cricket match. In the final of the cricket match, the IT Eagle won the competition by defeating Controller Badshah.

In his address, the vice chancellor said sports was essential for physical health. He said participation in

such activities increases the ability to work.

PUOWA President Dr Touqeer Ali said that the university officers work hard day and night while the sports festival gives them an opportunity to have fun. He thanked the contributors for organising the festival. Officers' families and children also participated in the festival. Food and drink stalls were also set up.

Later, Prof Dr Hafiz Zafar Ahmed distributed prizes among the players.

Shoaib Malik joins Karachi Kings squad in Multan



PNP

Shoaib Malik and his actress wife Sana Javed have arrived in Multan for the tournament. The pictures of the couple's arrival are making rounds on the visual sharing application Instagram. Karachi Kings, who won the PSL in 2020, will start their 2024 campaign against former champions Multan Sultans at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

Shoaib Malik is the second cricketer, and Asia's first, to score more than 13,000 runs in the shortest version of the game. The spinner bagged 28 wickets in the shortest format. The veteran cricketer has represented Green Shirts in 124 T20Is and scored 2,435 runs with nine half-centuries to his name. He batted at an average of 31.2 and a strike rate of 125.6. Earlier, he announced his availability for the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and the United States.

MI Emirates crush Dubai Capitals to win ILT20 2024

A Sports

DUBAI: Nicholas Pooran's swashbuckling half-century, followed by a combined bowling effort led MI Emirates to win the International League (ILT20) 2024 with a comfortable 45-run victory over Dubai Capitals in the final.

Put into bat first, MI Emirates registered a mammoth total of 208/3 on the board, courtesy of Andre Fletcher and Pooran's fifties.

Earlier, openers Muhammad Waseem and Kusal Perera scripted a decent start to the innings, putting up a 77-run stand.



Waseem, who was the core aggressor of the partnership, perished in the seventh over after 24-ball 43 which featured

three boundaries and as many sixes.

Perera was then joined by Fletcher in the middle for a brief

25-run partnership which lasted with the former's departure in the 12th over. He scored 38 off 26 deliveries, hitting six boundaries.

Captain Pooran then joined forces with compatriot Fletcher and bolstered MI Emirates' total with belligerent hitting.

The duo added 56 runs for the third wicket before Fletcher walked back after a brilliant knock. He smashed three boundaries and four sixes on his way to a 37-ball 53.

But Pooran kept going and carried his bat all the way through and made sure to take MI Emirates to a dominant total.

He scored an unbeaten 57 off 27 deliveries with the help of two boundaries and six sixes.

In return, Dubai Capitals could amass 163/7 in the allotted 20 overs and thus succumbed to a big defeat in the ILT20 final.

The home side missed big knocks from their batters with their skipper Sam Billings leading the charts with a cautious 40, followed by Tom Banton (35) and Jason Holder (24).

Vijayakanth Vijayakanth and Trent Boult bagged two wickets each for MI Emirates while Waqar Salamkheil, Muhammad Rohid and Akeal Hosen made one scalp each.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf exchanging views with General Irfan Ozsert Dy Chief of General Staff Turkish Armed Forces at Naval Headquarters on Saturday.



Turkish chief of general Staff calls on PN chief to discuss maritime security

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chief of General Staff Turkish Armed Forces, General Irfan Ozsert called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at the Naval Headquarters here on Friday.

According to the PN officials, during the meeting, matters of mutual interest including regional maritime security were discussed. The visiting dignitary appreciated and acknowledged Pakistan Navy's efforts and commitments in support of collaborative maritime security in

the region.

Both the dignitaries appreciated the mutual cooperation in the field of defence production in general and successful projects of ships construction between Pakistan Navy and Türkiye on Transfer of Technology basis in particular.

Türkiye and Pakistan share deep-rooted bonds of friendship and brotherhood that date back in history. The visit of Chief of the General Staff Turkish Armed Forces will further enhance bilateral defence collaboration between the two countries, said a press release.

'JI to continue talks with PTI against 'rigging' in elections'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Majlis-e-Shura of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) unanimously rejected the resignation of the party Ameer Sirajul Haq, spokesman Qaiser Shareef said.

After the meeting of the Majlis-e-Shoora, the spokesman of the party said that central Majlis al-Shura has reposed full confidence in Sirajul Haq and he would continue to serve as the JI chief. "Sirajul Haq would continue performing his duties as per the party constitution," he said.

Qaiser Sharif said that Sirajul Haq would also hold a press conference on Sunday.

In the meeting, the JI leaders maintained that it was 'rigging' not

Sirajul Haq that led to the party's defeat in the recently held General Elections 2024.

Qaiser Sharif said that Majlis-e-Shoora also decided to continue talks with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) over 'rigging' in the elections. He said that JI would keep protesting against what he called rigging in the elections till mandate is given back to 'genuine' winners.

Earlier on February 12, Sirajul Haq announced to resign from the party's top 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).

Security forces kills nine, including two high-profile terrorists in KP IBO: ISPR

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The security forces on Saturday reportedly killed nine terrorists including two high-profile terrorists in two separate Intelligence-based operations (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province

As per the ISPR press release, the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Tank District and eliminat-

ed two high-profile terrorists named Rehmat Ullah alias Badar Mansur and Amjad alias Babri.

Meanwhile, in another operation in the South Waziristan District, the security forces after an intense fire exchange killed seven terrorists.

The security officials recovered weapons, ammunition and explosives were from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous



terrorist activities in the area against the security forces as well as extortion and target killing of innocent civilians.

However, during the operation, Sepoy Shahzeb Aslam, age 29 years; a resident of district Haripur embraced martyrdom.

Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Marwat says Supreme Court can fix election issue in 'one day'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Sher Afzal Marwat said on Friday that the party's protest on Saturday will not be joined by any other party. He also said that the Supreme Court can settle the controversy over elections in a single day if it wants to.

He acknowledged that ties between Maulana Fazal ur Rehman and Imran Khan had always been strained because of a lot of different reasons. He added that PTI had never heard anything good from Maulana.

Marwat said that events have tried to bring the two parties together. He said that Maulana had said two things that were exactly what PTI was saying: that elections were rigged and should be



protested.

He said that the delegation to the JUI had gone with the intention of joining forces.

Marwat said that this had been the first time that the Maulana had not made fun of PTI's delegation. He said that perhaps Maulana does not have any other ways either.

He said that the PTI believed that all democratic

forces who want the end of rigging in Pakistan should be part of the protest.

The PTI leader said that Pakistan was being under a 'rule of jungle' which will have to end.

Marwat said that if the PMLN claimed that PTI had digitally altered Form 45, it was easy to clear up the issue.

He said that both parties

could submit their form 45 in the Election Commission of Pakistan and should be forensically examined by NADRA.

Marwat said that the forms carry a thumb impression the impressions cannot be counterfeited.

PMLN's hunger for power He added that PMLN was doing everything out of a hunger for power. He said that if the PTI wanted government, it could have made a deal with PPP.

However, Imran Khan had described the struggle of the party as one of principles and not power, Marwat said.

The PTI leader also added that PMLN had won 20 seats at the most and was shamelessly trying to form governments in Punjab and centre.

Marwat said that no elections can be fair in the future if the wrong results of this

election are not rectified.

He said that the problem can be fixed by the ECP or by the higher judiciary. He said that no case in Pakistan carried more public importance right now.

Marwat said that if the SC wants to see rule of law in the country, the case is not complicated enough to take more than one day.

He said that all Forms 45 should be sent to the ECP who should be asked to generate a report on whose form was real and whose was fake.

Marwat said that all candidates from a constituency can be called to verify their Form 45.

However, he said that Imran Khan had chosen not to exercise the option of long march and protests should be held in the entire country first.

Election Commission rejects Pindi commissioner's rigging claims

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has flatly rejected the rigging allegations put forth by Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chhatta against the Election Commission and the Chief Election Commissioner.

The spokesperson said in a statement that neither the ECP nor any of its officials instructed the Rawalpindi commissioner to change election results under his jurisdiction.

He stated that the ECP would soon conduct a comprehensive inquiry to confirm the facts. Commissioners of any division do not have a direct role in conducting elections; they are neither District Returning Officers (DROs), Returning Officers (ROs), nor Presiding Officers (POs).

Commissioner Rawalpindi's name should be placed on ECL: Marriyum

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Following the statement related to rigging in general election 2024, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb demanded that the name of Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chhatta should be placed on the Exit Control List (ECL).

"Liaquat Ali Chhatta should not be allowed to leave the country after his statement related to the 'rigging in general election' without any proof," said PML-N's Marriyum Aurangzeb in a presser.

She questioned, "why he [Commissioner Rawalpindi] realized to confess about 'rigging' after eight days as he has no constitutional responsibility for the election."

Aurangzeb stated that



Commissioner Rawalpindi should have approached the election commission first before accusing the Chief Justice of Pakistan and Chief Election Commissioner of rigging in the general election 2024. "He should have approached ECP first, his allegations are baseless as he did not provide any evidence during her press conference," Marriyum Aurangzeb said.

The PML-N's spokesperson further added that the

commissioner should have taken action against the accused involved in rigging.

READ: Rawalpindi commissioner resigns over alleged election rigging

"Do you want to derail the democracy through foreign meddling?" She questioned.

She called for an inquiry into Commissioner Rawalpindi's actions, urging an investigation into his recent contacts over the past eight days.

She further emphasized

the need for a thorough forensic audit of his accounts and proposed turning his allegations into a test case and the findings should be made public.

Marriyum Aurangzeb asserted that penalties should be imposed for creating an inflammatory atmosphere through allegations.

She called for stringent action against Commissioner Rawalpindi and questioned whether he wanted to bring back the group that was empowered by "orchestrating the Result Transmission System (RTS) drama in 2018?"

The PML-N's spokesperson emphasized that the Commissioner's accusations against the Chief Justice are not trivial, Liaquat Ali Chhatta should provide evidence to support his allegations.

Pakistan Railways retrieves land worth million from illegal occupants

Web Desk/Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Railways retrieved its land worth millions of rupees from illegal occupants during anti-encroachment operations at Gilani Station.

In a proactive approach to clear the encroachment from railway land, the relevant authorities conducted an operation at Gilani Station and demolished shops constructed on illegally occupied land.

According to the details, the shops demolished by the authorities were constructed illegally on railway land, meanwhile, the spokesperson claimed that the value of the encroached land is worth Rs seven crores in the market.

Back in 2020, a bench of the Supreme Court heard a case regarding the revival of the Karachi Circular Railways (KCR).

Pakistan Railway's counsel told the court that the railway has submitted its report to the court over the matter.

Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed said that the pictures in the report explain nothing adding that in these photographs the land is seen under encroachments. "How will the train run when the land adjacent to the track has been under encroachment," the CJP remarked.

"The path for running a train has been cleared," CEO Railways told the court.

"Talk as a responsible officer," Chief Justice retorted. "Don't you think the encroached land does not belong to the Railways," CJP asked. "The Railways should have cleared everything to appear before the court," he further said.

"Take the tractor with you and demolish all encroachments," the top judge said.

"A building just a distance of four feet from the railway track," Justice Faisal Arab observed.

The court ordered Pakistan Railways to clear the land along the railway track.

Pakistani lawyers allowed to practice law in Azad Kashmir courts

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, the members of the Islamabad Bar Council are now granted the privilege to practice law in the courts of Azad Kashmir.

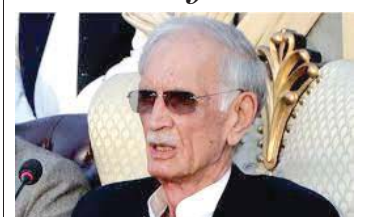
According to the details, an agreement has been successfully brokered between the Islamabad Bar Council and the Azad Kashmir Bar Council, paving the way for reciprocal legal practices between the two regions.

The official notification confirming the accord has been issued, solidifying the terms of this historic collaboration.

The agreement was formalized as the Vice-Chairmen of both the Islamabad and Azad Kashmir Bar Councils signed the agreement.

This collaborative initiative is expected to foster a strengthened legal fraternity, fostering enhanced cooperation and professional exchange between the legal communities of Islamabad and Azad Kashmir.

Pervez Khattak resigns PTI-P chairmanship after 'election defeat'



Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: In a shocking turn of events in the political landscape, Pervez Khattak on Saturday stepped down from the chairmanship of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf - Parliamentarians (PTI-P).

The PTI-P spokesperson confirmed the resignation of Pervez Khattak as party chairman and announced the former CM of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Mahmood Khan, as the new chairman of PTI-Parliamentarians.

The resignation of Pervez Khattak possibly came to light due to the failure of the general elections 2024 which was held on February 8.

It is noteworthy that Pervez Khattak, the ex-KP Minister, was once allied with PTI. Last year, he parted ways with the party and established his political entity called PTI - Parliamentarians.