

Jl announces sit-in
F.P. Report

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has announced sit-in protests outside the Election Commission and RO offices, demanding a thorough review of the results of the general election 2024. As per the details, all three Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) National Assembly candidates raised concerns about the results on the general election 2024 and announced to hold the protest.

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Salman challenges result
F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf backed candidate Salman Akram Raja has challenged the result of NA-128 in Lahore High Court (LHC). Salman has arrived in LHC to submit his plea against the result of NA-128. He stated that results are being changed because of a heavy majority of PTI's winning position. He said that the court should order the Returning officer to declare the results immediately.

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LAHORE: PML-N chief and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif addressing party workers.

Regional countries want peace in Afghanistan: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday said that all countries of the region, including Russia and China, wanted peace, security and stability in Afghanistan.

In an exclusive interview with TOLO news, he said that the recognition of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan needed regional consensus. Until the countries of the region and the world recognized the current government of Afghanistan, Pakistan would not take a step forward in that regard, he added.

"I personally believe that all the countries in the region want the Afghan government to get recognized, although I cannot talk about the exact time, regional countries have understood this. I believe that the issue of recognition will be resolved as time passes." The prime minister said the Durand Line was an internationally recognized border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"The UN and 206 countries have approved this as an international border and what the Afghan people say about this is their internal discussion, in which I am not interested." He said the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had shelter in some provinces of Afghanistan and that issue had caused insecurity in Pakistan.

"When my people come to your soil, use it, train on it, and then come and harm my people, then I will definitely be telling you that my unpleasant brother is on your soil, no matter if by your permission or not, he must be expelled from your soil," he added. "This is Pakistan's stance and we have not accused the Afghan government of intentionally sheltering these people," the prime minister said. He said that no nation would be permitted to utilize Pakistan's airspace against Afghanistan.

PM directs ministries to formulate strategy on development projects to attract foreign investment: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar directed all the ministries to formulate a strategy within five days for the establishment of the development projects with a potential to attract foreign investment.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the progress on execution of investment agreements in different sectors with GCC countries, directed the ministries to present their respective strategies on doable projects to the Special Investment Facilitation Council without any delay, a PM Office press release said.

In the meeting, he was apprised of the progress on the international

agreements in various sectors including energy, finance, logistics, food security, water, minerals and others.

Caretaker ministers for communications, maritime affairs and railways, law and justice, climate change, finance, energy, and food security attended the meeting besides the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission and senior officers.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar extended well wishes to King Charles III of Britain, joining hands with the people of the Commonwealth in praying for the monarch's complete health and full recovery.

"The Government and the people of Pakistan join the people of the Commonwealth in wishing His Majesty King Charles III complete health and full recovery," the prime minister wrote on X. He said King Charles' resilience and courage in confronting cancer was a source of strength to millions of concerned Commonwealth citizens around the globe. In a recent statement, Buckingham Palace had said, "During The King's recent hospital procedure for benign prostate enlargement, a separate issue of concern was noted. Subsequent diagnostic tests have identified a form of cancer."

PPP alleges rigging as Bilawal loses to Tarar

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Sherry Rehman has claimed that election results of Lahore's constituency were manipulated, where party chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari lost polls to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Attaullah Tarar.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore on Friday, Rehman said the results were changed abruptly while Bilawal was leading in the polls. She said the results were delayed to rig the elections.

Rehman also lamented that mobile and internet services were suspended on the polling day which created difficulties for the voters and candidates during elections. "We know very well what's the real intent behind closing mobile services," she added. Her statement comes as election results suffered from inordinate delay with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) also raising doubts over the transparency of the elections.

Terrorist killed in operation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Qilla Saifullah District of Balochistan on reported presence of a high profile terrorist.

During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange, HVT, Abdul Shakoor @ Nauman @ Abu Hamza Khurasani of Daesh was sent to hell.

The killed terrorist was the mastermind of recent bombings in Qila Saifullah and Pishin on 7 February 24 and was highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies.

Nawaz seeks unity govt after 'election triumph'

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) candidate for the premiership, said Friday he seeks to form a united government after his party "emerged victorious" in the February 8 general election.

"I have tasked Shehbaz Sharif to meet Fazlur Rehman, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, and Asif Ali Zardari today," Nawaz told a charged crowd in Lahore's Model Town, which was there to listen to his "victory speech". However, as the results trickle in, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed candidates are leading with more than 90 seats to their name, while the PML-N is trailing behind.

The party's top leaders, on the contrary, said that their candidates have won a majority of the seats and will form government in the centre. "Alhamdulillah, the PML-N is the largest single party in the country today after the elections." The three-time former premier, who ended his self-imposed

exile in October last year, urged all the national institutions and politicians to play a positive role in steering the country out of the ongoing crises.

Referring to the country's fragile economy, Nawaz said: "At least 10 years are needed for bringing stability to the country." He said that it was the responsibility of the PML-N to steer the country out of the crises.

The PML-N supremo said that they respect the mandate of all the political parties and independent candidates, and invited them to sit with the former ruling party for the sake of the country "Our sole agenda is a prosperous Pakistan," he added.

Hinting at forming a coalition government, the PML-N top leader said that the party's President Shehbaz Sharif would meet PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, JUI-F Chief Fazalur Rehman, MQM-P Convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and other leaders today. Earlier in the day, PML-N leader Ishaq Dar said that the successful

independents have contacted his party and shown interest in joining it.

However, PTI — which also claims to have the biggest number of National Assembly seats — ruled out forging an alliance with the PML-N or Pakistan Peoples Party to form the federal government. Pakistan on February 8 witnessed the biggest-ever general elections in the country's history.

The election results were expected to be completed a few hours after midnight, but the unofficial results couldn't be released even over 24 hours after the end of polling, sparking a controversy.

Meanwhile, as the nation braces for the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) announcement of the poll results, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has acknowledged a "huge" voter turnout in favour of its arch-rival Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), however, it remains hopeful for its supremo Nawaz Sharif's fourth term as the country's prime minister.

leader Ishaq Dar claimed that independent candidates, who are emerging victorious in the 2024 general elections, are in contact with the party.

"The independents have contacted us and they will join any party in the next 72 hours as per the Constitution," said the former finance minister while speaking to media on Friday as the election results continue to pour in.

Dar said that the PML-N cannot force anyone to join the party, adding that they are being contacted by candidates who are willing to join their party.

Zardari, Bilawal reach Lahore for meetings

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In the aftermath of the general elections in 2024, former President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto reached Lahore for a 'crucial post-election meeting' on Friday.

The PPP leaders are expected to hold a meeting with Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Supremo Nawaz Sharif during their visit to Lahore for an emergency meeting with party leaders to consult on challenging the election results in NA-127. The PPP leadership is also expected to adopt a stance on their reservations regarding election results in the Punjab region. Furthermore, there is a potential chance of a post-election meeting between the leadership of PPP and PML-N in Punjab.

PTI alleges police of killing four workers

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Four activists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) were killed and dozens others injured in firing of police on protest demonstration against alleged rigging in elections in Shangla, Swat on Friday the party sources claimed.

According to a private news channel, the PTI activists held protest in Shangla Alpuri against alleged rigging in elections and changing results of National Assembly constituency NA-11.

The protestors pelted stones at police and set a vehicle with green number plate on fire when police attempted to disperse the protesting PTI workers. The PTI shared a video claimed that its four activists were killed in firing of police and dozens others were injured.

It should be mentioned here that according to unofficial result, PML-N's Amir Muqam has won the NA-11 elections by securing 59,863 votes while his runner-up independent candidate Syed Fareen bagged 54,311 votes.

Raja Basharat to challenge defeat in court

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Raja Basharat, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed candidate for National Assembly Constituency NA-55, has vehemently contested his electoral defeat, claiming victory by a significant margin of 50,000 votes. In a video statement shared on Twitter (X), Basharat vowed to fight for his rightful win, asserting that his opponent failed to secure victory from any polling station within NA-55.

Despite presenting Form-45 as evidence, Basharat lamented the Returning Officer's refusal to acknowledge his victory, instead issuing Form-47 to his adversary. He maintained confidence in his claim, stating that he possesses indisputable proof of his triumph and decried the alleged rigging as unprecedented.

Expressing concern over the apparent theft of the people's mandate, Basharat urged the Election Commission of Pakistan to intervene promptly. He warned against the excessive declaration of successful candidates as unsuccessful by returning officers, emphasizing the need to uphold electoral integrity.

In the broader context of post-election developments, independent candidates have emerged as the frontrunners in the National Assembly, surpassing established parties like the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Independent candidates get lead in elections

— PML-N on second position, PPP on third

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The unofficial general elections 2024 results of national assemblies are pouring in across the country on Friday, independent candidates, a majority of whom are backed by PTI, have so far secured 96 NA seats, PML-N 69, PPP 52 and MQM-P 15.

PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif in a speech have invited all the political parties to sit together and form a government and added that he had told Shehbaz Sharif to approach Asif Ali Zardari, Fazlur Rehman and MQM-P leader Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui for the formation of a coalition government.

In a significant development, former President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto have reached Lahore for a post-election meetings and political development.

As per unofficials election results, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, his daughter Maryam Nawaz, former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shehbaz clinched Lahore seats. Nawaz Sharif won Lahore's NA-130 seat with a massive majority by securing 171,024 votes against former PTI leader Dr Yasmin Rashid who managed to get 115,043 votes.

However, Nawaz was defeated by an independent candidate Shahzada Gostasap in NA-15 Mansehra constituency, where he managed to secure 63,054 votes against his major rival candidate Shahzada Gastasap who got 74,713 votes.

Shehbaz Sharif clinched NA-123 seat with 63,953 votes by beating PTI-backed independent candidate Afzal Azeem who secured 48,486 votes. Shehbaz also won Lahore's PP-158 seat with 38,642 votes against his major rival and independent candidate Yousuf Ali who got 23,847 votes. Hamza Shehbaz won Lahore's NA-118 seat with 105,960 votes by defeating PTI-backed independent candidate Aliya Hamza who secured 100,803 votes.

Top Pakistan Peoples Party leaders Asif Ali Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Faryal Talpur secured victory in general elections with massive majority.

According to unofficial results, PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari secured 146,989 in NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad against his PTI backed independent candidate Sardar Sher Rind.

Pakistan Peoples' Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari clinched two seats NA-196 with 85,370 votes and NA-154 Larkana with 131,217 votes. However, he got defeat in NA-127 Lahore and could get only 15,005 votes whereas PML-N leader Atta Tarar emerged victorious by securing 98,210 votes while an independent candidate Malik Zaheer Abbas got 82,230 votes from this seat and stood at

number two.

PPP leader Faryal Talpur secured 85,000 votes in PS-10 Ratodero constituency against her rival candidate of JUI Kifayatullah who got 18,153 votes. The overall general elections' polling process remained peaceful manner, except a few minor incidents of poll rigging reports and clashes. The counting of votes was underway.

The National Assembly comprises a total of 336 seats out of which 266 candidates are elected through voting while remaining 70 seats are reserved including 60 for women and 10 for non-Muslims. As general election results are pouring in, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Information Secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb said Friday that the hopefully, PML-N would form government both in the centre and Punjab province.

In a message on X, formerly Twitter, she said: "Results are being received and compiled in the party's election cell. There was difficulty in getting election results due to the closure of internet and mobile service. The position of PML-N is strong and we'll serve the people of Pakistan after forming government in the centre and Punjab."

In the general elections 2024, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, his daughter Maryam Nawaz, former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shehbaz clinched Lahore seats. PTI backed candidates Asad Qaiser former NA speaker and Barrister Gohar Ali Khan emerged victorious in general elections with robust majority.

According to unofficial result on Friday, Asad Qaiser obtained 115,635 votes against JUI candidate Fazal Ali who got 45,567 votes. Gohar Ali Khan secured 110,023 votes in NA-10 Buner seat against ANP candidate Abdul Rauf who managed to get 30302 votes.

Separately, PTI backed candidate Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar got victory against Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) patron-in-chief Jahangir Tareen in NA-149 Multan. Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) patron-in-chief Jahangir Tareen was defeated by PTI backed independent candidate Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar in NA-149 Multan seat in the general election 2024.

Dogar secured 143,613 votes, defeating Jahangir Khan Tareen obtained 50,166 votes. Meanwhile, PTI backed independent candidate Latif Khosa secured victory against PML-N candidate Khawaja Saad Rafique in NA-122 Lahore. Khosa got 117,109 votes while Saad Rafique secured 77,907 votes. Amid a surprising move, Saad Rafique in a message on X (formerly Twitter) congratulated Latif Khosa on his victory. "I wholeheartedly accept my defeat," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Dr. Gohar Ejaz and Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi addressing a press conference.

Govt fulfilled pledge to hold peaceful polls: Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Friday, felicitating nation over the peaceful and orderly conduct of general elections, said the caretaker government had fulfilled the solemn pledge of holding elections in line with time-frame, given by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

Addressing a press conference along with Caretaker Interior Minister Dr Gohar Ijaz, he said despite speculations and multiple challenges, "we have consistently stood by our stand regarding the conduct of elections".

Replying to a question, he said there was no shutdown of Internet on election day and added the fixed broadband was functioning and social media platforms were fully used by the subscribers. He pointed out Internet suspension was not specific to Pakistan since many countries opted for the

shutdown of Internet service, simply due to security reasons.

Sharing data, he said that in 2022, the Internet was shut down 187 times in 35 countries of the world and a neighbouring country, with purported democratic credentials, closed Internet service for 84 times. He said Pakistan had been fighting the longest war against the scourge of terrorism with over hundred thousand martyrs.

He said on election day, 16 persons lost their lives in 61 incidents of violence and on the previous day, 28 persons were martyred in two incidents of terrorism. Solangi said since January 15 this year, there were 47 incidents of terrorism including seven improvised explosive device blasts and 26 grenade attacks.

Answering a question, the minister said the temporary shutdown of mobile phone service was imperative for protection of people's lives. On Thursday, the head of the

Commonwealth Observer Group pointed out that when there were no mobile phones and Internet service, even then democracy was in vogue and elections were conducted around the world.

The minister said that ECP SMS service 8300 had been functional since January 29 and most of the voters must have got the required information in advance. He acknowledged that people had faced some difficulties, but protecting citizens' lives was the main task and obligation of the security agencies and the Ministry of Interior.

"It was more important for us to save people's lives and mobile phone service shut-down was done due to security threats," Murtaza Solangi remarked. To a question, he said a large number of independent candidates were elected which was the indication of the fairness of the electoral process.

Principal Information Officer Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan was also present on the occasion.



Police praised for exemplary election security measures

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police Sindh, Rifiat Mukhtar Raja, expressed his appreciation on Friday for the exemplary security measures implemented by the police during the recent general elections.

Inspector General of Police Sindh, Rifiat Mukhtar Raja lauded the commendable execution of the election code of conduct, highlighting the impressive performance of all personnel in ensuring the security of polling stations and buildings across the province during the general election. Rifiat Mukhtar praised the meticulous implementation of contingency plans across various classifications of polling stations, including highly sensitive, sensitive, and normal ones.

Inspector General of Police Sindh, Rifiat Mukhtar Raja commended the successful execution of priorities outlined in the Joint Election Contingency Plan, emphasizing the commendable performance of law enforcement agencies and the unwavering cooperation of the police.

The IGP expressed strong confidence in the continued diligence, dedication, and passion of the police in ensuring the foolproof security of upcoming important events.

CCPO commends policemen security

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Bilal Siddique Kamyana expressed contentment with the comprehensive security arrangements during the general elections.

In a statement on Friday, the CCPO lauded the police for its management to maintain calm atmosphere during the general elections. Kamyana recognized a responsible and effective role played by police throughout the general elections, affirming that police successfully maintained peace and emphasized that meticulous arrangements resulted in maintaining control over security situation, allowing citizens to cast their votes in a secure environment.

MQM-P workers celebrate victory in general election

KARACHI (APP): The workers of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) on Friday celebrated their party's victory on National Assembly and Sindh Assembly seats in the general election here at the Pakistan House.

Hundreds of workers attended the ceremony, where sweets were distributed to mark the win.

Speaking on the occasion, MQM-P Convener Dr Khalid Maqbool attributed

the party's victory in the election to the sacrifices of its workers.

Senior Deputy Convenor Mustafa Kamal said by clinching the assembly seats from Karachi and Hyderabad, the MQM-P had proved it was representative of the people of two cities.

Dr Farooq Sattar said the urban area people had once again given their mandate to the party on February 08. Dr Khalid Maqbool announced that the MQM-P would celebrate its victory on Sunday.

Wasn't surprised over success of independent candidates: Aun Ch

LAHORE (INP): Istehkam e Pakistan Party (IPP) leader, Aun Chaudhry has said that he was not surprised over the victory of independent candidates and let see forward. Talking to a private news channel here on Friday, he said that IPP has mutual understanding with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and we want to ensure political sta-

bility in the country.

Aun Chaudhry urged the successful independent candidates to think about the future of country setting aside the personal interests.

The IPP leader said that its time to make efforts for betterment of Pakistan and party heads would take decisions in the larger interest of country.

PML-N clinches 5 NA seats in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has won five out of seven National Assembly constituencies of the Rawalpindi district while one each seat was claimed the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) and an independent candidate.

PML-N's Raja Usama Sarwar succeeded in winning NA-51 Murree-cum-Rawalpindi seat by securing 149,250 votes against Muhammad Latasub Satti, an independent candidate, who could manage to get 113,843 votes. Similarly, NA-53 Rawalpindi-II was clinched by Raja Qamar ul

Islam of the PML-N with 72,006 votes while his runner-up Ajmal Sabir Raja, an independent candidate secured 58,476 votes. Likewise, in NA-55 Rawalpindi-IV, Malik Ibrar Ahmed of the PML-N succeeded with 78,542 votes against independent candidate Muhammad Basharat Raja who bagged 67,101 votes.

PML-N's Muhammad Hanif Abbasi managed to win in NA-56 Rawalpindi-V by securing 96,649 votes against 82,613 by his runner-up Shehryar Riaz, an independent candidate

Chaudhary won the election in NA-57, Rawalpindi-VI with 83,331 votes and his runner-up Seemabia Tahir, an independent candidate, bagged 56,789 votes. Former NA speaker and prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf of the PPPP secured victory in NA-52 Rawalpindi-I with 112,265 votes while Tariq Aziz Bhutti, an independent candidate remained the runner-up with 91,547 votes.

NA-54, Rawalpindi-III has been won by independent candidate Aqeel Malik with 85,912 votes while his runner-up Azra Masood, also an independent candidate, bagged 73,694.

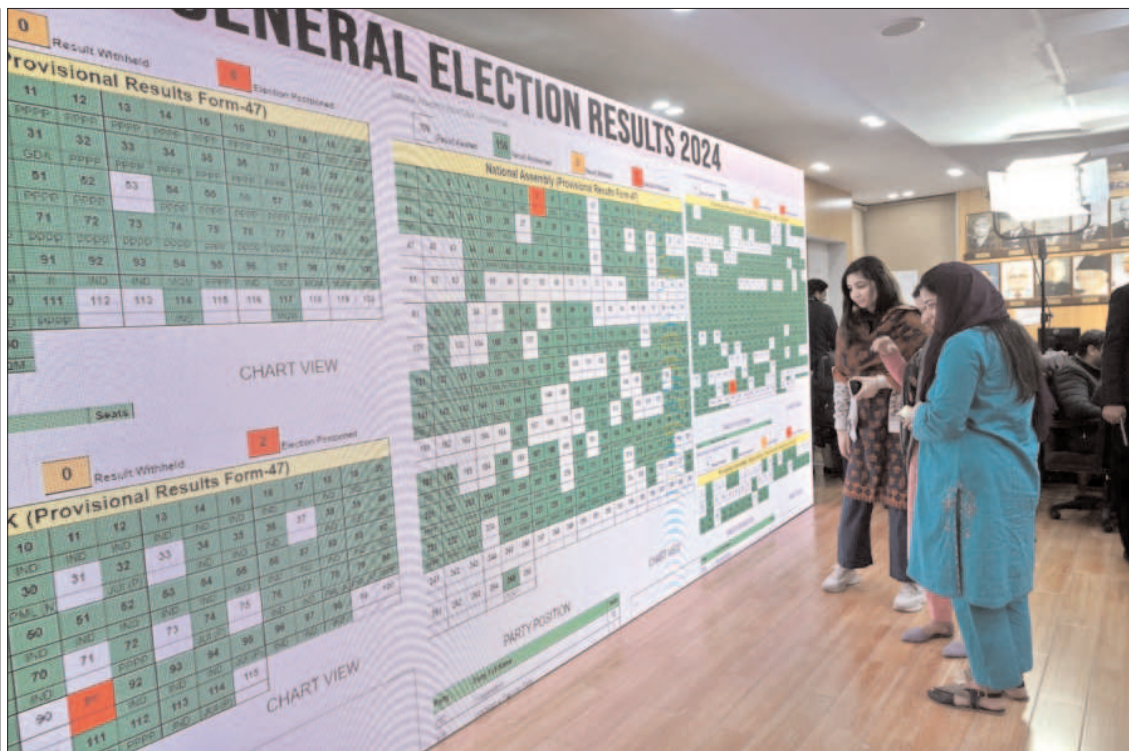
PML-N secures 9 NA, 21 PA seats from Lahore

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has once again remained successful in preserving its supremacy from the provincial metropolis by winning 9 National Assembly and 21 provincial assembly seats.

Istehkam-e-Pakistan party (IPP) candidates- Abdul Aleem Khan from PP-149, NA-117 and Aun Chaudhry from NA-128- also won their seats with the support of the PML-N following a seat adjustment agreement between both parties.

According to unofficial results from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the PML-N winning candidates from provincial assembly seats are: Sami Ullah Khan from PP-145, Ghazali Saleem Butt from PP-146, Hamza Shahbaz from PP-147, Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman from PP-148, Khawaja Imran Nazir from PP-150, Sohail Shaikat Butt from PP-151, Malik Muhammad Waheed from PP-152, Khawaja Salman Rafique from PP-153, Malik Gulam Habib Awan from PP-154, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif from PP-158, Maryam Nawaz Sharif from PP-159, Malik Asad Ali from PP-160, Shahbaz Ali Khokhar from PP-162, Imran Javed from PP-163, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif from PP-164, Muhammad Anas Mehmood from PP-166, Irfan Shafi Khokhar from PP-167, Faisal Ayub from PP-168, Malik Khalid Parvaiz Khokhar from PP-169, Marghoub Ahmad from PP-173 and Bilal Yasin from PP-174.

The PML-N winning candidates from National Assembly seats are: Hamza Shahbaz from NA-118, Maryam Nawaz from NA-119, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq from NA-120, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif from NA-123, Rana Mubashar Iqbal from NA-124, Muhammad Afzal from NA-125, Malik Saiful Malook Khokhar from NA-126, Atta Ullah Tatar from NA-127, and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif from NA-130.



ISLAMABAD: Journalists stand in front of a screen displaying live election results in the Election Commission office a day after General Elections 2024.

Meeting on WB's Punjab Family Planning Programme held

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Population Welfare Secretary Salman Ijaz chaired a crucial meeting related to the World Bank's Punjab Family Planning Programme, here on Friday.

Director General (DG) Population and Punjab Population Innovation Fund (PIPF) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Saman Rai, Additional Secretary (A & F) Ahmed Usman, Additional Secretary (Tech) Dr. Naila Altaf, Director (A&F) Muhammad Shahid Nusrat, Director (Technology) Dr. Zubdah Riaz and PPIF Chief Finance Officer Abdul Qayyum and other representatives attended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, the secretary said that Punjab province is home to more than half of the country's population. This World Bank

program is based on improving the means and use of family planning to reduce population growth.

This World Bank programme is providing free access to quality family planning services to the people of Punjab and institutionalizing quality of care in family planning services. He said that the delivery system focuses on creating awareness among the people and providing better health-related facilities to make more families aware of the benefits of family planning.

Secretary Population Welfare added that the World Bank programme would help in scaling up innovations like clinical franchising, voucher schemes, and family planning counseling through community leaders.

He said that this program has

been piloted in different districts of Punjab and the results of family planning are improving.

The program is being extended to remote areas and communities where there is limited or no access to family planning services.

He said that lady health workers, family welfare workers, and community health workers are linked to health facilities, family health clinics, and family welfare through a wide network.

Through this World Bank program, the program would support voucher incentive schemes, social marketing, engagement of men and community leaders, and youth platforms to increase utilization of family planning services. Interconnection of service providers related to this would also be improved.

MQM-P secures 20 PA seats from Karachi; independents beg 10, PPPP 9

KARACHI (APP): With 20 provincial assembly seats from the Karachi Division, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) was leading, followed by independent candidates who bagged 10 seats of the Sindh Assembly from the megapolis. The Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) also managed to secure nine seats from the provincial capital to further strengthen its position in the Sindh Assembly while the Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan got only 2 of its candidates returned successful, according to the unofficial results of 41 out of 47 seats of Karachi division announced so far by the returning officers.

The PPPP clinched five of the six provincial assembly seats of District Malir, while independent Ijaz Khan returned successful on PS-88 Malir V by securing 17580 votes.

PPPP's Muhammad Yousaf Baloch won from PS-84, Malir-I by securing 25,348 votes, Muhammad Sajid PS-85 Malir-II by 27,791 votes, Abdur Razaq Raja PS-86 Malir-III by 15,017 votes, Mehmood Alam Jamote PS-87 Malir-IV by 19,220 votes and Muhammad Saleem PS-89 Malir-VI by 25,326 votes.

Out of the seven provincial assembly seats of District Korangi, three were won by independent candidates, two by MQM-P and one each by the PPPP and the MQM-P. Independent candidate Sajjad Ali won PS-106 Karachi South-I by getting 20658 votes, PPPP's Muhammad Yousuf PS-107 Karachi South-II by 26,902 votes, MQM-P's Muhammad Dilawar PS-108 Karachi South-III by 20,014 votes, independent candidate Bilal Hussain Khan Jadoon PS-109 Karachi South-IV by 27,854 votes and independent candidate Rehan Bandukra PS-110 Karachi South-V by 47,450 votes.

Out of five Sindh Assembly seats of Keamari District, three were captured by independent candidates, and one each was secured

Korangi-V by 24,161 votes; PPPP's Muhammad Farooq Awan PS-95 Korangi-VI by 16,386 votes; and independent candidate Muhammad Awaiz PS-96 Korangi-VII by 16,997 votes. Out of nine provincial assembly seats of District East, six were clinched by the MQM-P and one by the PPPP while the result was two was awaited.

MQM-P's Shoukat Ali won PS-97 Karachi East-I, by securing 4,997 votes; Arslan Pervaiz PS-98 Karachi East-II by 13,903 votes; Syed Farhan Ansari PS-99 Karachi East-III by 26,658 votes, Syed Muhammad Usman PS-100 Karachi East-IV by 21,970 votes; Moeed Anwar PS-101 Karachi East-V by 43,080 votes and Faisal Rafiq PS-103 Karachi East-VII by 15,870 votes.

Similarly, PPPP's Saeed Ghani won PS-105 Karachi East IX by securing 26,168 votes while the results of PS-102 Karachi East-VI and PS-104 Karachi East-VIII were not yet announced.

Of the five PA seats of District South, three were secured by independent candidates and one each as clinched by the PPPP and the MQM-P.

Independent candidate Sajjad Ali won PS-106 Karachi South-I by getting 20658 votes, PPPP's Muhammad Yousuf PS-107 Karachi South-II by 26,902 votes, MQM-P's Muhammad Dilawar PS-108 Karachi South-III by 20,014 votes, independent candidate Bilal Hussain Khan Jadoon PS-109 Karachi South-IV by 27,854 votes and independent candidate Rehan Bandukra PS-110 Karachi South-V by 47,450 votes.

Out of five Sindh Assembly seats of Keamari District, three were captured by independent candidates, and one each was secured

by the PPPP and the MQM-P.

PPPP's Liaquat Ali Aaskani won PS-111, Keamari-I by gaining 29,396 votes, independent candidate Sarbuland Khan PS-112, Keamari-II by 16,287 votes; MQM-P's Faheem Ahmed PS-113 Keamari-III by 24,465 votes, independent candidate Muhammad Shabbir PS-114, Keamari-IV by 21,531 votes and independent candidate Shah Nawaz Jadoon PS-115 Keamari-V by 20,609 votes. The results of only two PA seats of the District West have been announced. MQM-P's Shaikh Abdullah won from PS-117 Karachi West-II by securing 11,154 votes and Naseer Ahmed from PS-118 Karachi West-III by 9,740 votes.

The results of PS-116 Karachi West-I, PS-119, Karachi West-IV, PS-120, Karachi West-V and PS-121, Karachi West-VI were yet awaited.

Out of nine PA seat of District Central, the MQM-P claimed eight and one by the JI.

MQM-P's Reehan Akram won from PS-122 Karachi Central-I by securing 48,170 votes, Abdul Waseem PS-123 Karachi Central-II by 17,526 votes, Abdul Basit PS-124, Karachi Central-III by 31,035 votes, Syed Adil Askari PS-125 Karachi Central-IV by 63,807 votes, Muhammad Iftikhar Alam PS-126 Karachi Central-V by 38,789 votes, Muhammad Muaz Mehboob PS-127 Karachi Central-VI by 23,389 votes, Taha Ahmed Khan PS-128 Karachi Central-VII by 34,417 votes, and Jamal Ahmed PS-130 Karachi Central-IX 38,334 by votes.

Ji's Naeem ur Rehman Khan returned successful on PS-129 Karachi Central-VIII by getting 26,296 votes.



KARACHI: A man watching latest election results live on a Computer screen.

KHYBER TEACHING HOSPITAL
MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION PESHAWAR
TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited for the supply of following items for Khyber Teaching Hospital Peshawar. Tender should reach to the office of the undersigned on or before **29-02-2024 at 10:00 AM** which will be opened on the same day at **10:30 AM** in presence of bidders or their representatives. The Bid security shall be submitted from the account of the firm / bidder / contractor who submits the bid in favor of Hospital Director, Khyber Teaching Hospital Medical Teaching Institution Peshawar.

S. #	Name of Item	Pre-Bid Meeting	Bid Security (CDR)	Procurement Method	Prices Required
1.	Pathology Lab Equipment on Reagent/Rental Basis. FY-2023-26 (2nd Time) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Coagulation AnalyzerPlasmapheresis Machine	15-02-2024 at 11:00 AM Supply Chain Department	PKR 500,000/-	Single Stage Two Envelop	FOR Basis
2.	Eye Equipment FY-2023-24	13-02-2024 at 11:00 AM Supply Chain Department	PKR 300,000/-	Single Stage Two Envelop	FOR and C&F Basis

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

- Rate for S. No. # 01 shall be valid till 30th June 2026.
- Only typed tender on original prescribing letter pad, sealed & signed should be submitted, the quoted Price must be printed and hand written quoted price is not be acceptable. The tenders must be according to hospital specification; **double rates** for one item will not be accepted.
- No conditional bid will be acceptable.
- A detailed list of specification of required items can be obtained from the official website <https://kth.edu.pk/download/tenders/>.
- The bid security in the shape of Pay order (PO) will not be accepted.
- No document will be entertained after bid submission.
- In case of public holiday on Bid submission date the next working day will be considered as last submission and tender opening day, time and venue will remain the same.
- The competent Authority has the right to reject all bids under Rule 47 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA) Procurement Rules 2014.

Hospital Director
Khyber Teaching Hospital, Peshawar
Medical Teaching Institute

INF(P)0238/24

Address of Bid Submission/Opening:
Khyber Teaching Hospital/MTI Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
Telephone(s): 0092-91-9224400 Ext: 2105



LAHORE: Supporters of Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's celebrates PML-N's success in General Election 2024 gathered at Model Town.



PESHAAR: KP Caretaker Minister for Revenue and Excise Ahmad Rasool Bangash inaugurating Tax Facilitation Centre at Excise Department.

Four martyred cops laid to rest

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The funeral prayer of four policemen, martyred in Dera Ismail Khan's terrorist attack during general election duty, was offered at their native villages in Dir Lower districts on Friday.

The Nimaz e Janaza of martyred Sub-Inspector, Sultan Yousuf was offered at ancestral village Kambatt in Lal Qilla, while, the funeral prayer of martyred constable, Muhammad Sabir was held at Amlook Darra, Talash.

The Nimaz e Janaza of martyred constable Ali Muhammad was offered in Badwan and the funeral prayer of martyred constable Israr Ahmad was offered at ancestral graveyard in Bandagai area of Talash.

District Police Officer, Lower Dir, Ziauddin

Ahmad, DSPs Circle, DPS Headquarters, SP Elite Force, police officers and officials and a large number of the area people and relatives participated in the funeral prayers of the martyred policemen.

Smartly turned-out contingents of police presented salute to the coffins of the martyrs while police officers laid wreaths at their graves. The DPO and police officers offered condolences and expressed sympathies with the bereaved families.

DPO Ziauddin Ahmad said our martyred policemen rendered their lives for the cause of peace and security of the motherland. He said the children of the martyred were like our own children and the department will not leave the families of martyrs alone in this critical time.

Four police personnel

martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Kulachi, Dera Ismail Khan the other day, were laid to rest in their native villages here on Friday, official sources and residents said. The martyred personnel belonged to different villages of the Lower Dir district.

The sub inspector Sultan Yousaf was laid to rest at Kambat Samarbagh, head constable Sabir Khan at Amluk Dara Talash, Constable Ali Muhammad at Badwan and Constable Israr Muhammad was laid to rest at Bandagai Talash with official dignity. A large number of local residents attended the funeral prayers. The residents meanwhile demanded the government to arrest the killers of the cops and provide security to its guarding forces across the country.

Jalal clinches victory against Taimur Jhagra

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz PML-N's Jalal Khan clinched on Friday victory against independent candidate Taimur Jhagra in PK-79. Jalal Khan had collected 16031 votes.

Jhagra had amassed 11495 votes. Pakistan Istakham Party Chairman Perviz Khattak and his two sons and son-in-law faced the biggest political upset. Independent candidate Mian Muhammad Umar had clinched victory against Khattak with 38384 votes in PK-88.

Khattak could only collect 9009 votes. Moreover, Khattak's son-in-law, Ali Khattak, had also been defeated in PK-89. Khattak's sons, Ismail Khattak and Ibrahim Khattak, had also faced defeat from PK-85 and PK-86, respectively.

ANP wishes good luck to elected MPs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Awami National Party (ANP) central general secretary Mian Iftikhar Hussain said that failure and success is part of politics while wished newly elected lawmakers to deliver in favor of public's welfare.

This he said while congratulating successful independent candidate for both national and provincial assembly from Nowshera Ishfaq Ahmad. He added that the independent candidate had conduct effective election campaign.

ANP central secretary general Mian Iftikhar Hussain blamed former Chief Minister Pervaiz Khattak for using malpractice during electoral process. He claimed that Pervaiz Khattak had also used to get votes to manipulate public opinion.

Accused of jubilant aerial firing held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Police arrested an accused involved in aerial firing over reports of success of his party candidate in general elections and recovered weapons.

According to details, a video of aerial firing of man over success of his party candidate went viral on social media.

Independent candidates outclass heavyweights of political parties in election

PESHAWAR (APP): The independent candidates outclassed the heavyweights of religio-political parties including Awami National Party, Pakistan People Party, Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Jamiat Ulema Islam (F) during election 2024 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Swat, Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda, Peshawar, Buner and other high literacy districts were swept away by the independent candidates and has won maximum number of national and provincial assemblies seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In Peshawar, independent candidates have won four seats out of five of the National Assembly and six out of 13 Provincial Assembly seats.

According to election results issued by Retuning Officers, except former MNA Noor Alam Khan of the Jamiat ulema-e-Islam (JUIF) who won NA 28 Peshawar-I, the independent candidates including Aamir Ayub secured victory in NA 29 Peshawar-II, Shandana Gulzar in NA 30 Peshawar-III, Arbab Sher Ali in NA 31 Peshawar IV and Asif Khan in NA 32 Peshawar V. Ms Shandana who is the daughter of former Commissioner Peshawar, Gulzar Khan (late) was voted to power after his father great employment and social services.

Independent candidate, Asif Khan has outclassed veteran politician and former Federal Minister for Railways Haji Ghulam Ahmed Bilour while former MNA Arbab Amir Ayub has also retained his seat. However, former MNA Noor Alam Khan who resigned from PTI and joined JUIF was able to comfortably defeated his political rival and former MNA Sajid Nawaz Khan.

Similarly, another independent candidate and former MNA Arbab Sher Ali retained his seat defeating

former Minister for Communications Dr Arbab Alamgir Khan on NA 31 Peshawar IV. The independent candidates, who won six among thirteen provincial assembly constituencies include Arbab Wasim on PK 73, Sameullah Khan on PK 76, Sher Ali Afridi on PK 77, Syed Qasim Ali Shah on PK 81, Mina Khan on PK 83 and Fazal Elahi on PK 84.

Karamat Ullah Chagarmati and Arbab Zarak Khan of Pakistan People Party also won PK 72 and PK 80 respectively. The candidate of Awami National Party, Arbab Usman won provincial assembly seat on PK 75. Arbab Usman was the elder son of former Agriculture Minister Arbab Ayub Jan (late) who cashed his father's development projects.

Ejaz Khan of JUI won PK 47 and Arbab Wasim of PTI Parliamentary was declares winner on PK 73. Jalal Khan of Pakistan Muslim League won PK 79 and Zahir Khan of same party declared victorious in PK 78. Chairman, Qumi Watan Party, Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao, Provincial President of Awami National Party, Aimal Wali Khan, Pakistan Tahrir e Insaf Parliamentarians Chairman, Perviz Khattak and former Chief Minister Ameer Haider Hoti had lost election in their respective national assembly constituencies.

Independent candidate and former senior minister Muhammad Atif Khan has won NA 22 Mardan-II after securing 114,748 votes, defeating former CM KP Ameer Haider Hoti who bagged 66,159 votes while former MNA Anwar Taj regained NA 23 Charsadda-I after defeating Aftab Sherpao who secured only 34,415 votes. Following defeat, Haider Hoti resigned from senior vice president of ANP and decided to serve party as a worker.

On NA 24 Charsadda-II, Aimal

Wali who bagged 67,876 votes was defeated by independent candidate Fazal Muhammad Khan who secured 100,713 votes. Similarly, former speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser who contested election as independent candidate with 115,635 votes retained his native NA 19 Swabi-I defeating JUIF Fazal Haqqani who bagged only 45,567 votes respectively.

Political stalwarts that lost election 2024 including PTI Parliamentarians Chairman Perviz Khattak on NA-23 Nowshera-I, KP PMLN Information Secretary Ikhtair Wali Khan, former Environment Minister Wajid Ali Khan in Swat, JIP Central Ameer Maulana Sirajul Haq. Independent candidate and former MNA Ali Muhammad Khan declared victorious on NA 23 Mardan after securing 102,175 votes and independent Shandana Gulzar secured victory at NA 30 Peshawar defeating former MNA Nasir Musazai of JUIF.

Professor Dr A.H. Hilali, Chairman Political Science Department, University of Peshawar told APP that participation of large numbers of voters in 2024 election has reflected the people unshakable trust in electoral process. Talking to APP, he said that decision of voters needs to be respected and the majority party may be given chance to form Govt and implement its manifesto.

Professor Hilali said that young voters have played a significant role in deciding fate of the contesting candidates during 2024 election. He said that constitution and election laws were very clear that the independent candidates must join a political party within the specified period to enjoy perks and privileges besides reserved seats for benefits of people and democracy.

PTI backed candidates gain ground in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The independent candidates backed by Pakistan Tahrir e Insaf has gained ground during election 2024 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where veteran politicians and Chairman Qumi Watan Party, Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao, Provincial President of Awami National Party Aimal Wali Khan, Pakistan Tahrir e Insaf Parliamentarians Chairman, Perviz Khattak and former Chief Minister Ameer Haider Hoti had lost in their respective national assembly constituencies.

According to results issued by Retuning Officers, independent can-

didate and former senior minister Muhammad Atif Khan has won NA 22 Mardan II with 114,748 votes, defeating Ameer Haider Hoti who bagged 66,159 votes while former MNA Anwar Taj regained NA 23 Charsadda-I after defeating Aftab Sherpao who secured 34,415 votes.

On NA 24 Charsadda-II, Aimal Wali who bagged 67,876 votes has been defeated by PTI backed independent candidate Fazal Muhammad Khan who secured 100,713 votes respectively. Similarly, former speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser who contested election as independent candidate with 115,635 votes retained his native NA 19 Swabi-I

defeating JUIF Fazal Haqqani who bagged 45,567 votes respectively.

The political stalwarts that lost election 2024 including PTI Parliamentarians Chairman Perviz Khattak on NA-23 Nowshera-I and former Environment Minister Wajid Ali Khan at Swat. PTI backed candidate and former MNA Ali Muhammad Khan has also won NA 23 Mardan after securing 102,175 votes and independent Shandana Gulzar secured victory at NA 30 Peshawar defeating former MNA Nasir Musazai of JUIF. PTI backed candidate and former MNA Amir Ayub has also won election at his native constituency at Peshawar.

JUI candidate Akram Khan Durrani wins PK-102

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam candidate Akram Khan Durrani won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-102 Bannu-IV by securing 39,061 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer/ECP, his runner-up was an Independent candidate Malik Adnan Khan who bagged 35,825 votes. Voters' turn-out remained at 42.74 per cent.

JUI candidate Lutf-ur-Rehman wins PK-114 election: Jamiat-e-Ulema islam Pakistan's candidate Lutf-ur-Rehman has won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-114, D.I.Khan-IV constituency by securing 30,291 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer, his runner-up was the candidate of Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian (PPPP), Qaizar Khan who bagged 27,606 votes. Overall voters' turn-out remained 57.77 percent, in this constituency.

PPPP candidate Karamat Ullah Khan wins PK-72 election: Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian (PPPP) candidate Karamat Ullah Khan won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-72, Peshawar-I by securing 18,527 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer/ECP, his runner-up was an independent candidate Mehmood Khan who bagged 14,332 votes. Overall voters' turn-out remained 37.13 per cent.

ANP candidate Arbab Muhammad Usman Khan wins PK-71: Awami National Party (ANP) Candidate Arbab Muhammad Usman Khan won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-71 Peshawar-IV by securing 44,564 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer/ECP, his runner-up was an Independent candidate Malik Shahab Hussain who bagged 26,126 votes. Voters' turn-out remained at 64.00 per cent.

PTI-P candidate Arbab Muhammad Wasim Khan wins PK-73: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarian (PTI-P) candidate Arbab Muhammad Wasim Khan won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-73 Peshawar-II by securing 21,949 votes.

Independent candidate Tariq Saeed wins PK-107

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Independent Candidate Tariq Saeed won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-107, Lakki Marwat-III by securing 34,400 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer/ECP, his runner-up was Jamiat-e-Ulema islam Pakistan (JUI) candidate Muhammad Fawad Raza who bagged 21,679 votes. Voters' turn-out remained at 46.61 per cent.

Independent candidate Waqar Anwar wins PK-90: Independent candidate Waqar Anwar, has won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-90, Kohat-I constituency by securing 57,573 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer, his runner-up was an Independent candidate Aftab Alam Afridi who bagged 41,043 votes. Overall voters' turn-out remained 38.06 percent, in this constituency.

Independent candidate Hisham Inamullah Khan wins PK-106: Independent candidate Hashim Inamullah

Khan won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-106 Lakki Marwat-II by securing 32,268 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer/ECP, his runner-up was an Independent candidate Noor Salim Malik who bagged 26,900 votes. Over-all voters' turn-out remained at 46.61 per cent.

Independent candidate Muhammad Usman wins PK-108 election: Independent candidate Muhammad Usman, has won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-108, Tank constituency by securing 42,611 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer, his runner-up was the candidate of Jamiat-e-Ulema islam Pakistan, Mehmood Ahmed Khan who bagged 30,770 votes. Overall voters' turn-out remained 39.18 percent.

Independent candidate Muhammad Idrees wins PK-86: Independent candidate Muhammad Idrees won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Assembly election from PK-86, Nowshera-II by securing 38,030 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer/ECP, his runner-up was Awami National Party candidate Masood Abbas who bagged 12,860 votes. Voters' turn-out remained at 47.63 per cent.

Independent candidate Muhammad Riaz wins PK-33 election: An Independent candidate Muhammad Riaz, has won Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-33, Kolai Palas Kohistan by securing 7,118 votes.

According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer, his runner-up was the candidate of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (JUI) Muhammad Asmatullah who bagged 4,951 votes. Overall voters turn-out remained 45.32 per cent.

Independent candidate Abdul Ghani wins PK-71 election: Independent candidate Abdul Ghani won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election from PK-71, Khyber-III by securing 15,061 votes.



PESHAWAR: Supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf holding a protest outside Election Commission office.

Faiq calls for early formation of govt to resolve issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Faiq Shah, founder and chairman of the Amun Taraqqi Party while commenting about the outcome of election 2024, said that it is a dire need of the hour that all parties should accept election results and form a government to solve the issues.

Chairing a meeting here at the party central secretariat on Friday, Shah said the country cannot afford anymore crisis situations. He urged political parties to accept election results to remove uncertainty and to strengthen democracy and address public issues. The party leader said poor people are erasing owing to rising inflation, injustice, poverty, lawlessness and unemployment.

He stressed that concrete steps should be taken to put the country on

a path of sustainable progress. According to unofficial results, independents, which have once again opened the door for those who previously remained active buying and selling business, the ATP chief remarked. He added the 'sale' of independent winners has begun and their 'buyers' have reached Islamabad.

The ATP chairman said elections have become a tradition of wealth, pressure, rigging and use of power. He made these results won't bring political stability in the country, Faiq lauded the central and provincial interim governments, election commission and law enforcement agencies relevant for smooth conduct of election processes across the country.

However, he condemned the occurrence of unpleasant incidents,

clashes between political workers and mismanagement. Shah once again demanded the formation of a joint board of wisdom and honesty (BWH) in which parliament, judiciary, military, administration, media, traders and industrialists, think tanks along with public segments, social activists and young people.

He said the joint board would only remove the corruption, politics-based on personality and personal interests and tug of war for gaining power. The ATP chief said the board will frame concrete policies and would ensure their implementation and hold accountability of all. In the prevailing scenario, he noted that the whole system, economy and society have adversely affected, which would put them in the right direction with unified efforts and under a single platform.



In brief

PTI backed candidates' clean sweeps Khyber F.P. Report

JAMRUD: As per unofficial result one National Assembly (NA-27) and three Provincial Assembly seats (PK-69, PK-70 and PK-70) have been won by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supported independent candidates. The result provided by district Returning Officer, PTI supported independent candidate Iqbal Afridi got 85514 votes while his nearest opponent Shah Jee Gul Afridi of Pakistan Muslim League, Nawaz (PML-N) received 18832 votes and thus Iqbal Afridi was announced to succeed on the seat. In PK-69 independent candidate Muhammad Adnan Qadri got 25596 votes while Shafiq Sher Afridi of PML-N remained runner-up by receiving 10095 votes. Similarly, in PK-71 independent candidate, Sohail Afridi bagged 31649 votes as Bilawal Afridi of PML-N secured 7401 votes. Likewise, in PK-71 Abdul Ghani was declared successful by securing 15061 votes whereas Khan Wali of Jamaat-e-Islami got second position by getting 7903 votes. A total of 638743 (349121 male and 289623 female) had been registered in the district Khyber.

Ex-FM Ijaz faces defeat

NANKANA SAHIB (INP): Former foreign minister Ijaz Shah defeated by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate in NA-112 general elections. According to unofficial results issued by ROs and ECP, Ijaz Shah contesting as independent candidate secured 93,316 votes. PML-N candidate from the constituency Shezra Mansab Kharaal got 105646 votes and stood victorious.

Pervez Khattak loses NA-33 seat F.P. Report

NOWSHERA: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P) president Pervez Khattak, who parted ways from Imran Khan-led party, has lost from Nowshera's NA-33 seat. According to unofficial results received from all polling stations, PTI-backed independent candidate Shahid Ahad Khattak won NA-33 seat by securing 90,145 votes. Meanwhile, Pervez Khattak managed to get just 25,258 - showing a major difference in votes. It is pertinent to mention here that former defence minister Pervez Khattak launched a new political party under the name of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Parliamentarians. Khattak who was expelled from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) over his statement against the party chief, announced his new political party. A day-long polling process concluded on Thursday for the General Election 2024 overall in a peaceful manner, with active participation from all age group voters who came out in droves to elect candidates of their choice.

Aimal Wali defeated F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Awami National Party (ANP) candidate for NA-25 Charsadda, Aimal Wali Khan was defeated with huge margin in general election. According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer/ECP, Aimal Wali Khan was defeated by the independent candidate. The son of ANP's chief secured 67,876 votes while his rival Fazal Khan stood victorious by securing over one hundred thousand votes.



FAISALABAD: Irrigation department worker cleaning Rakh Branch canal with the help of caterpillar during canal cleaning campaign.

Barrister Gohar elected from Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: The candidates supported by Tehreek-e-Insaf have won all seats in Buner NA10 and Provincial Assemblies seats PK 25,26,27 Buner. The PTI central Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has been elected MNA from NA-10. Former advisor to Chief Minister Riaz Khan has been re-elected from PK 25, the candidate supported by Tehreek-e-Insaf, ex-chairman DDAC Syed Fakhr Jahan Bacha has been re-elected and from PK-26, Abdul Kabir Khan Advocate of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has won for the first time from PK 27 and has been elected MPA.

From National Assembly seat NA-10, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Central Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan has been declared successful by getting 110,023 votes and ANP's Abdul Rauf Khan, who participated for the fourth time, has secured the second position by getting 30,302 votes, while Jamaat-e-Islami's Former Speaker Assembly Bakht Jahan Khan has secured the third position by getting 26106 votes.

From constituency PK 25 of Buner Riaz Khan, supported by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, has been declared successful by getting 28,490 votes, and former MPA of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Mufti Fazal Ghafoor, has secured the second position by getting 12,702 votes while ANP candidate Afsar Khan has secured the third position by getting 11878 votes.

From PK 26, Syed Fakhr Jahan Bacha has won by getting 26782 votes



and Nasir Ali of Jamaat-e-Islami has got the second position by getting 15216 votes while former MPA of Awami National Party Qaiser Wali Khan has got the third position by getting 12002 votes. From PK 27, the candidate supported by Tehreek-e-Insaf, Abdul Kabir Khan has been declared successful by getting 27,821 votes and Sardar Hussain Babak, a three-time MPA of ANP, has secured the second position by getting 15,439 votes, while Raj Wali of Jamaat-e-Islami has secured the third position by getting 8140 votes.

In celebration of the victory, PTI workers set off firecrackers throughout the night and celebrated by loud music of the party, running cars on the roads and reached the Hujra of the successful candidates in the night and danced on traditional Dol Surna. These tigers reached the Hujra early morning to greet the winners and celebrate the victory and this series of congratulations continued throughout the day till

night. On this occasion, MNA Barrister Gohar Khan, MPA Riaz Khan MPA, Syed Fakhr Jahan MPA Abdul Kabir Khan, while addressing the workers and talking to the media, has said that the governments will be formed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and the federal. We will give and forgive everyone and to work for the development, prosperity and peace of the country, to organize the institutions, the rule of law, the provision of justice and the supremacy of the parliament, the maturity and continuation of the democratic system and the prosperity of the people, the development of the country.

PTI's lawmakers added it will enact legislation for lasting peace and release Imran Khan from jail and further said that people will give more recognition to the democratic manner in which the people have avenged the oppression through the vote and give Pakistan a good place in the world.

5 including 3 brothers die in different mishaps

F.P. Report

SHAHADKOT: As a result of a head-on collision between a high-speed truck and a motorcycle on the Qamber-Larkana road near Bero Chandio, a suburb of Qamber-Shahdadkot district, two motorcyclists, 19-year-old Babar Buriro, were killed. And 38-year-old Yasin Buriro was crushed to death under the truck.

Police handed over the

bodies of the deceased youths to their relatives after post-mortem at the district headquarters hospital, Qambar, while the bodies of the deceased youths reached their homes. The scene of the doomsday was created while the police did not register the case of the deceased youth in the jail till the latest information.

Meanwhile, three Brothers, 17-year-old Abdul Majeed, 20-year-old Fazal

Muhammad, and 12-year-old Khamiso Khan, died after telling a poisonous story in village Nangar Jhateyal of Jhal Magasi. Speaking to the media on this occasion, Dr. Mansoor Ahmad Khoso, who conducted the postmortem, said that in the initial report, the death of the deceased brothers was caused by telling a poisonous story, and the matter is being investigated internally.



QUETTA: Leaders of various political parties holding a press conference against alleged alteration of election results.

Amir Muqam wins NA-11 elections, faces defeat from NA-2 F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) President, Amir Muqam won general elections from NA-11 Shangla while have to face defeat from NA-2 Swat-I.

As per unofficial results of all 346 polling stations of NA-11 Shangla issued by ROs and ECP, Amir Muqam stood victorious by securing 59,863 votes while Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent candidate Syed Fareen managed to get 54,311 votes.

According to unofficial results of all 341 polling stations of NA-2 Swat-I, Amir Muqam was defeated as he secured 37,764 votes while independent candidate Amjad Ali Khan won the election by securing 88,938 votes.

Three killed, girl injured in accident

MULTAN (APP): Three members of a family including a teenager were killed and a girl was injured after a motorcycle hit an oil tanker in Mianchannu, district Khanewal, on Friday.

The accident occurred near 35 Wali Canal, Mianwali Hotel in Mianchannu when the family was going somewhere. Zarina Bibi 42 wife of M Iqbal, Akhtar 47 s/o Ramzan and Iqra 16 d/o M Iqbal died on the spot as a result of the accident. Hira, a girl of the age of six years received minor injuries and was given first aid treatment by the rescuers. Dead bodies and the injured were residents of Chak 44/10-R, Khanewal.

People have rights to elects reps: MWM

QUETTA (PPI): Depriving people of their right to elect their representatives through ballot was the worst kind of dishonesty, therefore, Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen, Balochistan demands to conduct transparent inquiry into the maladministration and partiality of the staff of Election Commission of Pakistan and administration while conducting election in PB-42-Quetta.

These views were expressed by Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen, Balochistan's candidate from PB-42-Quetta Allama Hasnain while addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club here on Friday. He said that on the day of election, election process in most of the polling stations of PB-42-Quetta started very late, adding that incompetent and partial staff had been posted in the constituency by the Election Commission of Pakistan and district administration.

He said majority of female voters remained deprived of casting their votes owing to the reason that polling booths for female voters were very limited. Power outages during polling time in the constituency was the proof of the incompetency of Election Commission of Pakistan and district administration, said he, adding that most of the presiding officers of different polling stations of PB-42-Quetta refused to provide "Form 45" to the polling agents.

PTI retains all its previous seats in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Pakistan Tahreek Insaf backed independents returned victorious in six out of seven (two national and five provincial assembly) constituencies in the Lower Dir district. According to Forms-47 issued by the concerned returning officers here on Friday, the Jamaat-e-Islami won only one provincial assembly seat in the Lower Dir district, once considered as its stronghold in the country.

The JI chief Sirajul Haq, like 2018, again lost its seat from NA 6 against the PTI backed Muhammad Bashir Khan getting 76,259 votes. Siraj remained runner up with 52,545 votes. The ANP former MPA Haji Bahadar Khan got 11,080 votes, PPP's Muhammad Hanif 6497 votes, JUI-F's Muhammad Sher Khan 5,651 votes and PML-N's Rohullah got only 1,091 votes in this constituency. The turnout in NA 6 remained 34.59 per cent.

The PTI backed candidate former MNA Syed Mahboob Shah retained the NA 7 seat obtaining 84,843 votes against the JI's Muhammad Ismail's 31,133 votes. The PPP's Alam Zeb Khan got 20,346 votes, ANP Zahid Khan 16,096 votes, JUI-F Sirajud Din 13,941 votes, PML-N Yasir Khan got 4,170 votes on NA 7 Lower Dir-II. The turnout remained 42.66 per cent.

The PTI also retained four of the five provincial

assembly seats in the district. In PK 14, the PTI former MPA Azam Khan returned victorious by getting 31,200 votes against the JI's Sahibzada Yaqub Khan 16,552 votes. The ANP's Malik Muhammad Zeb got 7,948 votes, PPP Muhammad Zamin 7,027 votes, PML-N Malik Muhammad Numan 2,375 votes, JUI-F Faridullah 2,081 votes and the PTI-P Brigadier retired Saeedullah bagged only 1,099 votes. The turnout remained 39.24 per cent in this constituency.

In PK 15, the PTI former MPA Humayun Khan retained his seat who got 31,346 votes against the PPP Naemullah 14,591 votes. The JI Azizullah Khan got 9,953 votes, JUI-F Imran Khan got 7,148 votes, PML-N Zaidullah Khan bagged 5,439 votes, ANP Wasil Khan got 2,885 votes and QWP Imran Khan got only 906 votes in this constituency. The turnout remained 43.12 per cent.

In PK 16, the PTI former MPA Shafiullah retained his seat by getting 31,208 votes against the JI candidate Shad Nawaz Khan who bagged 11,525 votes. The PPP Kamran Zeb got 10,553 votes, JUI-F Maulana Nabi Shah got 9,590 votes, PTI-P Muzafar Syed got 6,318 votes, ANP Sajjad Ahmad bagged 4,248 votes and PML-N Muhammad Sajid got only 449 votes in the constituency. The turnout remained 44.52 per cent.

In PK 17, the JI district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari returned victorious by getting 25,124 votes against the PTI Ubaidur Rehman who bagged 22,981 votes. The ANP former MPA and district president Haji Bahadar met an upset who bagged only 10,878 votes, JUI-F Ibadullah got 4,855 votes, PTI-P Nazir Khan got 936 votes and PPP Kifayatullah bagged only 727 votes. The turnout remained 39.75 per cent in PK 17.

In PK 18, the PTI backed former MPA Liaqat Ali Khan retained his seat by getting 24,625 votes against the JI Saeed Gul's 16,059 votes. Another PTI disgruntled activist Malik Abdullah Shah got 4,194 votes, PPP Wazir Zada 2,214 votes, ANP Mubarak Shah 1,852 votes and PML-N Muhammad Zaman got only 229 votes. The turnout in this constituency remained 31.15 per cent.

In Upper Dir the PTI won all the four seats including NA 5, PK 11, PK 12 and PK 13. In PK 13 Upper Dir, in a major upset the PTI backed candidate Muhammad Anwar Khan defeated the JI former parliamentary leader and senior minister Inayatullah Khan who got 25,457 votes. Mr Anwar Khan got 32,043 votes, PPP's Arifullah Khan bagged 12,238 votes, JUI-F Ihsanullah got 4,254 votes and PML-N Muhammad Nisar Khan got only 525 votes in this constituency. The turnout remained 39.84 per cent.

Rally organized in Muzaffarabad

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A rally was organized, on Friday, in Muzaffarabad under the auspices of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir to pay tributes to Shaheed Muhammad Afzal Gaur and Shaheed Muhammad Maqbool Butt on their martyrdom anniversaries.

According to Kashmir Media Service, a large number of people gathered at Shaheed Afzal Guru Chowk in Muzaffarabad and marched on the Srinagar highway. They raised high-pitched slogans against India and in favour of freedom.

The speakers, addressing the participants of the rally,

said Muhammad Afzal Guru, Muhammad Maqbool Butt and other lakhs of martyrs are real heroes of Kashmiris. They said India can never weaken the freedom struggle of Kashmiris by executions, fake arrests and the worst use of black laws. India cannot suppress the freedom spirit of Kashmiris by committing the worst kind of human rights violations in the territory.

The speakers also paid tribute to martyrs Syed Ali Gilani, Molvi Mohammad Farooq, Burhan Muzaffar Wani, Shamsul Haque, Ahmed Hassan, Zakir Rashid Musa, Zia Mustafa, Sajjad Afghani, Riaz Naiko

and lakhs of others. Pasban-e-Hurriyat Chairman Uzair Ahmed Ghazali, Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Usman Ali Hashim, Syed Shoaib Shah, Pirzada Sultan, Syed Asif Gilani, Qazi Muhammad Khushal, Muhammad Ismail Jagwal, Syed Mahmood Shah, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, Muhammad Yousuf, Faisal Farooq, Muhammad Fayaz Khan and others also participated in the rally.

India executed Muhammad Afzal Guru on February 9, 2013 and Muhammad Maqbool Bhatt on February 11, 1984 in the infamous Tihar Jail of New Delhi and buried their bodies in premises of the prison.



FAISALABAD: Labourers busy in construction of Abdullah Pur Jhumra Road Flyover during development work in the city.

PPP registers clean sweep in Thatta and Sujawal

F.P. Report

THATTA: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) went on to register clean sweep in Thatta and Sujawal districts after it all candidates emerged victorious in both the district. As per the provisional results received from district returning officer PPP candidate for NA: 225 Thatta Sadiq Ali Memon who replaced his mother as candidate for this constituency toppled his opponents by securing 1,40,773, while Rasool Bux Jakhro of Pakistan Muslim League (N) stood second and could only muster 28,899 votes.

Haji Ali Hassan Zardari PPP candidate for PS-76

once again won the seat comprising coastal areas of the district with a landslide margin. Zardari acquired 71,408 votes while TLP candidate Altaf Katch could only receive 4,812 votes. The candidate of Pakistan People's Party Riaz Hussain Shah Shirazi son of veteran politician Aijaz Shah Shirazi, smoothly crossed the winning line by obtaining 80,744 votes, while JUI-F candidate could only gather 6,595 votes.

People of Sujawal also lived up to the expectations of PPP candidates and voted them wholeheartedly. Maintaining the record of remaining unbeatable Ayaz Shah Shirazi of PPP for NA:

224 garnered 1,33,530 votes. His opponent veteran JUI-F leader Muhammad Saleh grabbed 15,114 votes.

Coastal constituency of district PS: 74 once again went to PPP following landslide victory of Muhammad Ali Malkani with a formidable score of 83,600 votes. Independent candidate stood way behind him with 14,103 votes. Shah Hussain Shah Shirazi of PPP also registered remarkable victory with 72,942. The polling process ended across district peacefully except few incidents of heated arguments reported from Tarr Khowaja, Patel Ismail, Faiz Muhammad Jat and a polling station of Jati town of district Sujawal.



Xi and Putin accuse US of ‘interference’ in call



BEIJING (AFP): Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin accused the United States of "interfering" in their countries' affairs during a telephone call, the Kremlin said. The West has viewed Moscow and Beijing, both of whom are seeking to expand their global influence, with increased anxiety over the past two years as they ramp up ties in trade and defence.

Xi and Putin denounced the "US policy of interfering in the internal affairs of other states" during an hour-long call, the Kremlin said. "The leaders of the two countries realise that the US is practically implementing a policy of double containment, (toward) both Russia and China," Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said. Moscow has looked to Beijing as a crucial economic lifeline since the West hit Russia with unprecedented sanctions over its military assault on Ukraine.

China has meanwhile benefited from cheap Russian energy imports and access to vast natural resources, including steady gas shipments via the Power of Siberia pipeline. Trade between the two countries has surged in the last two years, hitting \$240.1 billion in 2023 -- a 26 percent annual increase -- according to Chinese customs data.

Beijing and Moscow declared a "no limits" partnership days before Russia

launched its full-scale military assault on Ukraine, and the two have expanded ties even as most Western countries turned their back on Moscow. China has itself been criticised, notably by the United States, over a number of thorny issues, including increasingly belligerent behaviour toward self-ruled democratic Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its territory.

"In discussing the situation in the Asia-Pacific region, the Russian President reaffirmed his principled position on the Taiwan issue, which is to support the 'one China' policy," the Kremlin said in its statement about the call. Xi said the two "should closely collaborate strategically, defend the sovereignty, security and development interests of their respective countries, and resolutely oppose interference in internal affairs by external forces", according to a readout from Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.

The Chinese leader also wished Putin well in his coming presidential election, according to the Kremlin. "Xi said he knows that Russia is now in the midst of an election campaign and wished the upcoming elections in March to be successful," Ushakov said. Putin, who has faced isolation from most Western countries over the conflict in Ukraine, met with Xi in a rare trip abroad to Beijing last October.

North Korea welcomes Russian tourists

SEOUL (AP): A group of Russian tourists arrived in North Korea on Friday, likely the first from any country to enter the isolated state since the pandemic. The tour underscores deepening cooperation between the two countries following a meeting last September between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin at a cosmodrome in Russia's Far East.

Many Russians now struggle to travel to Europe and the United States because of sanctions applied to Russia after its invasion of Ukraine. In October, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said he would recommend North Korea as a vacation destination. South Korea's government said it has no record of North Korean state media reporting on tourists entering the country since the COVID-19 pandemic. The tour group will visit the capital, Pyongyang, and then go skiing, said Inna Mukhina, the general director of the Vostok Intur agency, which is running the tour. Vladivostok airport's online timetable shows an Air Koryo plane took off for Pyongyang at 1:39 p.m. local time Friday.

The group left from Vladivostok airport in Russia's Far East. Mukhina said there were "lots" of people who wanted to come on the tour, adding that the group contains travelers from places across Russia including Moscow and St. Petersburg as well as the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, sandwiched in between Poland and Lithuania. The group also includes children who study skiing at a Russian school that aims to create Olympic champions, she

said. The Russians' reasons for visiting North Korea vary, Mukhina said, suggesting some people are interested in the opportunity to visit a closed country, while others are more interested in skiing and snowboarding.

"We love skiing," Galina Polevshchikova told the AP at Vladivostok airport shortly before getting on the flight to Pyongyang. "I really want to go there because it's probably the most closed place where you have the opportunity to do this." The group is not a traditional tourist group, but "a test tour delegation" that could pave the way for other Russian tourists, Mukhina said.

The trip was a surprise to Asia observers, who had expected the first post-pandemic tourists to North Korea to come from China, the North's biggest diplomatic ally and economic pipeline. According to a Tass report published in January, the group of tourists will visit monuments in Pyongyang such as the "Tower of Juche Idea," named after North Korea's guiding philosophy of juche, or self-reliance. The tourists will then travel on to Masik Pass on the east coast, where the country's most modern ski resort is located, Tass said.

"In (Masik Pass), you will find yourself in a real paradise for winter sports lovers!" the Vostok Intur agency's website gushes. "Here you will find incredible slopes with different levels of difficulty that will satisfy the needs of both experienced skiers and beginners." The tour costs \$750 per person, according to Tass and the tour agency.

Tass reported that the trip was arranged under an

agreement reached between Oleg Kozhemyako, governor of the Primorye region, and North Korean authorities. Kozhemyako traveled to Pyongyang in December for talks on boosting economic ties as part of a flurry of bilateral exchanges since the Kim-Putin summit. Ahead of the trip, he told Russian media he expected to discuss tourism, agriculture and trade cooperation.

The expanding ties between North Korea and Russia come as both are locked in separate confrontations with the United States and its allies — North Korea over its advancing nuclear program, and Russia over its protracted war with Ukraine. The Kim-Putin summit deepened global suspicions that North Korea is supplying conventional arms to Russia for its war in Ukraine in return for high-tech Russian weapons technologies and other support.

North Korea has been slowly easing pandemic-era curbs and opening its international borders as part of its efforts to revive its economy, which has been devastated by the lockdown and by persistent US-led sanctions. In August, South Korea's spy service told lawmakers that North Korea's economy shrank each year from 2020 to 2022, and that its gross domestic product last year was 12% less than in 2016. Chinese travelers accounted for about 90% of the foreign visitors to North Korea before the pandemic. In 2019, a record number of about 300,000 foreign tourists visited North Korea, resulting in North Korea earning between \$90 million and \$150 million, according to analysts' assessments.

will receive modern weapons to confront powerful drug trafficking gangs that have the country in a chokehold.

"We assume that such a reckless decision was taken by the Ecuadoran side under strong pressure from external interested parties," Russian spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said last week. She said Quito was contractually obliged "not to transfer (this equipment) to a third party" without Russia's agreement.

Philippines says joint exercises held with US

MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines and the United States conducted joint maritime exercises in the South China Sea on Friday, the Philippine military said, the latest round of drills underlining ongoing expansion of their defence ties.

Security engagements between the treaty allies have soared in the past year, at a time of tension in the South China Sea, where the Philippines and China have traded blame over a spate of run-ins over territory. It was the third time the Philippines and former colonial ruler the United States have held joint exercises in the South China Sea since November last year, moves that have frustrated Beijing, which objects to what it sees as US interference in its backyard.

"It demonstrates our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, and foster close cooperation towards further enhancing our maritime capabilities," Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief Romeo Brawner said in a statement. China claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of commercial shipping annually, including parts of the exclusive economic zones of the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei. It has policed those claims with a vast coast-guard fleet that the Philippines has accused of hostile intentions and actions that are against international law. China says it is protecting its territory.

A portrait of him smiling and flashing the peace sign was spray-painted on walls after the liberation of the southern city of Kherson, under the slogan "God and Zaluzhnyi are with us". Since then, Ukraine's battle-

UN chief for more help to Sudan

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The United Nations chief urged the international community to mobilize and do everything possible to stop the war in Sudan, saying "what is happening is horrible."

Secretary-General António Guterres said there is no military solution to the conflict between forces supporting rival generals that began in mid-April 2023, and he stressed that continued fighting "will not bring any solution so we must stop this as soon as possible." Guterres told a UN press conference that it's time for the warring rivals — Sudan's military, Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo — to start talking about ending the conflict, which has killed at least 12,000 people and sent over 7 million fleeing their homes.

The UN is working with the regional group IGAD, the African Union and the Arab League, and Guterres expressed hope he will meet with them at the upcoming AU summit on Feb. 17-18 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, "to see how we can converge our efforts to bring these two generals to the table" and achieve a ceasefire and create conditions to get humanitarian aid into Sudan for people in "desperate condition."

UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths told a news conference in Geneva that the rival generals assured him very recently they would attend a meeting in Switzerland to discuss humanitarian issues and Sudan's beleaguered civilians. "I'm still waiting to see when that happens," Griffiths said.

Sudan plunged into chaos last April with street battles between the generals' rival forces in the capital, Khartoum, that spread to other areas. Western Darfur, which was wracked by bloodshed and atrocities in 2003, has been an epicenter of the current conflict, an arena of ethnic violence where paramilitary troops and allied Arab militias have been attacking African ethnic groups. In 2005, the Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court, which is charged under the Rome Statute that established the tribunal with investigating and prosecuting the world's worst atrocities — war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide — and the crime of aggression.

Ukraine’s popular ‘Iron General’ replaced as war grinds on

KYIV (Reuters): Ukrainian armed forces commander General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, who was replaced, became a national hero for repelling Moscow's invading forces two years ago but suffered battlefield setbacks as the war ground on.

The move ends intense speculation over his fate after reported frictions between him and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, whose authority will be tested as he seeks to rally troops under a new army chief and change the dynamic of the war. Ukrainian forces are struggling after a counteroffensive launched last June made little headway in the south and east, while Russian forces are inflicting small but costly defeats at several points along the 1,000-km (620-mile) front.

Western military and financial support is no longer guaranteed, leaving Kyiv more exposed to attacks by Russian drones and missiles that are sapping Ukrainian resources. Given Zaluzhnyi's popularity and proven ability as an inspiring commander, the fact that Zelenskyy is replacing him may reflect the desire for a new approach on the battlefield.

In an opinion piece published by CNN on Feb. 1, Zaluzhnyi repeated his view that Ukraine could compete with Russia's much bigger army only through technological innovation including drones and other advanced weaponry. He also criticised state institutions for failing to push through unpopular legislation that would reform the way Ukrainians are mobilised to fight, amid a shortage of soldiers and growing exhaustion among those already serving.

Defying the odds, Ukraine's soldiers used stealth and speed to thwart Russia's advance on Kyiv in February, 2022, helping to ensure that, even now, Russian President Vladimir Putin remains a long way from conquering Ukraine. As the war progressed, Zaluzhnyi's stock rose, and he won praise at home and abroad when his forces launched counteroffensives in the northeast and south that recaptured swathes of land and raised hopes of an unlikely victory.

A portrait of him smiling and flashing the peace sign was spray-painted on walls after the liberation of the southern city of Kherson, under the slogan "God and Zaluzhnyi are with us". Since then, Ukraine's battle-



field momentum has stalled, yet polling indicated that Zaluzhnyi was still trusted by 92% of Ukrainians late last year, significantly above Zelenskyy's 77%.

Reported frictions between the two men burst into the open in November after Zaluzhnyi was quoted by the Economist as saying the war as at a "stalemate", a gloomy assessment that jarred with Zelenskyy's more optimistic vision. The 50-year-old four-star general, who rarely speaks in public but is occasionally shown on news bulletins poring over maps and addressing commanders in fatigues, said then too that better technology was the key to breaking the impasse.

The president's office rebuked him, and one of Zaluzhnyi's senior officers said he had been sacked by Zelenskyy over the general's head. Were he to go into politics - though he has never voiced political ambitions - the "Iron General" could prove a formidable force. Zaluzhnyi began his military training in the 1990s, after Ukraine gained independence from the Soviet Union, graduating with honours and rising up the ranks.

He got a taste of real conflict in 2014 when he served in an area of eastern Ukraine where Russian-backed militants had seized territory. Tall and burly with cropped hair, Zaluzhnyi, whose military call sign is "Volunteer", has a reputation for hav-

ing a good rapport with his subordinates and allowing local commanders to make their own decisions on the battlefield. His warning in November that the war was sliding into an attritional phase that suited Russia was out of kilter with Kyiv's official rhetoric, but for many of his soldiers it was recognition of the painful reality on the battlefield.

Russia had been building up fortifications since late 2022 after suffering humiliating defeats in the Kharkiv and Kherson regions, with more recent Ukrainian advances thwarted. Tens of thousands of soldiers have been killed and wounded on both sides, although there are no reliable official figures. Ukraine desperately needs to replenish its overstretched and exhausted ranks but the government has been unable to amend call-up laws to help recruit up to half a million more soldiers.

Kyiv has also struggled to maintain Western support that has been vital to its war effort. The United States has failed to deliver a hefty aid package it had promised, although, in a boost for Ukraine, the European Union agreed to extend \$54 billion in new support, overcoming weeks of resistance from Hungary. Even so, as the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War Two enters its third year, Zaluzhnyi's boots will be hard to fill.

NATO allies warn Hungary not to hold up Sweden’s membership

BRUSSELS (AP): US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said that he and his NATO counterparts cautioned Hungary against further delaying Sweden's membership in the military alliance, and he warned that patience in Washington has its limits.

Lawmakers from the party of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán boycotted an emergency session of parliament where a vote was scheduled to place Sweden's bid to join NATO on the legislative agenda, adding to 18 months of delays that have angered Hungary's allies. The governing Fidesz party, which holds an absolute majority in Hungary's parliament, has stalled Sweden's bid since July 2022, alleging that Swedish politicians have told "blatant lies" about the state of Hungarian democracy. The party insists that Sweden's prime minister must come to Hungary first.

"We heard security adviser after security adviser say that it's past time for Sweden to get in, and to directly address the representative from Hungary," Sullivan told reporters after a meeting of the organization's top security officials at NATO headquarters in Brussels. Sullivan said that he and his colleagues had impressed upon Hungary that "it's a matter of credibility and obligation that they take the necessary steps" to complete the parliamentary procedures to ratify Sweden's accession.

Sweden, along with neighboring Finland, set aside decades of military nonalignment to seek protection under NATO's collective security umbrella after Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. Finland has since joined the trans-Atlantic alliance. The country, along with the other 30 allies, must all agree that Sweden should stand among NATO's ranks.

Hungary is the only member standing in its way.

Sullivan said that he wouldn't "stand here today and make particular threats, or speculation about steps that we would take down the road, but of course our patience on this can't be unlimited either." He said the US will "continue to watch it carefully, but hope that there is a constructive resolution to this issue in the very near term."

Orbán, who has broken ranks with NATO allies by adopting a Kremlin-friendly stance toward Russia's war in Ukraine, has said that he invited Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson to Budapest to discuss "future cooperation in the field of security and defense as allies and partners." Unless another emergency session of Hungary's parliament is called to debate Sweden's bid, the assembly is due to sit for its regular session on Feb. 26.

‘We’re waiting to be martyred’: Palestinians await Israeli attack

RAFAH: Seham al-Najjar and her family have nowhere else to run if Israel intensifies its assault on Rafah, a town in southernmost Gaza. Like 1.8 million people, Seham fled to Rafah in search of relative safety from Israel's relentless bombardment and ground invasion in other parts of the Gaza Strip. She arrived weeks ago with 20 members of her family from Khan Younis, a city that Israel designated as "safe" at the start of the war and then reduced to rubble in December. Seham fears that Rafah could suffer an even worse fate.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants to take this area from [Palestinians] and give it to the Zionists," Seham, 30, told Al Jazeera. "Nowhere in Gaza is safe." Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in Rafah are bracing for an Israeli onslaught that could add to the long list of atrocities committed in Gaza, according to rights groups and United Nations agencies.

They said Israel has deliberately and disproportionately targeted civilians in Gaza in retaliation for Hamas's surprise attack on Israeli communities and military outposts on October 7, in which 1,139 people were killed and 240 taken as captives into Gaza by fighters from the Qassam Brigades and other armed Palestinian groups. Israel has responded by killing 27,000 Palestinians and injuring more than 66,000 in attacks that have reduced most of Gaza to rubble, including homes, hospitals, museums and universities.

The carnage has killed more than 1 percent of Gaza's population in just four months, prompting the International Court of Justice to warn last month that genocide is "plausible" in Gaza. The UN says "every-

thing must be done" to halt a planned offensive on Rafah, but Israel has disregarded the concerns and killed scores of people in the city already. "Gaza is one of the most densely populated places on Earth, and Rafah is now the most densely populated place in Gaza. Any sort of military campaign or air strike would amplify risks of disproportionate attacks," said Omar Shaki, the Israel-Palestine director at Human Rights Watch.

Feryal al-Najjar, 42, said she fears her son and six daughters could die at any moment. The family has been displaced multiple times since October 7, first fleeing their home in Jabalia refugee camp to Khan Younis, where they took shelter in a factory for a couple of months. With Khan Younis increasingly pounded by Israeli forces, they realised there was no safety to be had there, and they left for Rafah, where most of the displaced civilians are staying in schools and residential buildings or sleeping in tents pitched on cold streets. "This is the last place in Gaza... If they attack us here, then where else can we go?" Feryal asked. "We'll have to stay here and die."

Even if Israel delays its offensive on Rafah, thousands of civilians could die of starvation in Gaza. Most have little access to food or clean water due to Israel's policy of blocking the delivery of aid. Israel has also razed farm areas as part of what Human Rights Watch said is a broader policy of using starvation as a weapon of war — a war crime. "Every day for the last four months", Feryal said, "we heard news that there may be a possible ceasefire, but one never arrived."

"Now we need a ceasefire. Enough of this nonsense." Qatar, Egypt and the United States are working to bro-

ker a truce between Israel and Hamas, which would see an exchange of Israeli and Palestinian captives as well as the scaling-up of aid to the besieged enclave. Talks are ongoing, but a deal does not appear imminent. Netanyahu says Israel wants to control the Philadelphi Corridor, the strip of land on the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, to ensure that Hamas cannot smuggle weapons into Gaza.

But any operation to control that border may drive hundreds of thousands of Palestinians over the border into Egypt, according to Palestinians in Gaza and Egyptian officials. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has consistently been against "the dilution of the Palestinian cause" by driving Palestinians off their lands and leaving them to fight for their right of return as past generations of Palestinian refugees are doing. Egypt said Israel should allow Palestinians to return to northern Gaza before any sort of military operation begins in Rafah.

Cairo also warned that any attempt by Israel to control the Philadelphi Corridor risks upending the 1979 Camp David Accords, a peace deal between Egypt and Israel that demilitarised the border. "It's hard to anticipate what the next step is going to be [for Egypt] should such an Israeli attack [on Rafah] materialise," said an expert on Egypt, who requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject. "Egypt's agency is limited in this situation." Meanwhile, Seham is living with her fears that the world is going to allow Israel to commit massacres in Rafah. "We are waiting to be martyred," she said. "We know that wherever we go and whatever we do, we'll be killed." — Al Jazeera

Ecuador mulls sending Russian military ‘scrap’ to Ukraine

MOSCOW (AFP): Ecuador is weighing up sending its old Russian military equipment to the United States so that it can be transferred to Ukraine, a US official said in Quito. "I understand that the Ecuadoran government is still studying the issue," US Assistant Secretary of State for South America Kevin Sullivan said on local TV.

"This is an agreement aimed at transferring equipment to the Ukrainian government, which is fighting against the Russian inva-

sion of its territory," he added. President Daniel Noboa announced last month that Quito had agreed to exchange Russian military equipment that had become "scrap metal" for new US weapons worth around \$200 million. Ecuador will send six Russian military helicopters, long-range rocket launchers and air defense systems to the United States. Local media reports the equipment dates back to the 1990s.

In exchange, Ecuador

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Solarization, and energy management

THE Balochistan government, in collaboration with the Chinese government and private energy firms, has completed the solarization of 12 educational institutions, computer laboratories and hospitals that have been equipped with modern solar power facilities. According to the details, these projects have been launched under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and currently working at full capacity. Solar power is a cost-effective source of energy, with a wide range of uses and benefits. Solar panels convert sunlight directly into electricity, providing a renewable and clean source of power. It reduces carbon footprints, helps to mitigate climate change and reduces air pollution. It lowers countries' reliance on fossil fuels and imported energy sources. The solar industry creates jobs in manufacturing, installation, maintenance, and research, contributing to economic growth and financial stability.

Historically, energy-deficient and resource-ridden Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable nations to the worst effects of global climate change. A cheap, easily available and climate-friendly renewable energy source has been the dire need of the South Asian nation, that is not only available through sunlight or air wind, but could easily be used in coastal areas in Balochistan and Sindh. According to a report, Pakistan's total solar installed capacity was 1.24 GW by 2022, representing a 17 per cent increase in 2021. The government has implemented multiple initiatives with technical assistance from China and the Republic of Türkiye to increase the share of solar energy in the country. By now, Pakistan's Solar Energy Market is estimated to increase at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 49.68 per cent from 1.30 gigatonnes in 2023 to 9.77 gigatonnes in 2028. In the specific case of Balochistan province, Pakistan's total technical solar and wind potentials are 2,900 GW and 340 GW, respectively. According to a Chinese Economic Portal Assessment, Balochistan's geography, irradiance, and location make it one of Pakistan's most high-potential provinces, concerning renewables, with additional potential to implement greater than 14 GW of Renewable energy within the next 5-10 years.

Energy has been the most biting problem for Pakistan's economy in recent years, wherein the country experienced extensive load shedding, energy price hikes, and industrial and business collapse due to no availability or high prices of power. According to government statistics, the country's energy demand has exceeded 30,000 megawatts and the national electricity production remained around 23,900 megawatts. Over 7000 megawatts shortfall resulted in prolonged power outages and stopped the wheel of industry in the country. Under such a background, clean energy technology is the only viable option for Pakistan that can provide secure and sustainable energy solutions in the future.

Solar energy is currently attracting more capital investment than the traditional oil sector that ruled the global economy throughout the 20th century. As said an average of approximately USD 1 billion per day is being invested in the solar industry, exceeding investment in oil production for the first time in history. Previously, the Shehbaz-led PDM coalition government started work on the execution of 10,000 megawatts of solar energy projects to reduce the import bill, while thousands of tube wells and government buildings were shifted to solar energy. Pakistan stands at a crucial juncture, despite numerous challenges and scarcity of liquidity, the country owes mass natural reserves together with an abundance of water, sunlight, air and suitable geographical features coupled with technical and monetary support from friendly countries. The optimum efforts should be made to construct decentralized microgrids paired with solar energy plants to provide reliable electric power to households, businesses and industries to gradually shift the country's dependence from costly thermal power to renewable green energy. That is the only recipe to revive the national economy, end energy deficiency and provide relief to the public.

Haiti unceasing political unrest

HAITI'S Prime Minister Ariel Henry called upon the masses for calm, amid nationwide violent protests demanding his resignation from premiership. According to him, the time has arrived for all to put their heads together to save Haiti, to do things another way that are in the interest of the Haitian people.

Haiti, a poor Caribbean nation, has been in the grip of spiralling turmoil, lawlessness and chaos since the murder of politically elected President Moïse, who was shot dead cold-blooded in his official residence in the heart of the capital, Port-au-Prince. Since then, rifle-toting gangs have commanded up to 90% of Haiti's capital and there has been an explosion of killings, kidnappings and sexual violence turning much of the city into a no-go zone. Millions are struggling to eat, partly as a result of gang checkpoints blocking food supply routes, and captured water and fuel reservoirs. The masses became annoyed by persistent violence and a curfew-like life in their nation as a low-intensity war against peaceful and unarmed people is raging across the country.

Henry's recent sermon did little to appease the thousands of Haitians angry and frustrated over growing gang violence and deepening poverty with no general election in sight. The government was bound to hold elections and pass power to newly elected officials on February 7 this year but failed. A day after the deadline passed, Prime Minister Henry pledged to hold general elections as soon as the country's security issues were resolved. However, who knows how and when that miracle will happen in a crisis ridden country.

Previously, the Haitian people launched a self defense movement against the armed gangs with machetes, rocks and guns to protect themselves, their belongings and fundamental rights and gain access to basic necessities. The Haitian government has been requesting the UN over the past months, for the deployment of a UN-backed peacekeeping force to assist the government fight against rebels. Presently, no political party or community group is able to steer Haiti out of the prevailing crises but every other leader including rebels are ready to take over the government and rule the violence hit nation. In fact, the Haitian have paid a heavy price for the selfishness of their leaders, God knows when their issues would be resolved and they might live a peaceful life.

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Why Kremlin fiddling as Russia freezes

Andras Toth-Czifra

OVER the past few weeks, residents of several Russian regions have been hit hard by public utility outages, affecting power supplies and leaving people without heating in -20 degree Celsius weather. Understandably upset, citizens have made desperate appeals to President Vladimir Putin for help.

The problem may have been exacerbated by extremely cold winter weather. But service disruptions and accidents due to the chronic decay of public utilities have been a long-standing problem, as the investigative news outlet iStories described in detail last year. In 2023, even the deputy chair of the State Duma's committee in charge of housing and utilities noted that 80% of utility networks were in need of repair or replacement.

The actual number might be higher. In 2022 a government report identified large gaps in financing, stating that an additional 3% of utility networks were becoming accident-prone every year. At the same time, the pace of replacements has slowed, rather than gained pace, in recent years. Like many other public policy reforms in Russia, the modernization of utility networks has fallen victim to wishful thinking, corruption and political short-termism. Successive Russian governments have tried to reform the sector at least once a decade since the fall of the USSR. These efforts all failed to reach their objectives, as did an attempt to attract private investment over the past decade.

Similarly to the reform of waste management, which was started in 2019 on similar principles, many consumers were affected by rising prices for services that did not improve. Over the past two years, a state-stimulated construction boom and a forced trade pivot to Asian markets have likely strained these systems further. At the same time, there is less public money to spend on repairs and upgrades. True, regional expenditure on housing and utilities rose by more than 20% in the first nine months of 2023. But this happened after a series of protests triggered by poor service quality and high tariffs, suggesting that the issue can raise political risks. Furthermore, federal expenditure on housing and

utilities is expected to drop from 881 to 381 billion rubles (\$10.6 billion to \$4.3 billion) per year between 2024 and 2026.

Only a fragment of this money is specifically allocated for network repairs. Thus, in 2022, the government designed a new program to increase federal financing to modernize utility networks. 30 billion rubles were allocated for this purpose in 2023, with the promise of an additional 100 billion in 2024. Regions were asked to

be blamed for the problem.

Regional officials, who are mostly charged with keeping their provinces quiet and obedient, and the local elite under control, could put these problems off for a long time, as they did not lead to immediate problems. Most residents affected were poorer than average. Service degradation, while it led to deaths occasionally, was largely a gradual decline that most people could live with. In a characteristic move, however, Putin immediately

blame from the Kremlin to local actors to show that, whoever is at fault, it is definitely not Putin. Federal financing may decrease, but the Kremlin still expects regional governments to keep tabs on these problems, and act if they risk escalating political threats. Dagestan, where residents have been experiencing electricity disruptions for months - and where the government has increased funding, but also raised the prospect of stricter financial control - is a case in point.

The Kremlin's fear is likely not that people will suddenly become interested in the issue as it gradually worsens, but that due to continued negligence something truly terrible happens that lights a match under the undergrowth of quiet grievances. This happened with the 2018 fire at the Zimnyaya Vishnya shopping center in Kemerovo, which caused sixty deaths and sparked protests. Five years of stagnating incomes later, people have even more to grumble about. Most governors have little fiscal space to play with, and 2024 will deliver more modest growth in income tax revenues than before. Reacting to the recent disruptions, Kursk governor Roman Starovoit said his region would need to triple expenses with further federal money needed to fix public utilities.

Most regions are dealing with a growing number of conflicting priorities, from keeping local economies stable to financing reconstruction in the occupied territories of Ukraine. But Moscow is not looking to them to solve this problem, or any other systemic issues. The Kremlin simply expects governors to make sure that they remain manageable by acting when and where they expect trouble.

Experience suggests that governors will use the brief moment while the issue is on the Kremlin's radar to angle for additional funds. Law enforcement and the security services will be happy to look into corruption related to public utilities - and likely gain leverage over local actors in the process. Putin, for his part, will continue to talk about these issues sympathetically and chide federal and regional officials. Such turbulence does nothing more than reinforce the status quo - until something gives.

The Moscow Times

Most residents affected were poorer than average. Service degradation, while it led to deaths occasionally, was largely a gradual decline that most people could live with. In a characteristic move, however, Putin immediately went into crisis management mode when the problem reached the Moscow region. During the past week, after a heating main burst in a military production plant on the capital's outskirts, leaving thousands of apartments without heating.

design their own plans and apply to a central operator for financing. Many did so over the past year. But eventually, the program was cut. In Russia's war-focused federal budget, instead of 100 billion, the program will distribute a mere 12 billion in 2024, albeit the promises to raise these funds eventually remained. Even if one takes at face value the expectations that federal financing will be complemented by regional and "extra-budgetary" (private) money, this would hardly be enough to upgrade networks. In 2022, experts estimated that a complete upgrade would need more than 4 trillion rubles. This is not beyond the means of the Russian budget - it is less than the 4.75 trillion rubles that the government expects the reconstruction of the newly occupied territories in Ukraine will cost in the coming years - but with the rigid constraints placed on policymaking by the Kremlin's obsession with the war, it is unlikely that this money will be allocated

to the crisis management mode when the problem reached the Moscow region. During the past week, after a heating main burst in a military production plant on the capital's outskirts, leaving thousands of apartments without heating. The president ordered local officials to fix the situation and the plant to be nationalized. A deputy mayor and two corporate officials were arrested. Similarly, during a 2009 trip to Pikalyovo, Putin reacted to protests over the closure of local factories by ordering their reopening, publicly humiliated oligarch Oleg Deripaska in the process.

While 15 years later the theatrics are admittedly less impressive, the parallels show that while politicians may come and go, the core logic of Russia's crisis management - and by extension domestic policymaking - system remains the same. When an issue is too complex and widespread to easily fix, but also too obvious to ignore, the main purpose of the system is to shift the

What the West gets wrong on Stalin and Putin

Jade McGlynn

LAST month, a new 'Stalin Center' was opened in Barnaul, Siberia. Its aim, like its predecessors' in the Russian cities of Penza and Bor, is to glorify the Communist dictator. Alongside a marked increase in Stalin statues across Russia - more than 100 since 2012 - the Stalin centers appear to affirm a simplistic story: The Kremlin is rehabilitating the 'Vozhd', or great leader.

But deeper inspection complicates the story. The first Stalin cultural center opened in 2016, in the western Russian city of Penza, with the support of local Communists - but not Russian President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party.

The second such center, which opened in 2021 in Bor, also in the west of the country, was originally a private initiative by a local Communist businessman. It began with a statue of Stalin looming over the Volga River. The mayor of Bor even petitioned for its removal, albeit unsuccessfully.

And now the most recent center, in Barnaul. It was established by the Communists of Russia, a radical and marginal Stalinist party that is separate to the much larger pro-Kremlin Russian Communist Party. In other words, these centers, like many of the new Stalin monuments, are not Kremlin-imposed but rather grassroots or at least non-state initiatives. Perhaps this should not be surprising. According to the independent Levada Center, Stalin has taken first place in their 'who is the greatest figure of all times and all people' survey since 2012.

Of course, this favorable view is not uncontested. The Russian human rights organization Memorial worked tirelessly for over 30 years to document Soviet crimes, which were widely discussed during the Gorbachev and post-Soviet era. More recently, Russian journalist and YouTube star Yury Dud powerfully depicted the horrors and legacy of Stalinist Gulag forced labor camps in his 2019 documentary 'Kolyma: Birthplace of Our Fear.' The YouTube video has over 29 million views.

Putin's treatment of Stalin takes both of these stances into consideration. Rather than a glorification of the Communist dictator, he offers a somewhat equivocal view that strives to placate both pro- and anti-Stalin constituencies within Russian society. To do so, he glosses over but does not deny the large scale of the Communist dictator's terror and repressions. In 2017, Putin unveiled Russia's first monument to the victims of Stalin's repressions in Moscow: the 'Wall of Grief.' During the opening, he asserted: "We must never again push society to the dangerous precipice of division." Over his 24 years in power, Putin's rhetoric on Stalin has remained reasonably consistent. He does not deny Stalin's crimes but rather tries to divert attention away from them, admitting the horror of the Gulag and mass repressions but insisting that the memory of these crimes should not overshadow Stalinism's achievements. In his view, efforts to overly 'demonize' Stalin are part of an attack on Russia.

While Putin has shown little enthusiasm for glorifying Stalin, his government has worked methodically to silence, or at least render abstract, the memory of the

Gulag's victims. For example, the "Perm-36" memorial complex, Russia's only remaining intact Gulag, was taken over by local authorities in 2015. When it reopened, individual stories of the prisoners' lives were replaced by content celebrating the prison guards and the camp's contribution to timber production during World War II. Elsewhere, the 2021 shutdown of Memorial - which documented Soviet human rights abuses especially during the Great Terror - and the recent removal of 'last address' plaques marking victims sent to the Gulag, were almost certainly state-directed initiatives that seek to erase reminders of the human cost of Stalinist repressions.

However, their removal cannot be reduced to the question of Stalin's legacy alone - it can also be seen as an attempt to eliminate evidence of the crimes of the security services, in which Putin's career and power base are rooted. After all, thinking about the individual victims leads to thinking about the individual perpetrators. The erasure of personalized reminders of the Gulag and Terror must be contextualized within the Kremlin's use of history and myth to legitimate the Putinist regime. Russia's war on Ukraine, and the country's great power status. As the prosecutor at Memorial's liquidation trial in 2021 argued: "Memorial besmirches our history. It forces us - a generation of victors and the heirs of victors - to justify our history." The prosecutor's comments reveal not an ignorance of the dark spots of history but a desire to ignore them. There are obvious parallels with the present day, when many Russians are trying hard to ignore the devastating war their country is waging on neighboring Ukraine.

Likewise, if one argues that Putin is the only driving force behind Stalin's rehabilitation, then one can also continue the fantasy that, if it weren't for Putin, Russians would embrace Westernized liberal democracy and stop justifying the sacrifice of thousands of lives for the whims of the state. These assumptions are flawed and lacking in nuance, no matter how comforting such a shallow understanding of Russian society might be. The Western tendency to reduce mass-scale crime to an omnipotent leader has always been a misleading one. Even Stalinism was not the work of one man, but of the security services and individuals willing to denounce their fellow neighbors for housing rights or petty grievances, as the Kyiv-born Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov so mercilessly satires in his short stories of the time. Likewise, efforts to pretend that Putinism is just the work of one man will lead to myopic thinking and poor analytical predictions regarding Russia's future. The question of Putin's position on Stalinism suggests he is far from the all-powerful instigator of a Stalin cult and rather a manipulative manager of divergent, pro- and anti-Stalin societal attitudes, which he tries to balance and fuse into a workable and unifying national narrative. That a notable section of Russian society exudes nostalgia for a leader who repressed millions illuminates pervasive and troubling issues that should inform predictions and planning for a post-Putin Russia. The problem is not just one strongman - it is that so many people wanted a strongman in the first place.

Middle East is growing more and more unstable

Yasar Yakis

ISRAEL is today taking revenge on an entire people - the Palestinians. Most of the victims are innocent children and women. Of all countries, it was South Africa that took the initiative to bring Israel to the International Court of Justice, accusing it of having committed genocide. The Gaza crisis has also opened the floodgates to a new series of crises in the Middle East.

While the Middle East was already in turmoil, the US and the UK attacked the Houthis and navigation has been severely disturbed in the Red Sea. The Iranian-supported Houthis took the opportunity offered by the Gaza war and the Red Sea became an area of confrontation between the US and Iran. As if this were not enough, Daesh attacked a commemoration ceremony

for Qassem Soleimani, the head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force who was killed in an American drone attack in 2020. Iran responded to these attacks by hitting the house of a Kurdish businessman in Irbil, claiming that it was an Israeli espionage center. It also attacked a medical clinic in Idlib in northern Syria.

All these things are intriguing because Daesh, an organization that the transatlantic community is eager to eliminate, has attacked the enemies of these countries. The risk of escalation is going up and nobody knows who is whose enemy. Türkiye is squeezed in between these problems. To begin with, it is fighting with terrorists, not with terror. Fighting terror requires a more sophisticated mechanism. It

moved beyond its borders the terrain on which terror was going to be fought, but doing so limited Türkiye's freedom of action, because it is now fighting terror in a hostile environment, in Syria and Iraq. Recent attacks on the Turkish-Iraqi border caused the death of more than a dozen Turkish soldiers. A sophisticated country must have helped the Kurds carry out such a plan. This conclusion should lead Türkiye to reconsider its tactics.

Türkiye and the US, two NATO allies, are at odds with each other. This issue raises the dilemma of how these two allies would fight in the same ranks if NATO is faced with a military confrontation. Even if they do not agree on all subjects, Ankara and Washington should be able to develop a

working framework as two NATO allies and meet somewhere in the middle. This has not happened so far. Türkiye has its problems, but it has several advantages in bringing together many stakeholders. Such cooperation may also involve other countries with influence in the region, such as Russia, Iraq, Syria and Iran. These formulas do not need to be carbon copies of one another.

The Kurdish problem is another headache for the region. Though Russia and the US are in opposite camps, they both support the Kurdish cause. In its talks with the Syrian authorities, Moscow has frequently raised the question of the incorporation of Kurdish fighters into Syria's national army as a

separate brigade, while the US is trying to create a Kurdish-controlled zone on Syrian territory to the east of the Euphrates river. In Iraq and Syria, Ankara seems to have opted for ending the terror originating from these two countries by drying the marsh. It has tried to do it for decades but without tangible effect. It has turned out to be difficult, if not impossible, to do it without US cooperation.

Türkiye has been able to push the focus of terror out of Turkish territory to Syria and Iraq. However, this is not sufficient. Türkiye has to cooperate more closely with these countries to discourage recruitment. The most important concern of the US in the Middle East is Israel's security. It regards Israel as the main pillar of its Middle Eastern policy.

There is no sign indicating that the US may give up this support, and neither are its fellow Western countries.

If Türkiye were not a heavily biased Sunni country, it could have played a mediating role between the Sunni and Shiite worlds, but the present government in Ankara is far from assuming such a role. Another important chapter regarding peace in the Middle East is the new conflagration in the Red Sea and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. When the situation became precarious in the region, Iran used this opportunity to promote the Houthis' cause in Yemen. If not contained properly, it may also spread to other places in the region and block traffic at the Suez Canal. The Middle East seems to be pregnant with many crises.

The only thing shocking about a 1997-style wipeout is that Sunak might keep 169 seats

A YOUNG poll splashed across Monday's front page foresees a shocking electoral wipeout for the Conservatives on the scale of their 1997 defeat by Labour. But were you shocked when you saw it? Is anyone really shocked? The only shocking thing about the shock poll, I think, is that it reckons the shockingly bad Tories will manage to hang on to 169 seats.

Wishful thinking, to my mind. A far superior and more reliable opinion poll - the comments under articles like this one in The Telegraph no less - has seen this asteroid coming for over 18 months. It is one thing to alienate the floating voter, but the Conservatives have been governing as if they were their natural supporters' own worst enemy. It is hard to overstate the sense of betrayal and anger. Back in October, I said that the Tories would be lucky to retain 150 seats and that was before we heard the Oh-dear-God legal immigration figures.

To wiffully welcome a population the size of Birmingham when your own people are struggling to access healthcare, housing and safe maternity services, which they have paid for out of their taxes, goes beyond mere incompetence. It is plain rude. A "kick in the teeth", as Suella Braverman said. Oh, and massively disrespectful of your loyal supporters. Immigration at those levels undermines social cohesion and it stops social mobility in its tracks because too many of our young people, who know they will never own a home and must live in extortionate rented accommodation while they pay off their student loan (like my two, in fact), get despondent and give up. The UK now has a higher proportion of foreign-born residents than the United States - more than 10 million people, which is 15 per cent of our population and roughly twice as many as it was 10 years ago.

Did any Conservative vote for that? Did they heck. But the people in whom we first placed our trust back in 2010, whose manifesto commitments we stupidly believed, went ahead and did it anyway. How did Tory MPs come to believe they were better judges of what the country needs than the British voter? While many who came to this country as immigrants, and the children of those immigrants, are making a fantastic contribution and are every bit as British as any of us, we all know there are a horrifying number of idle ratbags sponging off the efforts of hardworking families, getting priority for social housing, university places and even hospital appointments. A poisonous minority hates the West while living in the, er, West and enjoying its comforts and freedoms. We don't want them here. Record mass immigration "and under a Conservative government". I've lost count of how many times I've read or heard that incredulous rider. People say it all the time: The highest taxes for 70 years "and under a Conservative government". Over 40,000 migrants arriving

illegally on our southern coast "and under a Conservative government". Blackmailing the motorist into buying EVs they can't afford and struggle to resell "and under a Conservative government". Failing to exploit our own bountiful energy resources by banning fracking and shutting perfectly good coal-fired power stations "and under a Conservative government". Pursuing the economic suicide that is net zero, which gives comfort to our enemies and won't make a gnat's breath of difference to global carbon emissions, "and under a Conservative government".

Allowing trans ideology and batshit crazy Marxist identity politics to take root in our schools and institutions "and under a

Allison-Pearson

rowfully, marvelling that such and such a thing has taken place under - of all people - a Conservative government there is clearly a residual sense, a powerful nostalgia if you like, that Conservatives would never have allowed it to happen, not on their watch.

Sadly, the party no longer merits the benefit of the doubt. Why should we trust Rishi Sunak? Whenever the Tories appear to be tacking back in the right direction, it turns out to be a minor adjustment; the bare minimum they can get away with without causing a fit of the vapours in Ursula von der Leyen. Or upsetting all those Blue Wall voters they presume are on the Left of the party. (They're not.) Things the Conservatives used to

It's hardly an exhaustive list of the unTory abominations we have witnessed over 14 years of Conservative government. Do feel free to add your own. So, when people shake their heads sorrowfully, marvelling that such and such a thing has taken place under - of all people - a Conservative government there is clearly a residual sense, a powerful nostalgia if you like, that Conservatives would never have allowed it to happen, not on their watch. Sadly, the party no longer merits the benefit of the doubt. Why should we trust Rishi Sunak? Whenever the Tories appear to be tacking back in the right direction, it turns out to be a minor adjustment; the bare minimum they can get away with without causing a fit of the vapours in Ursula von der Leyen. Or upsetting all those Blue Wall voters they presume are on the Left of the party. (They're not.) Things the Conservatives used to be good at, which was often not doing too much, they are now really bad at. People calling themselves Conservative MPs have allowed all of the above list to happen, which tells us that they are imposters. Because they don't like or believe in Conservative things; they are liberal globalists who have no particular allegiance to this blessed plot so the dilution of its culture is irrelevant, the comfort and safety of our people unimportant. In fact, many Conservative MPs appear to despise Conservative values, and they loathe those of us who love them. The feeling is mutual, I can assure you.

Conservative government". Hospitals asking male patients if they could be pregnant "and under a Conservative government". Ditto "people with cervixes". Woman. The word you are looking for is WOMAN! "And under a Conservative government." Putting up thousands of illegal migrants in hotels while our homeless veterans sleep on the streets "and under a Conservative government".

The British Army no longer regarded by our allies as a top-level fighting force "and under a Conservative government". The RAF found guilty of discriminating against white men "and under a Conservative government". Businesses still reeling from lockdown hit with a brutal rise in corporation tax from 19 per cent to 25 per cent "and under a Conservative government". It's hardly an exhaustive list of the unTory abominations we have witnessed over 14 years of Conservative government. Do feel free to add your own. So, when people shake their heads sor-

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Tories again this year. If they're lucky.) On Radio 4's Today programme, Miriam Cates explained why she, Robert Jenrick and other "rebel" Tory MPs are demanding the Rwanda Bill be tightened up to prevent the farcical merry-go-round of appeals and the disappearance of potential criminals and terrorists.

In November, the Home Office admitted that they do not know the whereabouts of 17,000 asylum seekers whose claims have been discontinued. In a functioning country, that scandalous admission would have seen public apologies and resignations. In Broken Britain, it was par for the course. As Cates pointed out to a disapproving Mishal Husain (you can practically hear her shuddering fastidiously into the microphone, can't you?): "The British people have had enough of it." A poll in The Telegraph, the Sheffield MP said, showed that "in almost all constituencies in the country the preferred option is for quick detention and deportation (to Rwanda)". If Cates, an eminently sensible, down-to-earth Northerner is now considered a far-Right troublemaker, it is hardly surprising that Reform UK is hovering up Tory votes.

Analysis of that shocking yet not-at-all shocking opinion poll warned that 96 Conservative seats will be lost because Reform will be standing a candidate in every constituency. As if it were Reform's fault! Nigel Farage and Richard Tice are not to blame for the fact that former Conservatives cannot bear to vote for a party which has let them down in almost every single regard, even if the alternative is Starmergeddon. Last week, I interviewed Ben Habib, the co-deputy leader of Reform, for the Planet Normal podcast and was taken aback. Who was this excellent fellow talking with such passion about putting the interests of British people first? Ben sounded, well, he sounded like a Conservative actually. A sound nearly as extinct as the call of the hooded grebe or the kakapo. If I lived in Wellingborough, where Ben is standing in the forthcoming by-election, I would vote for him like a shot.

Many just like me will feel the same. The Conservatives pocketed our votes and used them to create a country we barely recognise. The UK needs and wants a Right-wing party. If Tory MPs find our views distasteful, other parties are available. The democratic process, when it swings round every five years, has a neat way of showing an arrogant and imposter government who is boss.

The ballot does not lie. I'm sure the Labour landslide will be every bit as awful as we fear, but true Conservatives will emerge from the rubble and, with our help, they will build again. (Even the Canadian Conservatives managed to recover after losing 167 seats and retaining only two in 1993.) At least there's one thing to look forward to. It's going to be a lot more fun hating a government you didn't vote for.

Many Western leaders increasingly out of step with their people

MORE than 100 days since the Oct. 7 attacks and Israel has given no sign of letting up in its ruthless bombardment of Gaza. It is hard to encapsulate the horror Palestinians are enduring, but we have reached a situation where, in Gaza, there are four times more people starving, some 500,000, than in the rest of the world put together. Israel has been killing an average of 250 Palestinians a day - a higher daily death rate than any other 21st-century armed conflict.

It has reached the stage where a credible and powerful legal argument has been presented at the International Court of Justice that Israel is perpetrating genocide against Palestinians. One would normally assume that the world, both governments and publics alike, would be fully outraged and appalled at such atrocities, but that is not the case.

Governments have largely determined their positions. The overwhelming majority of states support an immediate ceasefire. The US and other backers of Israel, which do not, are looking truly isolated. But where does global public opinion stand on this? Are the political classes in line with their publics on the issue?

Prior to Oct. 7, Israel would attract most support in the US. In a May 2023 poll, 29 percent of Americans sympathized more with Israel than the Palestinians, with the figure being 17 percent in Germany. It was only 10 percent in the UK. Among the major European states, Spain was the most supportive of Palestinians at 31 percent, compared to just 15 percent in the US.

Now, on the issue of an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, it appears that a massive majority is in favor, even in states where the government strongly backs Israel.

US public opinion is obviously crucial. A mid-November poll determined that 68 percent of Americans thought Israel should call a ceasefire. What was interesting was the party split. Three-quarters of Democrats supported a ceasefire, as opposed to half of Republicans, echoing a trend of more Democrats being favorable to the Palestinians.

In the UK, an opinion poll carried out toward the end of December showed that 71 percent of the population supported an immediate ceasefire, following a similar figure in another poll in October. Conversely, only 12 percent thought there should not be a ceasefire. In a November poll, 81 percent of Canadians supported an immediate ceasefire, but the poll also found a significant amount of sympathy for Israel.

One should expect fairly high numbers supporting a ceasefire in most wars. Many people would want to see an end to the carnage. The real question is why their governments do not agree. Why are they not aligned with the popular mood?

What about the overall trend in support of Israel? Do American and European publics think that Israel has acted legitimately? In the US in mid-October, 41 percent agreed "the US should support Israel," but this dropped to about 32 percent a month later. The latter poll showed that 39 percent supported the US acting as a neutral mediator. The level of US support for Israel was found to be higher than during Israel's last major ground invasion of Gaza in 2014. The slight decline in support for Israel as the conflict has continued is mirrored in other countries, such as Australia.

One trend that has been evident for a while is greater support for

Chris Doyle

Palestinians among the youth in Europe and the US. Older generations, perhaps more influenced by memories of the Second World War, tend to be more favorable to Israeli positions. Among the young, the issue of Palestine has often become a cause celebre. University campuses in Europe and the US have, for some time, been bastions of support for the pro-Palestinian rights movement. It is where Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaigns against Israel are at their strongest.

Might this mean that Israel will have a greater public relations problem in years to come? Possibly. It would explain why the Israeli state and supportive organizations put so much effort into public relations and propaganda. Israeli leaders know that this matters.

What about public opinion in the Middle East? Many Western armchair pundits have, for many years, been arguing that the "Arab Street" - a dreadful expression - was no longer concerned about Palestinian rights. This was always wishful thinking rather than being based on reality.

An opinion poll that this month surveyed 8,000 people in 16 Arab countries found an incredible 97 percent saying they had suffered from psychological stress as a result of the war on Gaza. Some 84 percent termed it a time of great psychological stress. No doubt many of those watching may have themselves suffered in the recent conflicts that have blighted countries like Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Sudan, Libya and Lebanon. The apocalyptic scenes in Gaza will be a painful reminder of other conflicts. Genocidal statements from Israel leaders are hardly calming.

But it also shows that Arabs are generally terrified about where this

will all end. Will there even be a future for Palestinians in Gaza? The conflict has already spread to the Red Sea and tensions and strikes between Israel and Hezbollah have increased.

It may not be a huge surprise that 92 percent of Arabs are in solidarity with Palestinians or that 94 percent perceive the US negatively in light of its massive support for Israel. Will this affect the Biden administration's thinking? It should do. Many European states also have to consider the chasm between their position and those of nations in the Global South.

Arab governments have called for a ceasefire and back the South African case at the International Court of Justice. Clearly, there is a strong awareness of the public mood in their states. It is a particularly potent issue in neighboring states, not least those with large Palestinian refugee populations, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The leaders in many Western states are increasingly out of alignment with their citizens. Will this make a difference? Some in the US, including Arab Americans, claim they can no longer vote for Biden. In the UK, many British Muslims and others will not vote for either the Conservatives or the Labour Party. Many election strategists in both countries envisioned the Gaza crisis lasting far less than 100 days and assumed that the public would soon get distracted and forget about the horrors of Gaza. That is far less likely to be the case now. Public opinion may not always be right. Indeed, in the US and Europe, ignorance about the Middle East in general remains at dangerous levels. But the political classes are no better informed and should give far more consideration to why they are out of line with their own publics and most of global opinion.

The US plan to revamp Palestinian Authority is doomed to fail

FOR two months now, the United States and other Western countries, backing Israel, have been talking about "the day after" in Gaza. They have rejected Israeli assertions that the Israeli army will remain in control of the Strip and pointed to the Palestinian Authority (PA) as their preferred political actor to take over governance once the war is over.

In so doing, the US and its allies have paid little regard to what the Palestinian people want. The current leadership of the PA lost the last democratic elections held in the occupied Palestinian territory in 2006 to Hamas and since then, it has steadily lost popularity. In a recent public opinion poll by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), some 90 percent of respondents were in favour of the resignation of PA President Mahmoud Abbas, and 60 percent called for the dismantling of the PA itself.

Washington is undoubtedly aware of the low public trust in the PA, but there is a reason why it insists on supporting its takeover of Gaza: its leadership has been a reliable partner for decades in maintaining a status quo in the interests of Israel. The US would like that arrangement to continue, so its backing for the PA may be accompanied by an attempt to revamp it in order to solve its legitimacy problem. But even if this effort succeeds, it is unlikely the new iteration of the PA would be sustainable. Perhaps one of the main factors that has convinced the US that the PA is a "good choice" for post-war governance in Gaza is its anti-Hamas stance and willingness to conduct security coordination with Israel. Since the commencement of the conflict between Israel and Gaza on October 7, the PA and its leadership have not issued an official statement offering explicit political support for the Palestinian resistance. Their rhetoric has predominantly focused on condemning and disapproving of attacks on civilians on both sides, while also rejecting the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland.

In a political address on the ninth day of the war, Abbas criticised Hamas, asserting that their actions did not represent the Palestinian people. He emphasised that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and underscored the importance of peaceful resistance as the only legitimate means to oppose Israeli occupation. This statement was later retracted by his office. In December, Hussein al-Sheikh, a PA official and secretary-general of the executive committee of the PLO, also criticised Hamas in an interview with Reuters. He suggested its armed resistance "method and approach" has failed and led to many casualties among the civilian population. The stance of the PA is consistent with its own narrow political and economic interests which have come at the expense of the Palestinian national cause. It has systematically and brutally stamped out any opposition and any support for other factions, including Hamas, in order to maintain its rule over West Bank cities while Israel continues with its brutal occupation and dispossession of the Palestinian people.

In Israel's war on Gaza in 2008-2009, the PA leadership hoped to regain administrative control of Gaza with assistance from Israel. During that conflict, the PA prohibited any activities in the West Bank in support of Gaza and threatened to arrest participants. I, myself, faced harassment and the threat of arrest for attempting to join a demonstration against the war. Similar positions were adopted by the PA, albeit with less aggressive measures, in subsequent Israeli assaults on Gaza, as its leadership came to recognise that Hamas was unlikely to relinquish its control over the Strip. Since October 7, the PA has taken a bolder stance, marked by more aggressive actions. Its security forces have suppressed demonstrations and marches held in support of Gaza, resorting to shooting

Samer Jaber

live ammunition at participants. Additionally, the PA has recently detained individuals expressing support for the Palestinian resistance.

While cracking down on Palestinian protests, the PA has done nothing to protect its people from attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinian communities, which have resulted in deaths, injuries and the displacement of hundreds of people in the occupied West Bank. Additionally, the Israeli army has intensified its raids in the PA-administered areas, leading to the arrest of thousands and the killing of hundreds of Palestinians, with no reaction from the PA. The PA's inability to offer basic protection has added to the deterioration of its legitimacy among Palestinians. Furthermore, by taking a stance against the Palestinian resistance and aligning itself with Israel and the US, the PA is only further undermining its own legitimacy.

Washington is aware of the growing unpopularity of the PA and its leadership among Palestinians but it is not giving up on it because it seems to believe that that can be fixed. That is because the US has tried to revamp the authority before as it has always faced problems with legitimacy due to the way it was set up.

As a governing institution, the PA was established to bring an end to the first Intifada. Conceived under the interim peace agreements in Oslo, it was envisioned as an administrative body to oversee civil affairs for Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip and certain parts of the West Bank, excluding occupied East Jerusalem. It effectively took on a role as an Israeli security contractor in exchange for certain benefits related to administering Palestinian population centres. The PA faithfully fulfilled its mandate, carrying out routine arrests and surveillance of Palestinian individuals, whether they were involved in actions against Israel or were activists opposing its corrupt practices. Thus, Israel strategically benefitted from the establishment of the PA, but the same cannot be said for the Palestinian people, as they continued to experience the ravages of a military occupation.

Despite this, the PA under Yasser Arafat - or what we can call PA 1.0 - leveraged patronage and corruption to maintain some level of support. Notably, Arafat viewed the Oslo process as an interim measure, expecting a fully independent Palestinian state by 2000. He pragmatically engaged in security collaboration with Israel, hoping to build trust and ultimately achieve peaceful coexistence. In 1996, responding to ongoing Palestinian resistance, he even declared a "war on terror" and convened a security summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, involving Israel, Egypt and the US. In 2000, the civil and security arrangements overseen by the PA became increasingly fragile and eventually collapsed, triggering the eruption of the second Intifada.

This uprising was a response to Israel's policies of settlement expansion, its firm refusal to accept any form of Palestinian sovereignty between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, and broader social and economic grievances. In 2002, the Bush administration conceived the idea of refurbishing the PA as part of the Road map for peace. While Arafat's leadership was perceived as a hindering factor, he had already collaborated with the US by implementing structural reforms, including the creation of a prime minister's position.

Seeking to reshape the Palestinian leadership, the US engaged with potential alternative leaders, including Mahmoud Abbas, who eventually assumed the presidency of the PA in 2005 after the suspicious death of Arafat. The PA took its first blow when Hamas won the elections in 2006 and was able to form a government. The US and EU rejected the results, boycotted the government and suspended financial assistance to the PA, while Israel halted the transfer of tax revenues. Meanwhile, the PA security apparatus leadership refused to deal with the Hamas govern-

ment and continued their work as usual, claiming they reported to the PA president's office. For several months, Hamas struggled to maintain its PA government, while Abbas and his supporters made significant efforts to isolate it. In 2007, Hamas took over the PA security apparatus in the Gaza Strip and assumed control of all PA institutions. Abbas declared Hamas an unwanted entity in the West Bank and ordered the expulsion of the Hamas government and the imprisonment of many Hamas operatives.

After splitting the PA into two entities, one in the Gaza Strip and another in the West Bank, Abbas, along with allies Mohammed Dahlan and Salam Fayyad, led efforts to restructure the PA in the West Bank with full support from the US and the EU. Under what we can call PA 2.0, two major restructuring efforts took place. First, it consolidated the Palestinian security apparatus under a united command. Led by US Army General Keith Dayton, the revamping of the Palestinian security forces aimed at deepening their partnership with the Israeli state and army. Additionally, it sought to cultivate a vested interest among PA personnel in maintaining the role of the PA. Second, the restructuring of the PA consolidated its budget, placing all its resources under the Ministry of Finance. This restructuring did not result in a "better" PA. It remained a dysfunctional entity, which mismanaged resources and service provision, leading to a severe deterioration in living standards for the majority of Palestinians. Its leadership enjoyed certain privileges due to its security coordination with Israel and engaged in widespread corruption practices that have raised concerns even among PA supporters. Meanwhile, Israel's settlement enterprises continued expanding without limits and the violence employed by the Israeli army and settlers against ordinary Palestinians only worsened.

The lack of support for the PA leadership and its dysfunction have raised concerns about whether it can play a role in the upcoming post-Gaza war arrangements that the US administration is trying to put together. That is why Washington has signalled it will seek to revamp the PA once again - into PA 3.0 - with the aim of addressing the needs of various parties. The US administration and its allies seek an authority that can provide security to Israel and engage in a peace process without altering the status quo. Since the start of the war, several US envoys have visited Ramallah carrying the same message: that the PA needs to be revamped. In December US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met with Abbas and al-Sheikh (the PLO secretary general) urging them to "bring new blood" into the government. Al-Sheikh is considered a possible successor to Abbas, who could be part of these efforts to restructure the PA.

However, after more than 100 days since the start of the Israeli war on Gaza, it looks like Washington does not have a concrete plan and only has some general ideas which the PA has declared a readiness to discuss. More importantly, the US vision does not seem to take into account the will of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian public clearly demands a leadership that can head a democratic, national entity capable of fulfilling the Palestinian national aspirations, including creating an independent state and realising the Palestinians' right of return to their homelands. Revamping the PA implies intensifying cooperation with Israel and providing Israeli settlers with more security, which effectively means more insecurity and dispossession for the Palestinians. As a result, the Palestinian people will continue to perceive the PA as illegitimate and public anger, upheaval and resistance will continue to grow.

In this sense, the US vision for revamping the PA would fail because it would not address the core issues of Israeli occupation and apartheid, which successive American administrations have systematically and purposefully ignored.



PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 1,200 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Friday, losing 1,200.12 points, a negative change of 1.87 percent, closing at 62,943.75 points against 64,143.87 points the previous trading day.

A total of 258,073,610 shares valuing Rs 12.529 billion were traded during the day as compared to 327,591,633 shares valuing Rs. 14.308 billion the last day. Some 319 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 55 of them recorded gains and 241 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 23 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 20,541,848 shares at Rs.4.65 per share, Oil and Gas Development with 18,933,926 shares at Rs.145.08 per share and Pak Petroleum with 17,861,036 shares at Rs.116.78 per share.

Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.30.00 per share price, closing at Rs.700.00, whereas the runner-up was Packages Limited with a Rs.12.73 rise in its per share price to Rs.522.85.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.64.33 per share closing at Rs.22,300.00, followed by Mari Petroleum Company Limited with Rs.56.74 decline to close at Rs.2,274.11.

Pakistan’s total liquid foreign reserves reach \$ 13.1 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 13,097.6 million in the week ended on February 2, 2024, while foreign reserves held by State Bank reached \$ 8,044 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Friday, informed that foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank decreased by \$173 million to US\$ 8,044 million due to debt repayments during the week under review.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$ 5,053.6 million.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on January 26, 2024, were \$ 13,262.5 million.

Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$ 8,216.5 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were \$ 5,046 million.

Pakistani Rupee gains record value against USD

ISLAMABAD (INP): After the shocking results of Pakistan’s General elections, the Pakistani Rupee gained a record 30 paisas against the mighty US dollar in the interbank trading on Friday.

The new price of the US dollar reached Rs279 against the Pakistani Rupee. The price of green-back hits reverse gear ahead of elections—which were held despite all the ambiguities and speculation and now the results are being announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). At 10 am, the rupee was hovering at Rs279, an increase of Re0.34 against the green-back in the inter-bank market. On Wednesday, the rupee registered a marginal gain to settle at 279.34 against the US dollar, according to the SBP.

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Port shipping activities reported at Port Qasim where three ships namely, Express Athens, Alcyone and Caribbean-I, scheduled to load/offload Containers, Rice and Palm oil, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal and Liquid Terminal respectively on February, while Five more ships, Young Sheng Guoji, Arpeggio, Epic Sunter, Patreas and Limra carrying Palm oil, Chemicals and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day.

A total of six ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Express Athens and Chem Ranger are left the port on today morning. A cargo volume of 80,391 tonnes, comprising 52,854 tonnes imports cargo and 27,537 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,346 Containers (1,340 TEUs are Import and 1,006 TEUs are export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

SECP enforces laws to promote compliance, transparency in corporate sector

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) efficaciously aided by its centralized adjudication function to promote compliance and transparency in the corporate sector. This quasi-judicial arm maintains regulator independence and minimizes arbitrariness, adhering to laws and international best practices.

The SECP effectively enforced its laws in the first half of FY 2024-25, deciding 1,849 cases of violations and imposing penalties of approximately Rs.962 million for corrective measures.

During July to December, the SECP primarily adjudicated cases against companies alleged to violate Section 84 of the Companies Act, 2017, which prohibits companies from inviting, accepting, or renewing public deposits, except for banking companies. A total of 11 orders were issued under Section 84, resulting in a penalty of Rs. 581.50 million. Directors of such companies were also disqualified from holding the office for five years using powers under 172 of the Companies Act, 2017.

In addition, a penalty of Rs. 1.750 million was also imposed by 11 orders against listed companies for violating Section 199 of the companies Act, which only allows companies to invest in their associated companies or undertakings only under special resolution.

Another area of focus was digital lending. The adjudication division issued seven orders, imposing a penalty of Rs. 13.265 million under Section 282 of the Companies Ordinance, 1984, based on observations of various non-compliances with relevant laws.

Moreover, 21 orders were issued under SECP AML/CFT Regulations 2020 for alleged contraventions of mandatory AML/CFT regulations, including deficiencies in KYC/CDD processes, customer identity verification, risk categorization, unapproved AML policy documents, and Targeted Financial Sanctions obligations.

The total penalty imposed was Rs. 14.66 million. Five orders were issued for non-disclosure of substantial acquisition in voting shares of listed companies, and a penalty of Rs. 1.2 million was imposed under the Securities Act, 2015 for contraventions.

In compliance with Section 96 of the Securities Act of 2015, a fine of Rs. 500,000 was levied for failing to disclose price-sensitive information.

Moreover, 45 orders were issued for filing substantial shareholding and directorship changes in listed companies under the Reporting and Disclosure (of Shareholding by Directors, Executive Officers and Substantial Shareholders in Listed Companies) Regulations, 2015, and a penalty of Rs. 737,500 was imposed under the Securities Act, 2015.

Adjudication proceedings in respect of 8 cases were initiated against insurance companies/takaful operators. Amongst the main violations of the insurance regulatory framework were failure in maintaining proper books of accounts in violation of section 34 and 45 of the Insurance Ordinance, 2000, inadequate amount of collateral in respect of insurance guarantees in contravention of the Credit & Suretyship (Conduct of Business) Rules, 2018 and non-payment of annual supervision fee in violation of Section 11(3) of the Insurance Ordinance, 2000.

SECP remains committed towards an effective, transparent & rigorous enforcement of its administered laws in the future while simultaneously continuing on the path towards digitization & promoting an enabling environment for the businesses.

Gold rates remain unchanged at Rs.215,500 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold remained unchanged at Rs.215,500 on Friday, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Likewise, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold and 10 gram 22 karat gold also remained constant at Rs.184,756 and Rs.169,360 respectively whereas the price of per tola and ten gram Silver also remained unchanged at Rs.2,600 and 2,229.08 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market witnessed no change and was traded at \$2,053, the Association reported.



FAISALABAD: A vendor displaying oranges at his roadside stall to attract the customers.

Pakistan’s exports to Afghanistan increase by 3.63% in 6 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan’s export of goods and services to Afghanistan witnessed an increase of 3.63 per cent during the first six months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$260.716 million during July-December (2023-24) against exports of US \$251.580 million during July-December (2022-23), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Afghanistan decreased by 26.83 per cent from \$38.297 million in December 2022, against the exports of \$28.019 million in December 2023.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Afghanistan also witnessed a decline of 46.02 per cent during December 2023 as compared to the exports of \$51.911 million in November 2023, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan’s exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 4.99 per cent in the first six months, from US \$14.222 billion to US \$15.288 billion, the SBP data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from Afghanistan into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$4.425 million against US \$13.253 million last year, showing a decline of 66.61 per cent in July-December (2023-24).

On a year-on-year basis, the imports from Afghanistan decreased by 28.39 per cent from US \$1.729 million in December 2022, against the imports of US \$1.238 million in December 2023.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports from Afghanistan into the country witnessed a nominal decrease of 3.95 per cent during December 2023, as compared to the imports of US \$1.289 million during November 2023, according to the data.

The overall imports into the country witnessed a decrease of 14.69 per cent, from \$29.588 billion to US \$25.241 billion, according to the data.

ICCI, FPCCI for joint efforts to address key issues of businessmen

ISLAMABAD (INP): President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari called on President Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Sheikh here on Friday and discussed with him the ways and means to work closely to address the key issues of the business community.

Speaking on the occasion, Atif Ikram Sheikh said that the business community was the backbone of the economy and FPCCI would take all possible measures to resolve their issues and facilitate them in business development. He said that the FPCCI would work with the newly elected government to address the economic challenges, tackle the issue of rising inflation, reduce high policy interest rate, improve exports, enhance forex reserves, and revive the economy.

The FPCCI President said that he would take all chambers of commerce and trade associations on board on important matters of the economy to present a consensus voice of the business community to the government. He said that he would work closely with the newly elected government to promote ease of doing business in the country and improve the economy.

Atif Akram Sheikh said that ICCI was doing good work for the business community and he would always cooperate with it in efforts to promote a business-friendly environment and facilitate the better growth of trade and industry.

Speaking during the meeting, ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the economy of Pakistan was facing multiple challenges and the President FPCCI should cooperate with the newly elected government to steer the country out of economic crisis and put it on the path of sustainable economic development.

He said that Pakistan has good potential to boost exports of IT, pharmaceutical, textiles, and other sectors and FPCCI should work with the government to address the issues of the export sector and create a conducive environment for export promotion.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the FPCCI should start working on budget proposals in consultation with all chambers of commerce and trade associations to present a comprehensive document of proposals based on the input of the business community for the forthcoming budget to the government. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with FPCCI in promoting the business and economic activities in the country.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI hoped that Atif Ikram Sheikh would act as a bridge between the government and the private sector and play a role to create a conducive business environment in the country.

Stock markets steady before US inflation data

LONDON (AFP/APP): Europe’s main stock markets steadied Friday as traders reacted to more earnings updates from top companies, while awaiting revisions to US inflation data. Asia saw holiday-thinned trade, with investors there struggling to build on another record-setting day on Wall Street.

"Today sees things slow down after a week that has seen yet another prominent role played by earnings, with Arm Holdings helping to bolster the tech story that underpins the gains seen for US markets," noted Joshua Mahony, chief market analyst at traders Scope Markets.

Shares in Arm soared in after-hours US trading "after earnings pointed to the AI opportunity for the British chip designer", said Neil Wilson, chief market analyst at Finalto.

The luxury sector was a focus in Europe, with French giant Hermes on Friday posting record annual sales and net profit. Hermes said it would reward all employees with a bonus following strong growth in every region last year.

Shares in Hermes rose by more than four percent to 2,618 euros nearing the half-way stage in Paris, propelling the group above cosmetics giant L’Oreal in terms of market value.

L’Oreal’s stock price fell more than seven percent to 420 euros after it posted lower-than-expected results for the fourth quarter.

Shares in LVMH, the world’s largest luxury goods group, were down 0.3 percent to 802 euros, though it also reported record annual earnings last month.

Gucci owner Kering was up 0.7 percent to 412 euros, a day after reporting slumping profits.

In the US, equities have continued their march higher this week as strong earnings from big-name firms and data showing resilience in the world’s number one economy helped overcome Federal Reserve warnings that interest rates will not come down as early as hoped.

Figures released Thursday showing below-expectation US jobless claims reinforced the view that the labour market remained in good health despite interest rates sitting at two-decade highs, but gave the central bank room to hold borrowing costs where they are for longer.

Revisions to the consumer price index due Friday will be pored over and followed by new data for January, with an above-forecast reading seen as justifying the monetary policymakers’ reluctance to cut just yet.

Elections held, transfer of power to be a test of politicians: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that general elections have been held, and the people were now waiting for the official results.

In a statement issued here on Friday, he said that when the new government was empowered, it must start preparing the budget and plan for debt repayments. Mian Zahid Hussain said the government will need another IMF program for debt servicing as the current agreement will be completed by the end of next month.

He said that all the political parties have prioritized the economy in their manifestos, so the public hopes that the new government will take steps to provide some relief amid severe economic punishment.

The business leader said servicing local and foreign debt had become a major problem. The volume of these loans and their interest has increased so much that the government was forced to borrow even for operational spending.

The main reason for the increased debt is the tax system’s weakness. In addition, large sums of money have been wasted on political agendas rather than improving the economy.

He said the resources have been wasted on many poorly designed projects, most of which have been completed for political benefits. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the debt has reached 82 % of the GDP, 667 % higher than the government revenue, which equals 328 % of our exports.

He said the country’s debt has doubled in the last seven years to \$ 124 billion, of which 22 % was to be paid in less than one year, which was a big challenge.

The business leader noted that political leaders and the establishment have become convinced that the country can no longer be run as if it were going on. Many believe the situation will get out of hand without improvements and strong decisions. He said that what the new government will do to provide relief to the masses remains to be seen.

It was expected to improve tax administration, tax agricultural incomes, and boost industrial and agricultural sectors.

Taxing wholesalers and retailers and reducing the volume of the undocumented economy were necessary for the country’s survival.



HYDERABAD: Women workers sorting old clothes at their work place site area.



In brief

Selection committee announced

KARACHI (APP): The Karachi Division Shooting Ball Association, gearing up for the Sindh Games 2024, has unveiled its selection committee entrusted with the task of forming the Karachi Shooting Ball Team. Comprising Qamar-ul-Salam Pyare, Abdul Manan Baloch, and Syed Iftikhar Zaidi, the committee is set to conduct trials at the Wahid Sports Shooting Ball Court Korangi on February 11 from 3 pm to 6:30 pm. Aspiring players are required to bring along a copy of their National Identity Card and two passport-size photographs for the trials.

Premier League facing threat

The Premier League is facing the threat of legal action from a club over amended rules around commercial deals. On Friday, rules regarding associated party transactions (ATPs) were tightened, aimed at clubs signing sponsorship deals with companies linked to their owners. ATPs can inflate revenue streams and allow more room for spending. League officials have not named the club but informed all 20 of the threat at a shareholders' meeting in London. The legal threat surrounds whether the Premier League's rules are compatible with competition law. BBC Sport has been told the threat remains even though a vote on the proposed rule changes, following an earlier review, gained enough support to be passed after it had been rejected in November. The changes will be introduced to the Premier League handbook in a matter of weeks but one contentious element around personal liability to directors has been removed. It is understood the vote was not unanimous. Sources have pointed to that disagreement, plus ongoing charges against Everton, Nottingham Forest and Manchester City and behind-the-scenes complaints about the new Premier League TV deal, as evidence of fractured relationships within the Premier League and discontent with chief executive Richard Masters.

Simona confident of tennis return

BERN (Agencies): Former world number one Simona Halep says she is confident of a return to tennis after her appeal against a four-year doping ban was heard by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas). Halep was suspended after an independent tribunal said she committed "intentional" anti-doping violations. The three-day hearing for the former Wimbledon champion concluded on Friday. "I had the chance to show my defence and I really believe that the truth is going to come out," Halep said. Halep, 32, was banned in September by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) following two separate doping infractions. She tested positive for roxadustat after the US Open in 2022, while irregularities were also found in her athlete biological passport, used to monitor selected biological variables over time, in a separate anti-doping breach that year. Halep, who would be unable to play professional tennis until 6 October 2026 if the ban is upheld, insists she is innocent and has claimed experts found she had accidentally taken a contaminated supplement. She has previously said that the ban will likely end her career if it is upheld, and said she would fight to clear her name of the "false allegations".

‘Zaka-led IMC was ‘not willing to commit’ to Pakistan’s women’s league’

LAHORE (Cricinfo): The PCB has pushed back a commitment they made over three years ago to launch a women's T20 league and shelved women's exhibition matches on the eve of the start of the ninth season of the PSL. In 2023, three women's exhibition matches featuring players from countries including South Africa, England and New Zealand were held, but this time around, it's not on the agenda. Tania Mallick, head of the PCB women's wing since 2021, attributed this to the uncertainty around the PCB chairman, saying the interim management committee led by Zaka Ashraf until last month did not wish to financially commit to a women's league.

"The impression I got was they did not feel they were in a position to make such big financial decisions," Mallick told ESPNcricinfo. "What was conveyed to us was the next committee and administration would do this, 'we don't want to'. The obstacle is not within our management or the financial officers within the PCB. It was the interim management committee that was not willing to commit. I don't feel frustrated with my management because they all agree [we need a league]. Even the PSL department, we had planned everything but it was taken off the board at the last minute. This was towards the tail-end of the

Zaka regime. It was quite disappointing for all of us and I told the girls that repeatedly."

There was little to no public communication from the PCB regarding its plans or intentions for women's cricket for the best part of 2023. Much of the year was a difficult period for Pakistan women's cricket, though it ended on a note of optimism as the side whitewashed South Africa 3-0 in a home T20I series, before becoming the first Asian side to beat New Zealand in New Zealand, stunning them 2-1 in the T20Is.

After that series, Fatima Sana spoke to ESPNcricinfo, and said that the three exhibition matches had "opened up the minds of our girls" and that "all the players want" to have their own league. The PCB has toyed with the idea of various leagues besides the PSL across three different chairs, with the Pakistan Junior League taking place in 2022. Last year, a local T10 league was also mooted, which Mallick said would have potentially included women's games.

But for a board that once spoke about getting Asia's first women's T20 league off the ground, things have changed significantly.

"Every new administration who comes in also doesn't necessarily have the same kind of interest in women's cricket," Mallick said. "I still feel Pakistan is

at the emerging stage of women's cricket and needs to go a long way. So [the administrative turnover] has a huge impact. We always wonder if we'll have a women's league or exhibition matches now, but if we had one chairman these question marks would not have been there. A couple of chairmen announced it'll definitely happen but because every chairman had such a short span of time, they spent most of their time firefighting and couldn't have a strategic policy."

"There was talk about a T10, and women were a part of that but unfortunately that couldn't take place and women's exhibition matches have also been pushed back. But all the chairmen that have come in, it's not as if they're unwilling to support us. They've imposed no financial cap on us to prevent us from holding camps or sending our Under-19 team to Bangladesh. But the problem is that normally with a chairman we can plan for a three-year period. There was a restriction there because we were only able to plan for a few months here and there."

For Mallick, there is a possible reason for optimism, as there are signs of stability returning to the PCB. Mohsin Naqvi was elected as PCB chairman on a three-year term earlier this week, and barring significant unforeseen events, should be in the role for the foreseeable future.

Kazakh tennis star Rybakina qualifies for quarterfinals at Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI (INP): Kazakh tennis star Elena Rybakina reached the quarterfinals at the Mubadala Abu Dhabi Open by rallying for a 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 win against Danielle Collins in the United Arab Emirates.

Rybakina improved to 3-1 against Collins with the two-hour, 17-minute victory. Rybakina trailed 3-2 in the second set and 2-1 in the deciding set before surviving to face Spain's Cristina Busca, a 7-6 (1), 7-5 winner over Great Britain's Heather Watson.

No. 8 Liudmila

Samsonova of Russia ousted Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina 6-1, 6-3 to set up a quarterfinal clash with No. 4 Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic. Krejickova was ahead 6-2, 1-0 when Spain's Sara Sorribes Tomo was forced to retire.

Transylvania Open Sara Errani of Italy cruised to a 6-0, 6-1 upset of No. 2 seed Tatjana Maria of Germany to make the quarterfinals in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Errani saved the only break point she faced and

converted five of her seven break chances in the 61-minute match. Up next is Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic, who had a breezy 6-2, 6-1 win over Colombia's Camila Osorio.

Two other seeds fell as Britain's Harriet Dart ousted No. 5 Elisabetta Cocciaretto of Italy 5-7, 7-5, 6-3 and Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova took out No. 6 Elina Avanesyan of Russia, who retired trailing 6-2, 6-7 (5), 2-0. Romania's Jaqueline Cristian defeated Denmark's Clara Tauson 6-4, 6-0.

Three SNGPL batters score centuries on first day of President's Trophy final

RAWALPINDI (APP): Kamran Ghulam, Sahibzada Farhan and Saud Shakeel struck centuries for SNGPL against WAPDA on day one of the final of the President's Trophy Grade-I here at the Pindi Cricket Stadium.

After being put into bat, SNGPL scored 479 for seven in 80 overs. After losing Test cricketer Abid Ali for no score, right-handed batters Sahibzada Farhan and Kamran Ghulam got together and knitted a 214-run partnership for the second wicket.

Sahibzada, who has featured in five T20Is for

Pakistan, top-scored for the side, scoring 161 off 206 balls, hitting 22 fours and two sixes. While the 28-year-old Kamran was the second centurion for his side in the first innings. He scored a 136-ball 101, which included 16 fours.

Saud Shakeel, who has featured in 10 Test matches, and was also part of the Pakistan squad against Australia recently, returned undefeated on 123 off 81 balls, smashing 12 fours and four sixes.

That SNGPL managed to score around six an over in 80 overs was largely due to a quick-fire 44 off 20

balls from Mubasir Khan. The right-handed batter, coming to bat at number seven, struck four sixes and two fours over the course of his innings.

For WAPDA, captain Iftikhar Ahmed and Tahir Hussain bagged two wickets apiece.

Scores in brief: SNGPL 479-7, 80 overs (Sahibzada Farhan 161, Saud Shakeel 123 not out, Kamran Ghulam 101, Mubasir Khan 44; Tahir Hussain 2-78, Iftikhar Ahmed 2-105)

WAPDA 5-0 (awarded five runs after SNGPL were penalised for a short-run)

Gulf Giants gains narrow 5 run victory against MI Emirates

DUBAI (INP): Gulf Giants showcased grit and determination to pull off a narrow five-run win over MI Emirates in the 26th match of the ILT20 season 2 at the Dubai International Stadium. The architects of Giants' win were their skipper James Vince who showed the way through his 59 runs off 41 balls with seven boundaries and a six, and wicketkeeper Jamie Smith's quick unbeaten 43 off 26 balls with four boundaries and two sixes. Together they helped Giants post a fighting total of 158 for 7. They then restricted MI Emirates to 153 for 7 in 20 overs.

Emirates' skipper Kieron Pollard lit up hopes of a vic-

tory through his fighting knock of 40 off 31 balls with three boundaries and a six after opener Kusal Perera had hit 34 runs off 25 balls with five boundaries. Chris Jordan and Jamie Overton bowled the death overs to perfection and ensured their team's win, which helped Giants move to the second slot in the points table.

Unfortunately, Emirates' left-arm spinner from Afghanistan, Waqar Salamkheil's spell of 3 for 19 went in vain.

Chasing the target, their aggressive opening pair of Kusal Perera and Muhammad Waseem scored only 22 runs in 3.1 overs when Waseem got out to a running catch by Jordan Cox near the deep mid-wicket boundary off Gerhard

Erasmus for 7. Andre Fletcher slashed at Chris Jordan to be caught by Shimron Hetmyer at backward point for 11. Ambati Rayudu quickly departed lifting Aayan Khan into the hands of Chris Jordan at long-on for 1.

At the half way mark, Perera who kept the scoreboard moving, fell, lifting Blessing Muzarabani to bail at wide mid-off for 34. This was followed by a brilliant direct hit by Jamie Overton to run out Dan Mousely for 11.

With half the side back in the dug-out, and 87 runs needed off 56 balls, Dominic Drakes and Aayan Khan bowled two tight overs giving away just four and five runs respectively.



BERN: Simona Halep spoke to reporters outside the court in Switzerland following the three-day hearing.

Poland smashes Estonia in ice hockey Olympic qualifier

WARSAW (Xinhua/APP): Poland men's ice hockey team beat Estonia 4-0 at home in Sosnowiec in the opening match of the Olympic pre-qualifying tournament.

Despite Poland dominating and keeping possession from the very beginning, it was Estonia who had a great chance to break the deadlock in the first period. Nikita Puzakov was in a perfect position to find the net, but he missed the target and the opening part of the match ended scoreless.

After a short break, Kalaber's players increased the pace. Filip Komorski wasn't precise enough in his first effort but he found a rebound to put the hosts ahead at 7:35 in the second period. The home side continued their momentum to double the lead at 11:02 thanks to Mateusz Michalski, who finished Poland's counter-attack with a perfect strike.

Dominik Pas' effective effort with two minutes into the third period killed Estonia's hopes to level the result. After extending its lead to 3-0, Poland controlled the match. Jakub Wanacki also found the net with 53 seconds left to put the icing on the cake.

Netherlands and Namibia to tour Nepal

LONDON (Cricinfo): Netherlands and Namibia are scheduled to tour Nepal to play bilateral ODIs and a T20I tri-series in February and March. All three teams have qualified for the upcoming T20 World Cup in the West Indies and USA in June. The six ODIs will be part of the World Cricket League 2.

The Netherlands board said its squads were not at full strength because some "players have injuries or commitments elsewhere".

Netherlands ODI squad: Max O'Dowd, Vikramjit Singh, Noah Croes, Shariz Ahmad, Aryan Dutt, Teja Nidamanuru, Scott Edwards, Michael Levitt, Vivian Kingma, Wesley Barresi, Sybrand Engelbrecht, Roelof van der Merwe, Bas de Leede, Kyle Klein, Olivier Elenbaas

Warner, Zampa star as Australia beat West Indies in 1st T20

HOBART (AFP/APP): David Warner slammed 70 off 36 balls in his 100th Twenty20 international and Adam Zampa grabbed three wickets as Australia beat the West Indies by 11 runs in the opening clash of their three-match series on Friday.

The hosts crunched 213-7 after being sent in to bat on a windy and cold Hobart evening.

The visitors put up a valiant fight but they could only manage 202-8, with Zampa taking 3-26.

Warner, who became only the third man after New Zealand's Ross Taylor and India's Virat Kohli to play 100 internationals in each format, hit 12 fours and a six in his explosive knock to anchor the Australia innings.

"Pleasing to get the win on the board. I feel refreshed and a lot of energy," said Warner.

"I said I want to play the Twenty20 World Cup and finish there and I'm excited and it's a good journey we've got going

through the next six months."

The West Indies hammered 16 off the opening over from Jason Behrendorff in a perfect start to the chase and put on 72 without loss in the six-over powerplay, just five shy of what Australia managed. But when Johnson Charles fell for 42 to Zampa and Brandon King for 53 to Marcus Stoinis after an 89-run stand, the wheels began coming off.

Stoinis accounted for Shai Hope (16) and Glenn Maxwell removed Rovman Powell (14).

It left the West Indies needing 72 from the final five overs, but when Zampa snared two more wickets in four balls it blunted the charge and the win proved out of reach.

"We struggled to get partnerships, but it was a good game of cricket," said West Indies skipper Powell. "We just have to back ourselves a little bit more." Warner smacked five boundaries from his

first 10 balls, including four in Jason Holder's opening over. The 37-year-old brought up his 25th T20 half-century off just 22 balls to send a clear message to selectors that he plans to be in contention for the World Cup later this year. He was eventually out to a slower Alzarri Joseph delivery, gloving to Nicolas Poonan behind the stumps.

With Travis Head and Steve Smith rested, Josh Inglis opened with Warner and was equally aggressive in thumping 39 off 25 balls until removed by Holder, offering Powell a simple catch at mid-off.

Mitchell Marsh was dealing with Covid in the lead-up but showed few ill effects in hitting a giant six off Andre Russell to help Australia reach 110-1 at the halfway mark before being caught behind off Joseph for 16. The run rate eased when Warner departed before Tim David took up the mantle with an explosive unbeaten 37 off 17 balls.

James Magnussen to make swimming 'world record' attempt taking banned drugs

LONDON (Agencies): Ex-world champion James Magnussen says he will take banned drugs in an attempt to swim faster than a world record.

The Australian, 32, will come out of retirement to compete in the Enhanced Games, where doping is allowed. Magnussen will try to swim faster than the 50m freestyle record, though it would not be official because there would be no drug-testing regime.

"I'll juice to the gills and I'll break it in six months," said Magnussen, who will be paid \$1m (£792,000).

The men's 50m freestyle world record of 20.91 seconds was set by Brazilian Cesar Cielo in 2009, though he was wearing a performance-enhancing, non-textile swimsuit that was banned a few months later. The Enhanced

Games was founded by Australian businessman Aron D'Souza in 2023 and would not be subject to World Anti-Doping Agency rules.

It is planned to include athletics, swimming, weightlifting, gymnastics and combat sports, though no date or venue for the event has yet been set.

However, the proposal has attracted criticism. Last year the UK Anti-Doping Agency said it was "extremely concerned by the concept of an Enhanced Games". "The premise of sports competitions that allow performance-enhancing drugs is unsafe, dangerous to athletes' health and wellbeing, and flies in the face of fair play," it said.

D'Souza told the Australian Associated Press said: "An Australian swim-

mer, the most important sport in the Australian psyche, I am just so proud that it's another fellow Aussie."

"I have no doubt now that James has done this publicly there will be dozens, hundreds of athletes [ready to join]. My phone is blowing up."

Magnussen, who won 100m freestyle world titles in 2011 and 2013 and Olympic silver at London 2012, has a personal best of 21.52 in the 50m that he achieved 11 years ago.

Despite being free to take whatever performance-enhancing drugs he likes, Magnussen says he does not want to take any risks with his health. "I thought it was an interesting concept from the first time I heard it," Magnussen, who retired in 2019, told Sydney's SEN radio.

Mighty batting meets smart bowling in blockbuster SA20 finale

LONDON (BBC): The SA20 is set to pass its second-season test when it concludes on Saturday in front of a sell-out Cape Town crowd. The tournament's momentum continued from its inaugural bow last year with solid crowds at all six venues and new sponsors and television deals. But it continues to clash with the increasingly packed calendar of internationals and T20 leagues.

This year, the SA20 tournament was played under the cloud of questions over South Africa's commitment to Test cricket as a makeshift side was sent to New Zealand. Last year, the SA20 had to pause for a must-play World Cup Super League series against England, which South



Africa won. While that lifted spirits, their performances this time have had the opposite effect. South Africa lost the first Test heavily, by 281 runs, and coach Shukri Conrad went from optimistic to realistic as he compared their challenge to being a team in the relegation zone facing log leaders. Three days after

the SA20 concludes, the South African Test side will go again and no, the first-choice players cannot simply jet off to New Zealand. Travel and protocols rule them out since they won't be able to play for at least a week after arrival.

At least, the New Zealand series has taken place in the middle of the

night, when most South Africans are asleep or celebrating the national football team, Bafana Bafana, who reached the semi-finals of the African Cup of Nations for the first time since 2000. And that provides a snapshot of the things the SA20 is competing against. Along with the SA20, South Africa has also hosted the Under-19 Men's ODI World Cup and performed well to reach the semi-final, the European Rugby Champions Cup has been happening where two South African sides compete, and the Six Nations rugby championship has started. But in a world of more, more, and more, the SA20 has shown it can keep pace and has delivered its own increases this season.



In brief

Kashmir Liberation Cell organizes rally

RAWALPINDI (INP): A rally was organized at Chandni Chowk in Rawalpindi on Friday, by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell to pay tributes to prominent Kashmiri leaders Muhammad Afzal Guru and Muhammad Maqbool Butt on their martyrdom anniversaries. India had hanged Muhammad Afzal Guru in New Delhi's Tihar Jail on this day in 2013 and sent prominent liberation leader, Muhammad Maqbool Butt, to the gallows in the same jail on February 11, 1984. Their bodies were buried in the premises of the jail. The speakers addressing the rally said both the martyred leaders are great heroes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and India should immediately hand over their bodies to the Kashmiris for proper burial. They said the sacrifices of Kashmiri martyrs are a ray of hope for Kashmiris struggling for right to self-determination. They said bodies of Afzal Guru and Maqbool Butt, buried in the premises of the prison instead of handing over to their families, is a manifestation of the worst form of Hindu extremism. The speakers said the history of the Indian judiciary is full of anti-Kashmir decisions. They added that such unfair decisions like the way the Indian judiciary had executed Afzal Guru would have created new enthusiasm and excitement in the Kashmir liberation movement. They said India cannot enslave the oppressed Kashmiris through persecution and the international community must force New Delhi to immediately stop the serious violations of human rights in occupied Kashmir and give the Kashmiris their birthright to self-determination. The speakers further said that the Supreme Court of India clearly wrote in its decision that the charges against Afzal Guru could not be proven, but to satisfy the collective conscience of the people of India, he is being sentenced to death. They said there is no example of this kind of judicial killing in the world.

Death anniversary of Abdul Qadir observed

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The death anniversary of prominent leader of Pakistan movement Sir Sheikh Abdul Qadir was observed on Friday. He was the editor of Punjab's first English newspaper and a very close associate of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. He was at the forefront of the group of Muslim youth that was born out of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's movement. Sir Sheikh Abdul Qadir was born in Ludhiana in 1874. He became editor of The Observer, the first Muslim newspaper published in English in 1895. In 1901, he launched the magazine 'Al-Makhzan', an Urdu language publication. This magazine published the early works of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. The preface to Allama Iqbal's first collection of Urdu poems "Bang-e-Dara" was also written by Sheikh Abdul Qadir. In 1904, Sheikh Abdul Qadir left for England to practice law. In 1907, he passed the barrister's examination, first practicing law in Delhi and then in Lahore. He became a High Court judge in 1921, and became Punjab's Education Minister in 1935. He became a member of the Executive Council of the Viceroy in 1939 and Chief Justice of Bahawalpur in 1942. Sheikh Abdul Qadir died on this day in 1955 and was buried in Miani Sahib Graveyard, Lahore.



ISLAMABAD: Supporters carrying PML-N candidate Anjum Aqeel Khan on shoulder while celebrates after won the election for National Assembly constituency NA-46 ICT according to the unofficial result.

Women politicians grasp crucial role in electoral process

ISLAMABAD (APP): Women from different age groups, political parties, and constituencies have actively contested in the General Election 2024, which depicts advancement in gender equality. The election results also show that women are gaining ground in various constituencies, said a report aired by a private news channel. Senior Leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Nafisa Shah said that active participation of women in politics and elections is a democratic norm that helps in addressing issues of women. Promoting the political participation of women is a necessary step that will help to achieve gender equality and it will also portray a positive image of the country in the world, said Independent candidate Shandana Gulzar while hailing active participation

of women in elections.

Another contestant Rehana Imtiaz Dar expressed her commitment and dedication to the welfare of the country and expressed confidence in winning polls based on her massive social work.

Representation of women in Pakistan's Parliament is an important metric to evaluate progress in bridging gender inequities in the country, said a youngster while appreciating the active role of women in General Election 2024.

The emergence of these courageous women candidates serves as an inspiring narrative of change and progress that signals a transformational era of the political landscape, said a women social media user.

While giving details of female candidates who participated in the election, Seemabia Tahir from

Rawalpindi said that overall turnout of women voters in the election was better than last year and it is a positive development that a huge number of women contested in the election.

Rehana Imtiaz Dar, former MNA from Lahore and Alia Hamza Malik also hailed the role of women in politics. Ayesha Nazir Jatt daughter of former MNA Nazir Jatt from Vahari commented that it was observed that women ran door-to-door campaigns against male candidates and appealed to exercise of right to vote.

Mrs. Talat Basra wife of Shaukat Basra from Bahawalnagar said participation of woman in the electoral process was increasing rapidly unlike in the past and Pakistani women are more aware of their political participation rights the past now.

NADRA audit: Cabinet approves bidding for hiring firm

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Federal Cabinet today approved open bidding for hiring services of a Category-A firm for the audit of NADRA.

The approval was accorded in a meeting of federal cabinet held in Islamabad, with Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Ha Kakar in the chair.

The decision has been made to make NADRA's audit more efficient, transparent and at par with international standards by providing equal opportunity to all audit firms registered with the State Bank of Pakistan in Category A. The cabinet also approved renaming the 'Cyber Security for Digital Pakistan' project as 'National Computer Emergency Response Team (NCERT)'.

Pakistani Bhil community being maltreated in India: Report

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Pakistani Hindu Bhil community, living in various camps in India, is being maltreated and living in poor condition.

A report released by Kashmir Media Service, today, said approximately 60,000 Pakistani Hindus are staying in various camps inside India, including eight camps in New Delhi, eight in Gujarat, six in Uttar Pradesh, fifteen in Rajasthan, four in Assam, three in Chhattisgarh and six in Madhya Pradesh. The Indian media should expose the evil face of Modi's government and urge the international community to intervene and force India to do the needful for the well-being of these Hindus.

The report said that many Hindu families from Pakistan immigrated to India but the treatment they received made them realize that the grass was not as green as perceived at the other side of the border.

It said Hundreds of Hindu families who left Pakistan in the past decade, allured by the Indian government's promises of citizenship and work, have either been living in tent settlements in New Delhi or have returned back home due to the lack of access to basic services and the Indian government's empty promises.

PML-N wins 9 out of 14 constituencies of Rawalpindi district

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan Muslim League (N) has emerged as the leading political party in Rawalpindi district by securing 9 out of 14 Punjab Assembly seats in the general elections 2024 on Feb 8 polls.

According to the unofficial results issued by the Returning Officers/ECP, Muhammad Bilal Yamin of PML N has won the election for Punjab Assembly PP-6, Rawalpindi I (Murree) constituency by securing 65,056 votes. His runner-up Zain ul Abideen bagged 33,475 votes. Overall Voters' turn-out remained 56.32%. From PP-7, Rawalpindi II (Murree) constituency independent candidate Muhammad Shabbir Awan has won by securing 72,898 votes against his runner-up Raja Saghir Ahmad of PML N who bagged 66,338 votes. Turn-out remained 49.66% in the constituency.

Independent candidate Javed Kausar has won from PP-8 (Gujarkhan) constituency by securing 47,526 votes, while his runner-up Khurram Parvez Raja of PPPP secured 40,603 votes. Voters' turn-out remained 45.88%.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz candidate, Shaukat Raja has won the election for Punjab Assembly constituency PP-9, Rawalpindi-III (Gujarkhan) by securing 50,560 votes. His runner-up was PPPP candidate, Chaudhry Sarfaraz Ahmad Khan who bagged 43,528 votes. The voters' turn-out remained 55.18%.

PML N candidate Naeem Ejaz has won

the election from PP-10, Rawalpindi IV constituency by securing 48,759 votes. His runner-up was independent candidate Muhammad Ameer Afzal who bagged 34,413 votes. Overall turnout of voters remained 56.26%.

From PP-11, Rawalpindi V (Taxila) constituency, PML N candidate Imran Ilyas Ch has won the election for Punjab Assembly by securing 27,657 votes whereas his runner-up Haji Zafar Iqbal, independent candidate secured 16,594 votes. Voters turn-out remained 50.04%.

PML N candidate Mohsin Ayub Khan has won the election for Punjab Assembly PP-12 (Taxila) Rawalpindi VI constituency by securing 41,338 votes. Independent candidate Saad Ali Khan remained runner up by securing 35,108 votes. Voters turn-out 53.89%. Independent candidate, Malik Fahad Masood has won the election PP-13, Rawalpindi-VII constituency by securing 56,723 votes. His runner-up was PML N candidate, Malik Umer Farooq who bagged 24,087 votes. The voters turn-out remained 47.47%.

PML N candidate, Malik Iftikhar Ahmad has won the election from PP-14 Rawalpindi VIII constituency by bagging 40,148 votes. His runner-up Nasir Ali Khan, independent candidate secured 33,487 votes. Voters turn-out remained 56%. Malik Mansoor Afsar of PML N has won the election for Punjab Assembly PP-15 Rawalpindi IX constituency by securing 62,163 votes.



ISLAMABAD: A youngster displays colourful balloons to attract the customers at Ghouri Town area.

Pakistan and Kazakhstan to establish State media offices in each other's countries

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan and Kazakhstan have agreed to establish offices of their state media organizations in each other's countries.

This came at a meeting between Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi and Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin in Islamabad today.

In his remarks, the Information Minister said Pakistan values its relations with Kazakhstan, stressing for promotion of people to people contacts and exchange of cultural delegations between the two countries.

Murtaza Solangi said we need to further promote cooperation between state media organizations. He said Radio Pakistan and PTV are important source of information on both sides.

The matter of signing a memorandum of understanding between the

Ministry of Information of Pakistan and the Ministry of Information and Social Development of Kazakhstan was also discussed in the meeting. In this regard, it was also agreed to hold a Zoom meeting between the Information Ministers of the two countries.

The Ambassador said the President of Kazakhstan loves Pakistan and its people. He said the Kazakh President will visit Pakistan next year. This visit will be of immense importance in terms of promotion of trade relations.

He said Pakistan is an important country for access to warm waters in the Middle East.

Sialkot is very famous for manufacturing football and surgical instruments.

The Ambassador said we want to further strengthen the cooperation between the state media of the two countries.

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Results for General Elections continue to pour in

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Results of general elections held for the National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies on Thursday continue to pour in from across the country.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has so far received 148 results of the National Assembly seats. Out of these unofficial provisional results, Pakistan Peoples' Party Parliamentarians won 38 and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz 43, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan four, while Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan and Pakistan Muslim League secured one seat each, according to a Radio Pakistan's report. Besides, 61 independents also emerged victorious. So far result of the Punjab Assembly is concerned, the PML-N has secured 77seats, independents 83, Pakistan Muslim League four and PPPP two seats.

The commission announced result of 99 constituencies of the Sindh Assembly. Out of which PPPP won 79, independents 10, MQM-Pakistan seven, Grand Democratic Alliance two, and Jamaat-e-Islami one seat. The result of 91 constituencies of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly has been received. Out of these seats, independ-

ent candidates stood victorious on 77, while PML-N got four, JUI-P five, Jamaat-e-Islami three and PPPP two seats.

So far result of 26 Balochistan Assembly seats has been received. PML-N remained successful on six seats, while PPPP and JUI-Pakistan won five each constituencies. Awami National Party and Balochistan Awami Party emerged victorious on two seats each.

Besides, Balochistan National Party-Awami and Jamaat-e-Islami secured one seat each. One independent candidate remained victorious in the election for Balochistan Assembly seats.

As per the received results, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, former President Asif Ali Zardari, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif as well as his son Hamza Shehbaz Sharif have all won their respective seats.

Besides, PML leader Chaudhry Salik Hussain, PPPP leader Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani, and former Speaker National Assembly Assad Qaisar also emerged victorious. Moreover, PPP stalwart Khurshed Ahmed Shah has secured his slot in the National Assembly for 8th consecutive time.



RAWALPINDI: PML-N candidate Hanif Abhsi reacts to the supporters celebrating the success of securing the National Assembly seat NA-56 Rawalpindi according to unofficial result.

‘Azerbaijani investors’
KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Commerce and Industry Nooruddin Azizi met with businessmen from Azerbaijan on Thursday in his office and discussed investment opportunities in Afghanistan. Both sides emphasized the need to strengthen business relations between Afghanistan and Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijanis asked the leadership to help establish a joint chamber of trade and investment between the two countries.

30 Malaysian tourists visit Herat
HERAT (Ariana News): As Afghanistan's tourism sector starts to improve, a group of 30 Malaysian tourists recently visited Herat where they took in the sights the province has to offer. Ahmadullah Muttaqi, head of Herat's information and culture department, met with the group and assured them of improved security. He said visitors now had no problems while visiting the historical sites and other attractions in the province.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

US, Uzbekistan envoys in Washington discuss Afghanistan issues



KABUL (Khaama Press): The Special Representative of the United States for Women, Girls, and Human Rights in Afghanistan discussed the status of Afghan women with the Ambassador of Uzbekistan in Washington. The U.S. Special Representative for Women, Girls, and Human Rights in Afghanistan stated that the meeting also touched upon the significance of Uzbekistan's role in Afghanistan. The Ambassador of Uzbekistan to the United States also described the

constructive conversation about taking a comprehensive stance supporting the rights of Afghan women and men with Ambassador Furqat Siddikov of Uzbekistan in Washington.

meeting and conversation with the U.S. Special Representative for Women, Girls, and Human Rights in Afghanistan as constructive. He mentioned that they discussed ensuring peace and stability in Central Asia and the best ways to support the people of Afghanistan.

Embassy in Tashkent has recently been entrusted to the representative of the caretaker government. Discussions between diplomatic representatives highlight the international concern for the situation in Afghanistan, especially regarding the rights and well-being of women and girls. Collaborative efforts between countries are crucial in addressing the challenges facing Afghanistan and promoting peace and stability in the region.

Women's healthcare requires 75 percent female workers: Ebad

KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Public Health Qalandar Ebad has said that the country's health sector needs 75 percent female workers to provide health services to women. Speaking in a debate program on Ariana News, Ebad said that the health sector has made progress but it is still facing some challenges. According to him, after the political change in Afghanistan, access to health services has increased, but in provision of quality services, Afghanistan's health sector is facing a shortage of female health workers, specialized medics, new technological equipment and medicines.

"I have said in many occasions that we need 75 percent presence of female workers for women's healthcare. That means, if 75 percent of our sisters are not present in this area, we may not be able to reach the



target," Ebad said. He also stated that there are about 70 specialty hospitals and 11,000 beds across the country, but 45,000 beds are needed to access standard health services. According to him, the pharmaceutical

industry in the country is very weak and only about three percent of the needed medicines are produced domestically. Ebad admitted that there are problems in the field of cancer treatment. He said that Afghanistan

needs international license for radiotherapy. A large number of Afghans travel to other countries, especially to Pakistan and India, for the purpose of treating their patients, with expenses reaching millions of dollars.

Deputy PM to UNAMA head Sanctions have hindered IEA's interaction with Int'l community

KABUL (Ariana News): The Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs Mawlawi Abdul Kabir met Thursday with Roza Otunbayeva, Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA, where he said that the continuing sanctions have hindered the Islamic Emirate's political interaction and understanding with the international community. The deputy PM's office

said in a statement that Abdul Kabir considered the continuation of sanctions against the IEA "unfair" and emphasized that the current government of Afghanistan has completed all the conditions for recognition. Kabir also said that the seat of Afghanistan in the United Nations should be handed over to the representative of the IEA. He also asked Otunbayeva to state the realities of Afghanistan at

the Doha meeting which is scheduled to be held on February, 18-19. The statement quoted the head of UNAMA as she said that the world has not forgotten Afghanistan and the Doha meeting is a good opportunity to attract humanitarian aid, ensure the country's stability and progress. Otunbayeva stated that the Doha meeting will provide an opportunity for the representative of the IEA to meet and exchange

views with the representatives of the countries in bilateral and multilateral meetings. The Doha meeting is expected to take place on Afghanistan's situation in less than two weeks convened by the UN and hosted by Qatar. Although the representative of the IEA has been invited to this meeting, the ruling officials said that they will vote on whether to participate in this meeting or not.

Efforts ongoing to 'divide the muslim communities': Muttaqi



KABUL (TOLOnews): The acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amir Khan Muttaqi at a gathering said that the world has an agenda to create disunity among Afghans. Without naming any country, Amir Khan Muttaqi said that programs aim to divide Muslims into groups, par-

ties, and ethnic groups. "The conspiracies and plans of the world are made to divide the Muslim communities into parties, tribes, and different groups," he added. According to him, the Islamic Emirate has had achievements in the economy, security, and politics.

"In the past two years, Allah honored the Islamic Emirate, which developed in the fields of security, politics, and the economy," Muttaqi stated. "The world and UN want four things from the Islamic Emirate and those are the respect for human and women rights, forming an inclusive government, fighting against drugs, and counter-terrorism," said Wahid Faqiri, a political analyst. "Except for a few harmful countries, the world wants a peaceful, stable, and progressive Afghanistan. Because if Afghanistan is unstable, it will affect other countries as well," said Malik Afghan, another political analyst. This comes as since for more than two years the Islamic Emirate has not been recognized by any foreign countries, but interaction with some countries continues.



Economic challenges hit female journalists in Kabul's media

KABUL (Khaama Press): After the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and significant political changes, many media outlets in the city of Kabul have been shut down due to economic problems. Journalists, especially female journalists, are facing unemployment, insufficient resources, and meagre income. Many have been forced to leave their jobs, while others struggle with severe economic challenges.

Female journalists state that after the upheavals and the loss of financial support for their media outlets, they were compelled to either leave their duties or continue working with reduced income. The high workload combined with low pay or irregular payment has demotivated them, ultimately leading many journalists to quit their jobs.

Zahra, Hasna, and Latifa, among the female journalists, have been unemployed due to the poor economic conditions of their media outlets over the past year. They express distress both economically and mentally, with no improvement in job opportunities.

Zahra says, "Finding a job in the current situation is the hardest task, and people's economic situation is also dire. Since I lost my job, my living conditions have deteriorated, and I can't meet life's necessities." Hasna also reveals that she was the sole breadwinner of her household and is now struggling with serious economic challenges. She told the

Khaama press, "I used to be the breadwinner of my family, but since I became unemployed, problems have been increasing day by day. We are eight in the family, and my father, being old, cannot work."

Similarly, due to economic challenges, Latifa had to quit her job as a journalist and is now grappling with uncertainty about managing her living expenses. She told Khaama Press, "The media outlet I worked for couldn't afford to pay its employees, so I had to leave my job. I've been desperately looking for work but to no avail. Our family is facing economic problems, and with each change in our lifestyle, things get more difficult, and we're bewildered about what to do."

These unemployed female journalists appeal to the authorities of the Taliban and relief agencies to pay serious attention to the situation of women and create job opportunities for female journalists.

Sara and Rabia are among the women who, due to the poor economic situation of their media outlet, have been forced to choose between three options: accepting a meagre income, working without pay, or resigning from their duties. Sara says, "For a year and two months, I've worked in a media outlet without receiving any salary or compensation. The distance from my home to work is considerable. I work diligently from early morning until late at night, yet the office doesn't even provide transportation



fare. This situation will force me to quit my job."

Similarly, Rabia preferred staying unemployed at home over the overwhelming workload with no compensation. She told Khaama press, "For several months, we haven't received any pay or compensation. Our family is economically weak. If this situation persists, I might be forced to resign. The work-

load is immense, but the income is minimal."

Meanwhile, authorities in some media outlets affected by the recent political changes in the country state that budget constraints and economic disparities have led to the dismissal of many employees.

Jafar Panahi, the managing director and owner of Afghan News Agency, says, "Media

outlets have undoubtedly been affected by the events of the past two years. Today, the biggest challenge is economic. The lack of attention from the global community has created numerous problems for media outlets. If there's no plan to fund media outlets, their capacities will diminish, and the voice of the people will not be properly represented."

Esmatullah Halem, the official at Radio Chinarr in Kabul, says that with the minimal revenue they generate from commercial advertisements, they cannot support many journalists in their outlets.

He told the press, "We don't receive any assistance or funding from foreign countries, and all our revenue comes from commercial advertisements and

sponsored programs, which we have currently lost. Therefore, we need to reduce our staff."

Simultaneously, the Nei organization, a supporter of independent media in Afghanistan, states that currently, more than 431 journalists and media personnel are employed in Kabul, whereas during the previous government, there were nearly 5,000 female journalists and employees across Afghanistan.

Zarif Karimi, an official from the Nei organization, said, "Currently, in Kabul, we have approximately 431 female journalists and media personnel. The majority of female journalists work in television channels such as Ariana, Tolo, Tolo News, Lemar, Tamadon, Radio Azadi, Salaam Watandar, Radio Kiliid, and others. Radio Bigem and Salaam Watandar are entirely managed by women and have around 35 to 40 female employees and journalists." Karimi added that some women in certain media outlets are also working without pay. According to him, "In TV channels such as Rah-e-Farda and some agencies, other female journalists are working without any compensation. In Tamadon TV, Noor TV, and Shamsad TV, women work for the lowest wages." The challenging economic situation of media outlets and the decrease in employees' salaries or non-payment of salaries have not only demotivated journalists but also negatively impacted the quality of media work.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing the meeting of federal cabinet.

Provision of maximum houses to people PM directs for focus on vertical buildings construction

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to make special focus on the construction of vertical buildings for providing houses to maximum people, instead of using valuable agricultural land in the allotment of plots to the employees.

Chairing the meeting of the Federal Cabinet, he also directed to formulate policy in this regard. The policy of allotment of plots to the CDA employees was presented to the Federal Cabinet in light of the decision of the Islamabad High Court.

According to the decision of the Islamabad High Court, the CDA had to determine the difference in the income of the CDA by giving employees at concessional rates. The Cabinet deferred the decision on the proposed allotment policy. On the recommendation of the Interior Ministry, the Cabinet also approved the open bidding for the procurement of services of a category A audit firm, issued by the State Bank of Pakistan for the audit of National Database

Registration Authority (NADRA). It modified the decision taken by the Federal Cabinet in 2019, according to which only four large and reputed audit firms could be hired for the audit of NADRA.

However in this decision, all the category A firms registered in the SBP have been provided equal opportunities for the audit of NADRA. The meeting was apprised that to make the audit of NADRA, more effective, transparent and in line with the international standard, it was important to provide equal opportunities to all the category A firms registered with the SBP for audit of NADRA.

Meanwhile, the cabinet, on the recommendation of Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, approved nomination of the project of "Cyber Security for Digital Pakistan" as "National Computer Emergency Response Team (NCERT)". The meeting was informed that the project - Cyber Security for Digital Pakistan - was part of the national development budget and work on it had already been initiated.

On the recommendation of

Ministry of Kashmir & Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, the Cabinet approved the amendment of Section 5(2) of the Adaptaion Act. According to the amendment, in this section, instead of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council, the words Azad Government of State of Jammu and Kashmir shall be used to transfer the license fee and renewal fee of mobile phone network spectrum from Pakistan Telecommunication Authority to Azad Government of State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The cabinet, on the recommendation of Ministry of Defence Production also approved the appointment of Air Commodore Muhammad Atif Hashim as member technical Pakistan Aeronautic Complex Board. The decision of the appointment would be applicable from July 19, 2023. The Federal Cabinet postponed the approval of the decisions made in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Privatization Commission on February 7, 2024. The meeting approved the decisions taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation held on January 31 and February 7, 2024.

My ‘worst frustration’ is I have no power to end Gaza war: UN

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed deep sadness at his inability to end the war in Gaza, "or at least to create the conditions for people to respect international law and international humanitarian law." He told Arab News: "My worst frustration is to see suffering at such a large scale and to know that I haven't the power to stop it. But it's a reality: I haven't the power to stop it."

He added: "I can raise my voice, and I do it. I can sometimes convene, but people need to be willing to be convened. "But the biggest frustration I have is not to have the power to end this conflict, or at least to create the conditions for people to respect international law and international humanitarian law." Speaking at his annual press conference to highlight his agenda priorities for this year, Guterres warned that a "gigantic tragedy" could happen in Rafah if Israel follows through on its intent to expand its offensive into the southern town where over 1 million Palestinians are sheltering.

"Half of Gaza's population is now crammed into Rafah. They have nowhere to go. They have no homes, and they have no hope," he said, again calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the unconditional release of hostages, and the need for "real, visible, concrete steps" towards a two-state solution. He voiced his disagreement "with the policies of the government of Israel, with the settlements, and with a number of other initiatives that have undermined the two-state solution. "And I've also expressed my opinion that the way the military operations have been conducted in Gaza has been with the absolutely unacceptable excess of people being killed, and the destruction."

He added: "I'll always be a strong

supporter of the right of Israel to live in peace and security. I've always been a committed fighter against antisemitism. "But I'm also totally committed to work for the Palestinians to be able to have their own state and to have their self-determination recognized, and to the end of occupation." Guterres sent a message to the people of Gaza of "total solidarity with the horrible suffering," and "total commitment to do everything to mobilize the UN system to provide the possible assistance we can provide, and at the same time to go on with a very active global advocacy for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire to take place."

The press conference came at a time when Qatar has been working with the US and Egypt to broker a ceasefire that would involve a halt in fighting for several weeks, and the release of the more than 100 hostages still held by Hamas after its Oct. 7 attacks in Israel. Guterres said it is in the interest of everybody, "and in the particular interest of the government of Israel," to make sure that these negotiations are successful, reiterating that "the quest of liberation of hostages is absolutely essential from a human point of view. I know the suffering that's related to that."

As he has done repeatedly in the past five months, Guterres again condemned the "horrible terror attacks" of Oct. 7 by Hamas, but he also described Israel's response as amounting to collective punishment of Palestinians in Gaza. "Israeli leaders have been telling repeatedly they aren't fighting the Palestinian people, they're fighting Hamas."

"If that's the case, I can't understand how this is conducted in such a way that has led in Gaza to reportedly around 28,000 people killed, 75 percent of the population displaced, and the destruction of entire neigh-

borhoods. ... I think there's something wrong in the way the military operations have been conducted." Asked whether Hamas, in allegedly using civilians as human shields, bears responsibility for the high death toll, Guterres said: "I've condemned the use of human shields. I even said they're a violation of international humanitarian law."

"But the same international humanitarian law is clear that even when there are human shields, there's an obligation to protect civilians. "So in that regard, I think we're abiding by principles without double standards. And I think it's very important to be credible, not to have double standards." On Jan. 26, in a case brought by South Africa, the International Court of Justice issued what it called emergency measures.

Although the ICJ did not uphold South Africa's request to order Israel to immediately halt its operations in Gaza, it did instruct Israel to prevent its military from committing acts that might be considered genocidal, to prevent and punish incitement to genocide, and to enable humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. The court also ruled that it had the legal right to proceed with the genocide case. Guterres expressed his "full support" for the ICJ, and said it is the right entity to pronounce itself on these issues.

"We fully support the decisions of the International Court of Justice, and (it) is absolutely essential that all the (court's) decisions are implemented," he added. Guterres said while it is true that the US is an ally to Israel, "and that has been said time and time again by all leaders in the US and Israel," it is also true, "and can testify it myself, that there has been a lot of pressure by the United States in relation to Israel in different areas of humanitarian aid. — Arab News

Zardari secures win in Shaheed Benazir Abad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Co-Chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari bagged 146,989 in NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad followed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent candidate Sardar Sher Rind. Earlier, PPP's Syed Khurshed Ahmed Shah won from the NA-201 seat in Sukkur-II with 120,219 votes, according to the unofficial results.

According to unofficial results, PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari bagged 146,989 in NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad followed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent candidate Sardar Sher Rind. Earlier, PPP's Syed Khurshed Ahmed Shah won from the NA-201 seat in Sukkur-II with 120,219 votes, according to the unofficial results. Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari clinched victory in NA-154 and bagged 131217 votes. A daylong polling process concluded on Thursday for the General Election 2024 overall in a peaceful manner, with active participation from all age group voters who came out in droves to elect candidates of their choice.

The polling started simultaneously across the country at 8 am and continued till 5 pm without any break to provide maximum time to citizens to exercise their right to vote enshrined in the constitution. The voters present in the premises of the polling stations at the poll-ending time were allowed to cast their votes, said a spokesperson for the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

According to the ECP, over 128 million registered voters were scheduled to exercise their democratic right by casting votes for candidates participating in elections for the national and provincial legislatures. The polling was held for 265 seats of the National Assembly and 590 seats of provincial assemblies. The voting took place on 51 seats of the Balochistan Assembly, 128 out of 130 seats of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, 296 out of 297 seats of the Punjab Assembly and 130 seats of the Sindh Assembly. The polling was held in 855 constituencies out of 859 however due to the death of the candidate, voting will not be held in NA 8, PP 266, PK 22 and PK 91.

Saad Rafique loses against Latif Khosa

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent candidate Latif Khosa secured victory against PML-N candidate Khawaja Saad Rafique in NA-122 Lahore in general election 2024.

According to unofficial results, PTI-backed Independent Latif Khosa bagged 117,109 votes followed by PML-N's Khawaja Saad Rafique who secured 77,907 votes. Following his defeat, Saad Rafique took to X (formerly Twitter) and congratulated the PTI candidate on his victory. He said that "I wholeheartedly accept my defeat"

Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent candidate Barrister Gohar Ali Khan clinched victory in NA-10 Buner in the general election 2024. According to unofficial results, the PTI-backed independent candidate Barrister Gohar Ali Khan bagged 110,023 votes followed by Awami National Party (ANP) candidate Abdul Rauf with 30302 votes.

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Putin tells West: Russia cannot be defeated in Ukraine

WASHINGTON: President Vladimir Putin said in an interview released with controversial right-wing US talk show host Tucker Carlson that the West should understand it is "impossible" to defeat Russia in Ukraine.

In a two-hour interview with the former Fox News host — coming just ahead of the two-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine — Putin also said a deal "can be reached" on imprisoned Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich. "There are certain terms being discussed via special services channels," he said, while insisting that the reporter is a spy — something the Journal and US government vehemently deny.

It was the first one-on-one interview of Putin by someone from the Western media since 2019. However Carlson, who is close to White House candidate and former president Donald Trump, asked few tough questions and largely listened while the Kremlin leader lectured him on his views of Russian history, portraying the country as a victim of Western betrayals.

Putin defended his decision to invade Ukraine in February 2022. And he said the West now realizes that Russia will not be defeated, despite US, European and NATO help to Ukraine. "Up until now, there has been the uproar and screaming about inflicting a strategic defeat to Russia on the battlefield. But now they are apparently coming to realize that it is difficult to achieve, if possible, at all. In my opinion, it is impossible by definition," he said.

He also aimed a message at the US Congress, where Trump-dominated Republicans are increasingly reluctant to keep backing Ukraine with weapons and other military aid. "I will tell you what we

are saying on this matter and what we are conveying to the US leadership. If you really want to stop fighting, you need to stop supplying weapons," he said.

When asked if Moscow would consider invading other countries in the region — NATO members Poland and Latvia — or generally across the European continent, Putin said that was "out of the question." "We have no interest in Poland, Latvia or anywhere else. Why would we do that? We simply don't have any interest. It's just threat mongering," Putin said.

A war with Poland, he said, would happen "only in one case: if Poland attacks Russia." Asked about a possible change in leadership after the US election, where Biden is expected to face off against Trump in a rematch of their 2020 contest, Putin indicated he would see little change. "You just asked me if another leader comes and changes something? It is not about the leader. It is not about the personality of a particular person."

Facing Putin in matching white chairs with a small table between them, Carlson rarely pushed back in his interview in an ornate room at the Kremlin — recorded Tuesday and posted on Carlson's own website — and did not challenge Putin over his relationship with Trump. While president and since being defeated by Biden, Trump has repeatedly praised Putin and failed to condemn the invasion of Ukraine — saying that if he was reelected he would be able to solve the war in "24 hours," though not saying how. By contrast, Biden has branded Putin a "war criminal" and has made backing for Ukraine's elected, pro-Western government one of the key priorities of his presidency. — Arab News

Houthis says Red Sea attacks won't deter Yemeni peace

LONDON: Mohammed

Abdulsalam, chief negotiator and spokesperson of the Houthis, says that the recent meeting of the Sanaa delegation with Saudi Arabia officials has "resulted in overcoming the most important obstacles facing the roadmap" to peace.

These solutions were in line with those championed by the UN envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, said Abdulsalam in a wide-ranging interview with Asharq Al-Awsat. Abdulsalam had previously called Saudi Arabia officials his "brothers" in a statement to Asharq Al-Awsat in January. He did so again, and answered questions about peace initiatives, attacks in the Red Sea and regional and international relations.

Abdulsalam said the Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea would only stop if Tel Aviv ended their assault on the Palestinian people. Abdulsalam believes that efforts at find-

ing peace in Yemen "is going well, both since the start of the UN truce in April 2022, corresponding to the month of Ramadan at that time, and also through discussions with the Saudi side under Omani sponsorship, which are going well so far."

Asked about the extent of the Houthis' willingness to begin political negotiations that include power sharing, elections, and a new constitution, Abdulsalam said "the roadmap included everyone's concerns, and highlighted the urgent humanitarian situation that the Yemeni people are suffering from." In a previous statement to Asharq Al-Awsat, Abdulsalam said that the Houthis' Red Sea operations would not impact the peace initiatives. He said it was "necessary to respond to the urgent situation in Palestine, which represents a risk for regional, Arab and Islamic security."

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"It will affect us in Yemen if Israel dominates, eliminates or weakens the Palestinian people and its resistance. This will reflect negatively on everyone, aside from the religious and moral position towards this issue. Therefore, we consider that it is separate from the peace process so far and think that the statements of the West come as part of an attempt to pressure us to back down." Abdulsalam added: "The military operations in the Red Sea, which target Israeli ships as well as ships heading towards Israel, will continue until the aggression against the Gaza Strip ends and the siege is lifted by bringing food assistance into the north and south of the strip. He said the Houthis were open to talks with Western powers on the Red Sea situation, under the "auspices of our brothers in the Sultanate of Oman." — Arab News



ISLAMABAD: Leader of PTI Shoaib Shaheen addressing a press conference at his office.

Independent candidates reach out to PML-N: Dar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former federal finance minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader, Ishaq Dar, disclosed that independent candidates have reached out to the party. He emphasized that the PML-N stands as the predominant party in the National Assembly seats from Punjab.

During media interactions, he affirmed PML-N's lead in the election results, emphasizing their continuous advantage as the results unfolded. Regarding delays in result announcements, the PML-N leader acknowledged the shutdown of mobile phone networks the previous day, refraining from complaints. Dar highlighted the influx of individuals seeking to align with PML-N, noting that independent candidates must join a party within 72 hours, as per constitutional

requirements. He expressed confidence that independent candidates would affiliate with PML-N within the stipulated timeframe.

Asserting PML-N's dominance in Punjab, the PML-N leader commended the strategic approach of Bilawal Bhutto's father Asif Zardari in wooing independent candidate. He further emphasized that, based on data compiled by PML-N's election cell, the party emerged as the single largest in the National Assembly and secured a clear majority in the Punjab Assembly.

Meanwhile, in a statement on social networking website X, Dar reiterated PML-N's prominent position in both the National Assembly and Punjab Assembly, based on data compiled by the party's election cell. He urged against premature and biased speculations, advocating for patience until the

Election Commission of Pakistan releases the official full results.

According to the interim results announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan, the Pakistan Muslim League (N) has garnered 17 seats, underscoring its leading role in the political landscape.

Meanwhile, PML-N Senior Vice President and PML-N Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif finally broke the silence on the results of Elections 2024 and said that PMLN emerged as the single largest party in centre.

In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, Maryam Nawaz Sharif said: "As opposed to the false perception deliberately built by a section of media last night, PMLN, Alhamdulillah emerging as the single largest party in the centre and in Punjab." Maryam Nawaz said: "Some results awaited."