

Pakistan condemns attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Sunday strongly condemned yesterday's heinous terrorist attack against the UAE military trainers and under training Somalian soldiers at a military base in Mogadishu. In a statement the Foreign Office Spokesperson said, "We offer our deepest condolences to the governments and the people of the UAE and Bahrain and to the families of victims and pray for the early recovery of all the injured."



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PML-N delegation meets Zardari, Bilawal

—MQM, PML-N leaders agree to work together

LAHORE (APP): A Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) delegation, led by its president Shehbaz Sharif, Sunday met Pakistan People's Party Parliamentary President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari here at Bilawal House.

According to a joint communique, detailed discussion was held on country's overall situation and political cooperation in future.

Leaders of the two parties agreed to cooperate with each other to ensure political stability in the country.

They agreed in principle to protect country from instability.

During the meeting, consultation was held on the current situation and leaders of both parties also exchanged proposals in this regard. They said that people had given them mandate and they would not disappoint them.

PPP leaders said that proposals

of the PML-N would be presented in party's Central Executive Committee meeting.

The PML-N delegation consisted of Azam Nazeer Tarar, Ayaz Sadiq, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Malik Ahmad Khan and Marriyum Aurangzeb.

Meanwhile, A delegation of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) Pakistan met with the leadership of Muslim League-N at Jati Umra here on Sunday.

An important political discussion was held between Pakistan Muslim League (N) supremo Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and MQM leadership, party president Shahbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz and other PML-N leaders also participated in the meeting.

The MQM delegation was led by Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Governor Sindh Kamran Tesuri, Dr. Farooq Sattar, Mustafa Kamal were included in the delegation. The

meeting discussed the future political situation.

According to the party sources, after the meeting between the delegation of Muslim League-N and MQM, the guest delegation has gone back, while the meeting between the two delegations lasted for 50 minutes.

During the meeting, PML-N and MQM decided to form a joint committee for the consultative process of government formation. The representative committee of both parties will contact other parliamentary parties. Both parties also agreed to contact other parties.

On this occasion, a consultation was also held regarding the newly elected members of the provincial assembly from Sindh.

Earlier, on their arrival in Raiwand, Pakistan Muslim League (N) supremo Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, President Shehbaz Sharif along with the party leaders welcomed the MQM leaders.



LAHORE: PML-N's Shehbaz Sharif meets with PPP leaders Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari at Bilawal House in Lahore on Sunday.

ECP directs re-polling at 53 polling stations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan has directed a re-polling at 53 polling stations in three constituencies of national and provincial assemblies on Thursday.

According to Radio Pakistan, the spokesperson of ECP said that the commission has withheld the results in NA-88 Khushab, PS-18 Ghotki-I, and PK-90 Kohat-I constituencies due to the wastage of polling materials.

The results of these constituencies will be announced after February 15. The Commission ordered re-polling in 26 polling stations of NA-88, following the burning of polling material by a crowd at the Returning Officer's office. The commission has mandated the re-polling of 2 polling stations in Ghotki due to the snatching and destruction by unknown miscreants and 25 polling stations in PK-90 Kohat.

Newly elected PPP candidate arrested on terrorism charges

KARACHI (INP): Irfan Zafar Leghari, a newly elected Member of the National Assembly for the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), was arrested alongside his uncle Qammar Leghari and fellow PPP member Fayyaz Bhatt in Mehr Tehsil, Sindh. The arrests were made under the Terrorism Act, casting a shadow over their recent electoral success.

According to reports, a case was registered at the Mehr police station accusing Leghari, his uncle, and Bhatt of firing and attacking Pakistani soldiers. The case reportedly involves over 200 individuals, but these three newly elected politicians stand out due to their recent ascent to public office. This development comes amidst ongoing tensions in the region and raises questions about the potential involvement of elected officials in acts of violence. While the full details of the case remain under investigation, the arrests have sparked outrage and debate within Pakistan.

The PPP has yet to issue an official statement on the matter. However, the party's leadership is likely under immense pressure to address these serious accusations and clarify their stance on the alleged involvement of their members in such activities.

The arrests also raise concerns about the potential for political influence in legal proceedings, particularly in cases related to terrorism.

It is crucial that the investigation is conducted transparently and impartially to ensure justice is served and public trust remains intact.

Daesh ring leader killed in Khyber operation: ISPR

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: On 11 February 2024, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Khyber District, on reported presence of a high profile terrorist.

During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange, HVT

Terrorist ring leader Surat Gul @Saif Ullah of Daesh was sent to hell. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed Terrorist Commander, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities including target killing of innocent civilians as well as extor-

tion and was highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies.

Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism.



U.S lawmakers tell Biden not to accept Pakistan election results

WASHINGTON (INP): Both Democratic and Republican politicians in the United States have urged President Biden not to accept Pakistan election results until the investigation of alleged irregularities.

Claims of interference or fraud should be fully investigated

a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department stated in a statement, voiced worries on the interference in the election process.

"We join credible international and local election observers in their assessment that these elections included undue restrictions on freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly,"

the statement said.

Congressman Brad Sherman, a prominent member of the influential House of Foreign Affairs Committee stated that "press organizations in Pakistan ought to have liberty to disclose vote tallying and there should not be any needless postponement in declaring the outcome".

Rashida Talib a congresswoman said that we must stand with the Pakistani people because their democracy is seriously at risk.

In addition to that the U.S. must make sure the tax monies don't go to anyone who undermines their right to freely choose their lead-

ers. They should be able to do so without intervention or meddling.

Another congresswoman Ilhasn Omar asked the State Department that there should be independent bodies who conduct investigations regarding the alleged interference in the electoral process until they refrain from recognizing the results.

She further said that I am deeply troubled by the news of meddling and interference in the election result process.

The Pakistani people deserve nothing less than a transparent democratic and true representative government.

Caretaker govt fulfills its constitutional responsibility by holding polls: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said the government had fulfilled its constitutional responsibility by holding free, fair and transparent elections in a peaceful manner.

Speaking in a TV talk show on private media, the minister said the caretaker government had extended all-out facilitation to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in holding the polls.

The results of the elections were a testament to the transparency of the elections, he added.

To a query, Solangi said there

was a procedure for the transfer of power under the constitution and law. Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said the incumbent speakers would call sessions of all the assemblies as soon as the official results of the general election conveyed to the respective assemblies officially.

The caretaker governments would be dissolved when the elected Prime Minister and Chief Ministers would take oaths of their positions, Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza

Solangi added.

The Ministry of Interior had responded to the queries about the suspension of mobile service on election day, he said, adding the citizens' lives were of paramount importance for the state.

There were threats to the citizens and polling staff, he said in response to another query. "It was important for us to ensure that there was no hindrance to the people's mobility on the election day.

There had always been disputes over the election process and election date, he said recalling such disputes at the time 2018 and 2013 elections.

Trump's NATO comments draw scorn, White House calls them 'unhinged'

PARIS (Reuters): Top western officials criticized former president Donald Trump on Sunday after he suggested the U.S. might not protect NATO allies who aren't spending enough on defence from a potential Russian invasion.

"Any suggestion that allies will not defend each other undermines all of our security, including that of the US, and puts American and European soldiers at increased risk", said NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in a written statement. "Any attack on NATO will be met with a united and forceful response," he added, reacting to remarks on Saturday by Trump, who is likely to be the Republican nominee in this year's U.S. presidential election.

Polish Defence Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz also weighed in.

"NATO's motto 'one for all, all for one' is a concrete commitment. Undermining the credibility of allied countries means weakening the entire NATO," he wrote on social media platform X.

"No election campaign is an excuse for playing with the security of the Alliance."

Germany's foreign ministry posted the message 'One for all and all for one' with the hashtag #StrongerTogether on its English language X account following Trump's comments.

EU Council President Charles Michel said: "Reckless statements on #NATO's security and Art 5 solidarity serve only (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's interest."

Article 5 of the NATO treaty says that an armed attack against an alliance member will be considered an attack against them all, triggering collective self-defence.

Trump, speaking during a political rally in South Carolina and appearing to recount a meeting with NATO leaders, quoted the president of "a big country" that he did not name as asking, "Well sir, if we don't pay, and we're attacked by Russia - will you protect us?"

"I said: 'You didn't pay? You're delinquent?' He said: 'Yes, let's say that happened.' No I would not protect you. In fact I would encourage them to do whatever the hell they want. You gotta pay."

"We have heard that before ... Nothing new under the sun", said

EU Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton in an interview with France's LCI television, adding:

"He maybe has issues with his memory, it was actually a female president, not of a country, but of the European Union," Breton said, referring to European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen and a conversation she had with Trump in 2020.

"We cannot flip a coin about our security every four years depending on this or that election, namely the U.S. presidential election," Breton said, adding European Union leaders understood the bloc needed to boost its own military spending and capacities.

White House spokesperson Andrew Bates, asked about Trump's comments, said, "Encouraging invasions of our closest allies by murderous regimes is appalling and unhinged - and it endangers American national security, global stability and our economy at home."

NATO's 31 members have agreed on a target of spending at least 2% of gross domestic product on defence, but NATO estimates have shown that only 11 are spending that much.

Desperate Gazans in Rafah fear coming Israeli assault

RAFAH, Gaza Strip/DOHA (Reuters): The Abu Mustafa family's tent is hard against the high concrete and metal fence separating Gaza from Egypt in Rafah, the last relatively safe place in an enclave devastated by Israel's military offensive, but one that may now also come under attack.

The family is among more than a million Palestinians now crammed into the area around Rafah and fearing they have nowhere left to flee inside a tiny strip largely reduced to rubble and where fighting still rages.

"Every day, we're on the run. Being displaced is tough because I have two daughters with disabilities. I can't carry them around. I don't have a car or a cart," said Laila Abu Mustafa. "If there will be more displacement, I'm not moving," she said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered an evacuation plan for the civilians who crowd Rafah, camping in streets and empty lots, on the beach and like the Abu Mustafa family on the sandy strip along the Egyptian border.

Before previous assaults on Gaza cities, Israel's military has ordered civilians to leave without preparing any specific evacuation plan. Aid agencies say an assault on Rafah

would be catastrophic in a war that has already caused untold misery.

U.S. President Joe Biden was due to speak with Netanyahu on Sunday, White House officials said, the first conversation between them since Biden last week described Israel's military response in Gaza as "over the top". The war began on Oct. 7 when the militant group Hamas that controls Gaza stormed the border fence with Israel, sending in fighters who killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and seized about 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

Four months later, Gaza is in ruins. Under a massive daily bombardment, Israeli ground forces have overrun most of the enclave, smashing houses, public buildings and infrastructure with air raids, artillery fire and controlled detonations.

Palestinian health authorities say more than 28,000 people have been killed in the war. More than 85% of Gazans are homeless. A U.N. survey found that nearly one in 10 children under five are acutely malnourished.

Talks for a deal on a ceasefire and the release of hostages have so far failed to bring an agreement. Last week Israel rejected a Hamas proposal, saying it would not stop fighting

while the group retained brigades that Israel says are hiding in Rafah.

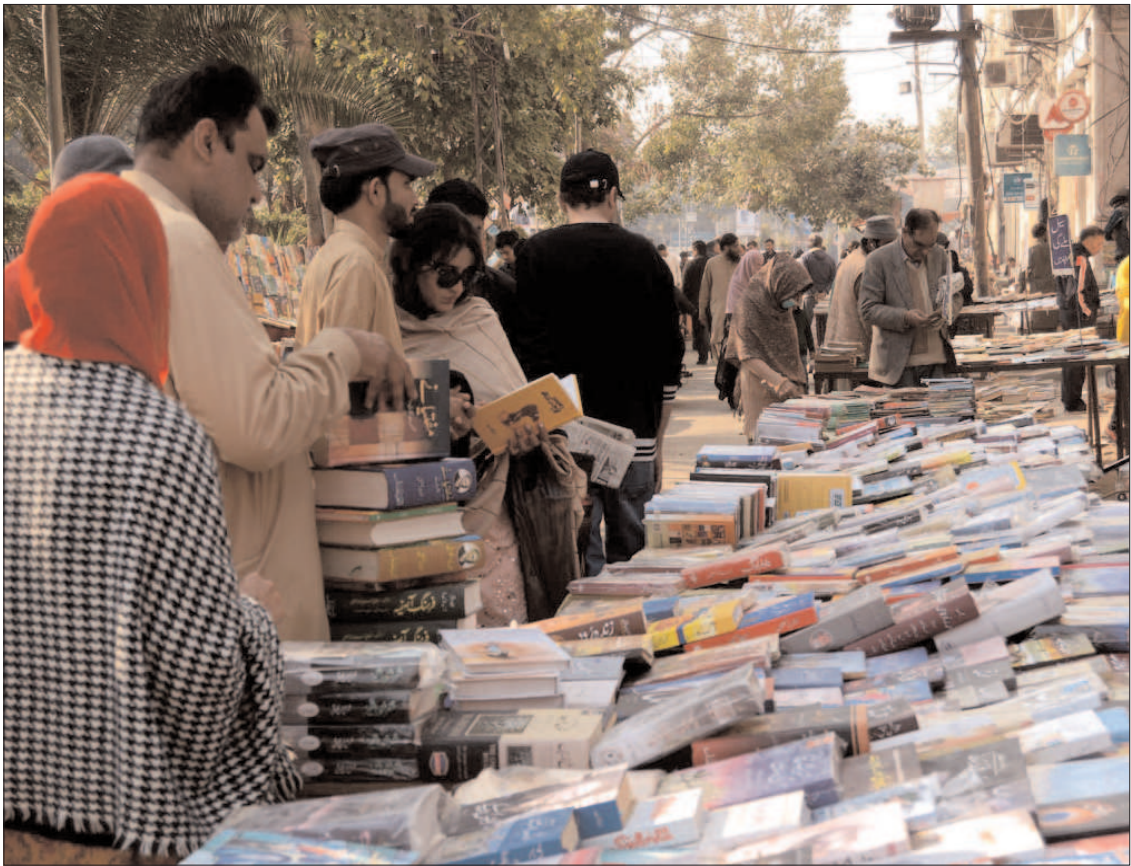
Egyptian security sources said more high-level talks were planned for Tuesday with senior officials from Qatar and the United States to attend, as well as Israeli and Palestinian delegations. Israeli air raids have started targeting Rafah over recent days.

On Sunday, Hamas said Israeli air raids in the Gaza Strip over the previous four days had killed two hostages and injured eight others.

The group said any Israeli assault on Rafah would "blow up" the discussions for a deal to free the remaining hostages. Speaking in an interview that aired on U.S. network ABC on Sunday, Netanyahu reiterated that Israeli forces would assault Rafah, but said they were preparing "a detailed plan" for where civilians there could go. "We're going to do it. We're going to get the remaining Hamas terrorist battalions in Rafah," he said, adding "we're going to do it while providing safe passage for the civilian population". A spokesperson for France's Foreign Ministry said "a large-scale Israeli offensive at Rafah would create a catastrophic humanitarian situation of a new and unjustifiable dimension".

Ghafoor Haideri wins

QUETTA (APP): Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI) Pakistan's Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri has won the National Assembly election from NA-261 (Surab-Kalat-Mastung) by securing 31,649 votes. According to the unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer/ECP, his runner-up was Muhammad Akhtar Mengal of the Balochistan National Party (BNP), who bagged 27,395 votes.



LAHORE: People selecting and purchasing old books from a roadside setup at Mall Road.

Qazi Wajid remembered on 6th death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): The legendary classical drama icon and versatile actor, Qazi Wajid, was fondly remembered and honored on his sixth death anniversary on Sunday for his life-long contributions to the entertainment industry.

He remained associated with the industry for 25 years, and was one of the pioneers of Pakistan's radio industry. Wajid decided to switch careers and joined television in 1966, private news channel reported.

Qazi Wajid died on February 11, 2018, in Karachi, after being brought to the hospital for heart palpitations.

Qazi Wajid's career includes unforgettable performances in Pakistani television classics including "Khuda Ki Basti," "Dhoop Kinaray," and "Tanhaiyan." His portrayal of Raja in "Khuda Ki Basti" propelled him to celebrity status on television.

Three persons killed in Sheikhpura

ISLAMABAD (APP): Three persons were killed in firing by unknown persons on Sunday near Khanpur area of Sheikhpura.

According to the private news channel, the police reached the spot after receiving the information about the incident and cordoned off the area.

The police said, the victims including two brothers and a guest were shot dead in the incident by the unknown assassins.

Police said that among the victims, the two brothers have been identified as Farooq Dogar and Baga Dogar.

Police have initiated an investigation after registering a case to probe the motive of the incident.

Armed gang raids cattle shed

KARACHI (INP): Unknown armed individuals stole 94 buffaloes and cows, valued in the crores of rupees (tens of millions USD), from a cattle shed in Karachi's Landhi neighborhood. The incident occurred sometime between Friday night and Saturday morning, leaving the owner and local authorities scrambling for answers.

According to reports, around 20 to 25 armed suspects stormed the cattle farm, wielding weapons like Kalashnikovs, repeaters, and pistols. They overpowered the owner and employees, tying them up before herding the livestock onto three waiting trucks and making their escape. The stolen animals are said to be worth a significant sum, dealing a major financial blow to the victim.

Adding another layer of intrigue, the owner claims to recognize four of the alleged perpetrators, naming them Manzoor Chandio, Akhtar Chandio, Willi John Chandio, and Arshad Brohi. He further states that the armed group also abducted one of his employees alongside the stolen cattle.

Sirajul Haq sees Feb 8 polls rigged

LAHORE (PPI) Jamaat-e-Islami emir Sirajul Haq has declared the Feb 8 polls rigged and demanded resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja.

The Jammat central leadership held a meeting in its headquarters Mansoorah with Siraj in the chair to discuss post-election scenario, according to a statement on Sunday.

Siraj lambasted the ECP

and said it supported the PML-N, the PPP and the MQM in the general elections. He asserted that there was no level playing field for everyone in the polls. He claimed that election results do not reflect true public sentiment. It was an injustice to the public and voters, Siraj added.

He stated that any government formed as a result of rigged elections would have no political and moral

standing. The Jamaat chief said international organisations and media have raised questions about fairness and transparency of elections, further intensifying polarisation and destabilising political situation.

Siraj blamed the ECP for failing to fulfil its constitutional responsibility. He called for the establishment of an independent and unbiased commission for investigations.

CM reviews progress on Mazar Bibi Pak Daman road

LAHORE (APP): A new route from the Empress Road will be built to facilitate pilgrims at Mazar Bibi Pak Daman. Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a visit to the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) located at the Birdwood Road Lahore and inaugurated FM Radio 'Sehat Zindagi' by the Health Department.

He inspected the studios and various sections of the FM Radio and recorded a message for the FM Radio Sehat Zindagi. He said that launching of FM Radio was an appreciable step of the Health Department. The people could be provided awareness to save themselves from various diseases and undergo their treatment through the FM Radio. He said that specialists from various medical departments should be invited on Sehat Zindagi radio and people should be provided awareness with regard to health issues and treatment.

Mohsin Naqvi underscored that Sehat Zindagi radio would prove to be a beneficial project in the health sector. He maintained that the standard of radio industry has definitely declined but FM Radio is listened even today. The broadcast of FM Radio Sehat Zindagi can be listened within approximately 50-km range of Lahore. The P&SHD minister

were also present.

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deserved appreciation on successful launch of FM Radio, he said. The Health Department could make an effective awareness campaign through the platform of Sehat Zindagi. The health secretary, despite scarce resources, launched an excellent project, he added. The FM Radio has to focus only on programs relating to the health sector.

Naqvi apprised that various hospitals had been upgraded in a short span of time while upgradation of few other hospitals was in their final phases of completion. The hospitals which have not been upgraded yet, would be upgraded in the next phase. The CM said, "We have provided non-available facilities in the hospitals. We will arrange new operation theatres, MRI machines and other facilities in collaboration with the private sector."

The CM also inaugurated Human Resource Information and Management System (HRIMS), Health Information and Service Delivery Unit (HISDU). He inaugurated the van especially being prepared for the coast project. Provincial Minister for P&SHC Dr. Jamal Nasir, Chief Secretary, Secretary C&W, Secretary Health and officials concerned were also present.

Tourists urged to follow traffic rules to avoid mess on roads in Murree

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Murree, Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi has urged the tourists to strictly abide by traffic rules to avoid traffic congestion and road mishaps at the hill station.

He informed that the traffic management plan was being implemented to facilitate the tourists. He said that 13 tourist facilitation centers were established at different places in Murree while a control room had also been made fully functional. The DC said that the district administration had made excellent arrangements to promote tourism in the region besides helping and assisting the tourists.

A large number of tourists visit, 'Queen of Hills', Murree to enjoy the snowfall in winter, he said adding, solid steps were taken by the district administration to provide assistance and guidance to the tourists. He informed that on the directives of the Commissioner Rawalpindi

Division Liaquat Ali Chatta, the administration was ensuring strict implementation of Murree Contingency Plan to facilitate the tourists.

All the machinery along with the drivers was available round the clock during the snowfall season, he said. According to Murree Contingency Plan, additional staff had been provided to traffic police and related departments. He said that the role of traffic police is most important to regulate the traffic in Murree.

Entry of the vehicles would be allowed according to the parking capacity in Murree, he informed. The management had completed all its arrangements for the snowfall season and the staff and officers would not be allowed to remain absent from the duties, he warned.

Facilitation Centers at various locations in Murree at Satara Meel, Lower Topa, Jika Galli, GPO, Kashmir Point, Kuldana, Kali Mitti, Masiyari, Sindhan, Sunny Bank,

Bhorban, Thanda Jungle and Saharbagla had been set up to guide and assist the tourists, the DC said.

Public service messages were being displayed on SMDs to spread awareness for the tourists, he informed. The DC further said that a 24/7 helpline is available to guide the tourists and keep them updated about the weather and traffic conditions.

The vehicles entering the city would be monitored through digital counting at the 17 Meel Toll Plaza. 26 CCTV cameras had also been installed to monitor the situation of traffic and other administrative matters, he added. The DC Murree informed all the departments were put on high alert in view of the forecast of snowfall.

The tourists would be able to get the information about weather, traffic conditions at various intersections, hotels before coming to Murree from the website, the DC added.

Asma Jahangir remembered on her sixth death anniversary

LAHORE (APP): The sixth death anniversary of iconic human rights advocate Asma Jahangir was observed across the country on Sunday.

She was born on January 27, 1952, in Lahore to human rights pioneer Malik Jilani. Asma Jahangir's fearless and tireless struggle for democracy and human rights will always be remembered. She was also the co-founder of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and served as its Secretary-General. Under her leadership, the HRCP emerged as the leading platform for highlighting human rights issues across the country and advocating for immediate actions.

Noted rights activist Tahira Habib told APP that Asma's death anniversary provides people with an opportunity to reflect upon her fight for fellow human beings and celebrate the enduring legacy of her work. "Despite the fact that she's not around us anymore, her spirit lives on, inspiring future generations to continue fighting for human rights and justice," she opined. Asma Jahangir was posthumously awarded the Nishan-e-Imtiaz. She died on this day in 2018.

CM Baqar takes cognizance of killings in Larkana

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Rtd) Maqbool Baqar on Sunday took notice of casualties during firing in Neodero area of Larkana.

While expressing his grief and sorrow over the killings of 6 persons including a policeman in Neodero, he directed the IGP Sindh to present an immediate report of the incident to him.

The IGP informed the Chief Minister that firing took place between two groups near Neodero Bypass in Larkana. He said that as a result of the firing, a police officer of Mahota police station ASI Sultan Shah embraced martyrdom.

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Fire breaks out in Karachi's Govt hospital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Seven persons sustained burn injuries as a fire erupted in the emergency centre of Sindh Government Hospital Liaquatabad on Sunday.

According to private news channel, a fire broke out due to cylinder explosion in the emergency ward of Sindh Government Hospital Liaquatabad situated in a densely populated area of Karachi.

The Police said that all those injured persons were hospital's staff and they were rushed to another hospital. The smoke filled the entire hospital, causing inconvenience for the patients and attendants.

Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori has taken notice of the incident and sought a report from Medical Superintendent of Sindh Government Hospital Liaquatabad.

PU awards 10 PhD degrees

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University has awarded ten PhD degrees to the scholars in which Amna Mushtaq D/o Mushtaq Hussain in the subject of Sociology, Aneela Munir D/o Muhammad Munir in the subject of Zoology, Muhammad Ajmal S/o Muhammad Afzal in the subject of Mathematics, Syed Muhammad Saqib Saleem S/o Syed Muhammad Saleem in the subject of Communication Studies, Maria Mushtaq D/o Mushtaq Ahmed in the subject of Zoology, Muhammad Hsain Shahzad S/o Muhammad Zulqarnain in the subject of Mathematics, Syed Asif Ali Shah S/o Syed Wasif Ali Shah in the subject of Mathematics, Mehwish Rauf D/o Abdul Rauf in the subject of Agriculture Sciences (Plant Pathology), Shabana Kausar D/o Talib Hussain in the subject of Chemistry and Sitara Nasar D/o Nasar Saeed in the subject of Biological Sciences (Molecular Biology).

PTI in habit of not accepting its defeat: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League leader Azma Bukhari said on Sunday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was in the habit of not accepting its defeat.

Talking to the media here at Model Town, she said, "From where PTI loses it levels allegation of rigging in that constituency", Azma Bukhari said that PTI levelled rigging allegations in 2013 and created chaos in the country.

She said, "Every party talks about respect of their

mandate but no one talks about the respect of PML-N's mandate."

She further said that PML-N was a responsible party and it does not believe in politics of lies and agitation.

Election tribunal was an appropriate forum which could be approached by aggrieved candidates, she added.

She said that with the grace of Allah Almighty, PML-N was the only majority party in Punjab, adding that prosperity and development process

would start again in the province.

She claimed that PML-N was also a single majority party in the National Assembly.

Azma said that PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif had mentioned it again and again that no single party could steer the country out of challenges as collective efforts were required in this regard.

She said it was vital to ensure stability in the country and all political parties had to play their role for this purpose.

Lahore ranks 5th in global air pollution ranking

LAHORE (APP): The provincial metropolis was the 5th most polluted place in the world on Sunday.

According to the details, the weather in the provincial capital again has become polluted, despite cold winds continuing in the early morning in the bright sun, the temperature was recorded at 10 degrees Celsius, while the weather is predicted to remain dry-polluted in the next 24 hours.

According to the Meteorological Department, the maximum temperature in the city is likely to go up to 21 degrees, the humidity in the air is 90 percent, the wind is blowing at a speed of 5 km, there is no chance of rain in the next 24 hours. Lahore ranks 5th in the global air pollution ranking, with an overall air quality index of 192.

Meanwhile, on the instructions of Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa, action continues against violation of anti-smog orders. Various trash burning furnaces have been demolished for using old technology, while others were extinguished.

The Punjab Environment Protection Department (EPD) also started various initiatives to control smog, under which smog dissolution "weather generators" have been installed in Lahore.

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Dubai, adding a weather generator is capable of dissolving smog or thickly polluted environment in a 10 square kilometer area.

The EPD director said that all possible measures including generators were being taken to control the polluted air. "Short and medium-term projects have been prepared in this regard", he added.

He said that it was the need of the hour to reduce the emission of harmful gases and use modern technology to control air pollution.

Meanwhile, the EPD's anti-pollution squad sealed various smoky units in the city.

The anti-smog squad is also imposing fines worth millions on factories and units responsible for creating smog.

Broad-based national govt will serve nation best: PDP

KARACHI (PPI): Regretted that the widening political polarization following the results of the general election, Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman Altaf Shakoor here Sunday said that instead of further political infight, a broad-based national government would serve the nation best to bring economic stability and electoral reforms, especially proportionate electoral system.

He said the nation and country needs a stronger economy which is not possible without a durable long-term broad-based national government. He said all major political parties and winning independent candidates should join hands to steer the country out of political and economic crises.

Altaf said we need to prefer the national interests over petty personal

interests. He said the results of the general election show that polls were relatively free and fair. He said the victory of the independent candidates shows that there is respect for political dissent in our country which is a healthy sign for democracy. He said youth have played a major role in the recent elections and all political parties should keep in mind that ignoring the voice and aspirations of the youth would go against them.

He said electoral reforms are now overdue. It is a dire need to introduce a proportionate electoral system in our country. He said the present system has served the interests of big mafias and not of the ordinary people. He said we should ensure that the voice of ordinary voters is also heard and respected. He said this is the way to

grow and develop a healthy and sustainable democracy in our country.

Altaf asked to keep the economy supreme over all other political considerations. He said without a strong economy we would continue to live as slaves of the international lenders like the World Bank and IMF. He said agricultural, irrigation and solar energy sectors would need focus of the coming government as these sectors are our game changers. He said every household should have rooftop solar panel systems. Dozens of big and small dams should be made and vast barren arid lands should be irrigated with drip irrigation and other water saving technologies.

Altaf congratulated all the winners and hoped that they would serve the nation and country to the best of their abilities.

SUIT NOTICE

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar
Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar

Case No: **25/1 of 2024** Date of hearing: **16-03-2024** Suit for the recovery of **Rs.56,208.16** M/S Askari Bank Ltd: chowk Yaadgar Branch, Peshawar. Vs: Muhammad Safer.

Notice Versus:- Muhammad Safer S/o Muhammad Shafiq c/o:- 116 Brigade, Bannu cant; near yadgar-e-shuhada, Bannu. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of **Rs.56,208.16** Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/publication of the notice in the newspapers. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today On 06-02-2024 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Registrar Banking Court-1 Peshawar

SUIT NOTICE

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar
Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar

Case No: **20/1 of 2024** Date of hearing: **16-03-2024** Suit for the recovery of **Rs.56,666.76** M/S Askari Bank Ltd: chowk Yaadgar Branch, Peshawar. Vs: Waseem Anwar.

Notice Versus:- Waseem Anwar S/o Habib-ul-Ghani, c/o:- Dara Medical Hostel, Room No.45, KTH Hospital, Peshawar. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of **Rs.140,666.76** Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/publication of the notice in the newspapers. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today On 06-02-2024 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Registrar Banking Court-1 Peshawar

SUIT NOTICE

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar
Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar

Case No: **19/1 of 2024** Date of hearing: **16-03-2024** Suit for the recovery of **Rs.198,769.48** M/S Askari Bank Ltd: chowk Yaadgar Branch, Peshawar. Vs: Atta-ur-Rehman.

Notice Versus:- Atta-ur-Rehman S/O Noor Rehman R/o:- House No. 400, street No.4, Muhallah sardar Ahmad Jan colony Peshawar. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of **Rs.198,769.48** Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/publication of the notice in the newspapers. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today On 06-02-2024 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Registrar Banking Court-1 Peshawar

LESCO detects 484 power pilferers in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 484 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhpura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) on the 152nd day of grand anti-power theft campaign.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Sunday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 148 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations.

Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations.

The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice. On the 152nd consecutive day of the anti-power theft campaign.

Preservation of historical buildings imperative to promote archeological tourism in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Known as the oldest city of South Asia with nearly 3000 years old history, Peshawar is s home to scores of historical buildings signifying its past glory.

However, several of its ancient buildings like Khan Klub has started losing its unique architecture and wood work due to negligence and experts call for its prevention to restore these jewels inevitable to promote archeological tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Khan Klub, a historical building at Peshawar City constructed by Mughal rulers in 1800, has started losing its eye-catching ancient architecture and woodwork after it was converted into floor godowns and general stores for monetary gains.

Located at Hastnagri bazaar near Balahisar fort and Chowk Yadgar, Khan Klub's four storey building built on five marla land was in shamble currently with no facilities for tourist and art lovers for which it was once famous far and is required immediate reconstruction and conservation work before it falls.

A visitor while passing on Ashraf road near Rampura gate would remain extremely disappointed after seeing the deteriorating boutique style primitive building with dust of floor, fodder and materials of daily use commodities everywhere.

"Khan Klub is neither a hotel nor a guesthouse or Havalli, but it is a home of centuries old civilization reflecting Mughal era architecture and traditional craftsmanship and its conservation was need of the hour being an identity of Peshawar," said Bakhtzada Khan, senior research officer KP archeology and museum department while talking to APP on Monday.

"Khan Klub was the most preferred choice of foreign tourists and dignitaries for stay at Peshawar due to its peaceful environment, architectural significance and close proximity with historical buildings including Balahisar fort, Mohabat Khan mosque and Qissa Khwani bazaar," he said.

"Before 2,001, booking of a room was a herculean task for foreign tourists, ambassadors and missions, who stayed here due to its pleasant atmosphere, mouthwatering cuisines, cultural music and closed location with other historical buildings including Qisa Khwani bazaar, Ghanta Ghar, Mohabat Khan Mosque, Chowk Yadgar, Ghanta Ghar and Sethi House," he said, adding in its main halls were flooded with tourists where they enjoyed the traditional Peshawari music including 'Rubab with Tabla.

The tourists explored the historical Chowk Yadgar monument constructed in 1892 after it was dedicated to General Hastings and were highly impressed by the historical Mahabat Khan mosque's architecture built in 17th century by the Mughal Governor Mohabat Khan.

Peshawar Museum, which is the lone museum of Ghandhara Art with complete life story of Lord Buddha housing around 30,000 artifacts and statues had drawn Ghandara art lovers and enjoyed the traditional Peshawari Qhwana at historical Qissa Khwani bazaar in the company of the international storey tellers.

Besides cultural programs, the tourists enjoyed local traditional music and taste of varieties of foods including the mouthwatering Peshawari Palao, Qahwah (Green Tea), lemon grass tea with an aroma of jasmine, Bengal tea, Kerala coffee and darjeeling sitting bud at Qissa Khwani and returned back to Khan Klub for night stay.

Bakht Zada said Khan Klub had been formally converted into a full fledged hotel by a local influential Inayatullah Khan with support of an Irish American Martin Jay Davis in 1995 and has soon become the most ideal choice of foreign and domestic tourists.

The owners said they were ready to reserve its two upper storey for tourists if the provincial government provides financial support for its repair and renovation. The architecture and artwork of the historical building were badly affected by earthquakes and torrential rains.

"Its sophisticated artwork on exterior and interior designs besides its beautifully designed balconies required immediate renovations before it collapsed" said former Nazim Bahadar Khan while talking to APP.

He said its eight rooms with different colorful names were totally different from one another. A room called the "Lapic Suite" consists of a large sitting room and bedroom artistically decorated with royal blue silk, damask and embroidered furnishings complimented by solid lazuli bowls and decorative tiles were centre of attraction of visitors.

This suite has an immediate excess to its past library containing books on the history and culture of the province especially of Peshawar and Khyber Pass. Another room is called "spinal" with a fireplace in winter, private balte-balcony, red beige and black embroidered silk furnishing. While entering the Morganite room with 22-feet ceiling, sikh styled windows and shutters open onto the private balcony, peach, cherry, cognac colored silk embroidered furniture with antique Russian bowls and filigreed brass lanterns, was a historic place to watch.

Another room called the "Tourmaline Suite" has three levels of carved antique glass windows and doors with a 22-feet ceiling and multi-colored silk and carpets furnishings. The "Topaz Suite " room consists of a large sitting room and a second level sleeping bed, a large private bath and balcony fireplace and original oil paintings, cedar staircase and filigreed lanterns compliment the yellow damask furnishings was also losing its architectural value.

By visiting its "Garnet Room" a visitor had enjoyed the panoramic view of the old city of Peshawar and mountain ranges of Koh-e-Shalman. The room is decorated with garnet inlaid floor and saffron colored silk.

"Peridot" is another room with a 12-feet ceiling, a balcony and shuttered windows from where a fine view of the walled city could still be seen. The "Ruby Suite" is a two-level black granitic suite with a lovely second level and private balcony with oil paintings and red silk covered furnishing that has inspired many.

There was a Mughal era restaurant, where the guests sat on takiyas (pillows) and enjoyed KP's traditional live musical shows in the form of Rubab and Tabla besides popular Khattak dance, also needing the attention of concerned authorities for conservation and repair works.

Bakhtzada said that 1868 ancient houses, monuments and religious places have been included in the protected list and its architectural would be kept preserved. The KP government has completed a cultural heritage trail project under which 500 meters long trail from ancient Ghanta Ghar to Gor Gathri has been renovated including centuries-old buildings, houses and shops besides establishment of a food street at Namak Mandai Peshawar.

The trail started at the historical Ghanta Ghar and passed through ancient Bazaar-e-Kalaan and primordial Mohallah Sethian with a number of beautifully architectural houses constructed by wealthy Sethi family way back in 1880s.

He said Sethi house with a unique woodwork has been purchased by the government keeping in view of its historical significance and was opened for tourists after establishment of a museum in it.

Bakhtzada said that Sethi House was converted as museum attracting tourists from across the country. The renovation of Ali Mardan Khan Valley built during the British era at cantonment was also completed besides ancient inns of Mughal period at Gor Kathri at Peshawar.

Under the heritage project, he said the facade or outer appearances of 85 heritage buildings of Mughal, British and Sikh period with a cultural and historical touch have been renovated.

The experts requested the KP cultural and tourism authority and Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation to come forward and financially support owners of such buildings to conserve Khan Klub like architectural wonders of Pakistan.

Convoy of 40 trucks of relief goods entered in Chitral

PESHAWAR (APP): As promised, the truck convoy of loaded relief goods of the Muhammad Talha Mahmood Foundation Sunday entered Chitral would be distributed among needy people, Senator Mohammad Talha Mahmood said while talking to media men.

Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood was contesting election from constituency of NA -1 Chitral for the National Assembly seat, which led to him temporarily separated from the Foundation and his son Mustafa bin Talha was declared acting Chairman.

On his direction 40 trucks loaded from free ration, edible things and relief goods had reached inside the Lowari Tunnel, but opponent candidates of different political and religious parties had objected to it and submitted a written complaint to the Deputy Commissioner to stop this distribution as it was a political bribe.

Now after stopping the relief goods, the same would be distributed among needed people of District Chitral until the end of election. Senator Talha Mahmood had announced that as soon as the Election was over, the trucks loaded with relief goods would enter Chitral.

"I was sitting in the driving seat and will carry a convoy of these trucks filled with relief goods in Chitral and on Sunday people will have witnessed the promises I had made with them," he said. The convoy of trucks filled with relief goods was standing in Syed Abad, which was carried by Senator Talha Mahmood leading a procession.

Talking to the media on the occasion, he regretted that these trucks had no bullets or illegal goods but carried relief goods for the poor, but these politicians tried to snatch them from the mouths of poor people.

He said that we were also harassed by the Drosch Police and the district administration also issued us the NOC with great difficulty so that we could distribute these rations and aid among the poor.

On this occasion, he made it clear that the Muhammad Talha Foundation has been serving humanity for the last 35 years without any kind of humanity, color and race and this Foundation has not belonged to any political party, even if it is Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam on the ticket.

"We invite all to come and join us in this noble cause, our doors are open for all," he said. In order to distribute these relief goods, the most honest and non-controversial people will be selected to distribute it among the deserving people.

When this convoy of forty trucks arrived in Chitral, there were a large number of people. Addressing a public gathering on the occasion, Talha Mahmood said that the promise made to the public before the election despite that I did not succeed in the election, but fulfilled what I had announced before the election.

Now 250 handicraft centers will be opened under the self-employment scheme for women across lower and upper Chitral, which will make people self-sufficient and get rid of the needs of others by earning themselves.

Weather to remain cold

PESHAWAR (APP): The weather will remain cold and dry in most of the districts of the province, an official of the Meteorological Department said here Sunday. The temperature in Kalam, Dir and Malam Jabba has dropped below freezing and during the last 24 hours, the lowest temperature in Kalam was recorded as minus 8 degrees Celsius, the official of the Meteorological Department confirmed.

Likewise the lowest temperature in other parts of the province including -2 in Dir while Malam Jabba and Parachinar recorded minus 1 Celsius, the official said, adding, Peshawar recorded a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 26 degrees Celsius.

Police traced out a blind muder case of a doctor

PESHAWAR (APP): Topi Police traced the blind murder of a doctor and arrested the victim's wife and nephew allegedly involved in the murder they committed a few days ago, Police said here on Sunday.

The doctor was killed near the house. The wife of the deceased filed an FIR against unknown accused in the Topi Police Station, on which District Police Officer Swabi Haroon Rashid Khan took notice to bring out the real facts and succeeded in tracing the alleged accused involved in the murder case.

DPO assigned the task of tracing the accused, on which SP Investigation Swabi Khan Khel Khan headed by SHO Topi Niaz Ali Khan, Technical staff in-charge ASI Hafiz Zahid Ali and investigation officer of the local Police Station found evidence during the investigation.

After thorough investigation, the woman and her acquaintance were detained, the accused (J) involved in the murder of her husband and the accused nephew Idrees, who was involved in the murder of the maternal uncle.

Both made a formal confession before the Police, who said that (J) killed Yasir Shah because both of us were in love with each other and after that we made plans for marriage. The arrest of the third accused involved in the murder was carried out soon, Police said.

Two killed in two separate incident

Two people were killed and two others were injured in different incidents in Swabi District, Police Control Swabi said.

According to the report of Police Station Chota Lahore, the driver Mukhtiar, resident Jagannath was killed in a collision with a car on Udeena Lahore Road, while two people Shahzad and Mutasim of Chotta Lahore were injured. Meanwhile, Arif's head was severed from his body after being hit by the bullet of a flour machine in Bamkhel, Police said.



PESHAWAR: Supporters of PTI gather to protest as they allege rigging in general elections.

Khatm-e-Bukhari Sharif organized

PESHAWAR (APP): Madrasa Darul Banin Usman Khel Dagai Khadukhel Buner held a spirited ceremony of Khatm Bukhari Sharif in which a large number of scholars, students, elders of the areas and the general public participated.

The eminent religious scholar Sheikh Al-Qur'an and Hadith Maulana Muhammad Khan of Chota Lahore (Swabi) said in a passionate speech that the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are a guide for us.

"It is the source of guidance, by following which we can enlighten our worldly and hereafter life," he added. He highlighted the virtues of the last hadith of Bukhari Sharif. After that, Sheikh Hadith Maulana Mahbub Zada also spoke on this occasion.

Addressing the gathering Sheikh Hadith Maulana Mahbub Zada said that the Holy Qur'an is a great heavenly book, which is a complete code of life for us. The miracles that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) performed for the reformation of a deteriorating nation.

On this occasion, certificates were distributed to 18 female students who graduated from Bukhari Sharif and 63 female students who completed Nazra and Tajweed and 10 completed their Hifaz. Prizes were also distributed among the students who obtained prominent positions.

The parents were congratulated and said that the students will prove useful to the society by serving the religion and their parents will get fruits in the hereafter. A special prayer for the Shariah system in the country.

Ind. candidates grouping up for forming govt in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Who will form the government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the talk of the town, wherein the independent candidates are grouping up to find out a way to complete the required numbers for a certain government.

A total of 73 members are needed in the House to form the government in the province; however, independent candidates have secured 91 out of 113 seats, with 89 out of 91 seats being for independent candidates supported by PTI.

A close friend of the former speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Mushtaq Ghani, said, "He (Mushtaq Ghani) is a strong candidate for speaker provincial assembly, while the names of Ali Amin Gandapur and Atif Khan are being discussed as strong candidates for Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa."

On the condition of not being named, he said, "Form 49 will be issued by the Election Commission in a day or two, while it has been discussed that the independent candidates are bound to join a party within three days after the issuance of Form 49."

He said, "After three days, the independent candidate will be considered an independent MPA for the next five years."

When asked about the formation of government by the independent candidates, he said, "In the case of forming their own government, independent candidates will lose 30 reserved seats, out of which 26 are reserved for women and four for minorities."

He said, "For such seats, an independent candidate has to be a part of a political party."

Election 2024 signifies people unshakable trust in democracy: Experts

PESHAWAR (APP): The Election 2024 results has signified the people's unshakable trust in electoral process as well as strong parliamentary system and has pinned high expectations from their elected representatives to address their problems besides taking the country forward on road to progress and development, experts say.

"The people of Pakistan has delivered verdict on February 8, 2024 and now its upto elected representatives, institutions and political leadership to accept their decision imperative to carry ship of democracy forward and take the country's out of the shabby economic situation," said Professor Dr A.H.Hilali, ex Chairman Political Science Department, University of Peshawar while taking to APP on Sunday.

The split electoral mandate which was given to mainstream political parties on February 8 is a manifestation of pluralism in the country's politics besides signify that people of Pakistan wanted resolution of their problems and country's challenges through a national government represented by all political parties, he said.

"Pakistan is currently facing enormous challenges including shabby economy, terrorism, security issues, price hike, inflation and climate change and no political party can address it single handedly, and that is why people of Pakistan had given split mandate to political parties for resolution of these issues amicably," he said.

By taking lesson from past; he said that political leadership should immediately sit together and form a coalition government as quickly as possible to take the country's out of economic challenges by accepting each others mandate wholeheartedly.

PTI backed candidates have so far won 93 seats at National Assembly, 116 in Punjab Assembly, 11 in Sindh Assembly, 83 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly while PMLN's clinched 77 seats at National Assembly, 137 seats in Punjab, 10 in Balochistan and five seats in KP Assembly.

PPP has secured third position with 54 NA seats, 10 seats in Punjab Assembly, 84 in Sindh Assembly, 11 in Balochistan Assembly and five in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly till filing of this report.

Likewise, MQM Pakistan will play a key role in formation of coalition government in centre after winning 17 NA seats and 28 seats in Sindh Assembly, he said.

Similarly, six seats in National Assembly, 22 seats in Punjab, 3 in Sindh and 5 seats in Balochistan have been clinched by independent candidates while JUIF bagged four seats in National Assembly, 10 seats in Balochistan and eight seats in KP.

PMLQ has bagged three seats in National Assembly and 7 seats in Punjab Assembly while two each NA seats of Istehkam Pakistan Party and Balochistan National Party will also matter in coalition government.

"Election 2024 results has signified that votes banks of all political parties in their respective provinces were intact," said Professor Dr. Ejaz Khan, former Chairman International Relations Department, University of Peshawar while talking to APP.

He said Election 2024 which has been closely observed by international community was largely endorsed that was positive sign.

Dr Ejaz Khan said that suspension of internet services in some areas with sensitive polling stations has greatly helped holding of peaceful elections in the country including erstwhile Fata.

Except DI Khan's attack in which 4 policemen were martyred on the election day, the polling remained peaceful for which our police and security forces deserved appreciation.

In the wake of an increase in literacy rate and mushroom growth of social media in the country, he said people have rejected six former Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa include QWP Chief Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao, PTIP Chairman Pervaz Khattak, Mehtab Abbassi, PTI Vice Chairman Mahmood Khan, JUIF leader Akram Durrani and Central Vice President ANP Amir Haider Hoti.

Aftab Sherpao has been defeated on NA 23 Charsadda-I, Pervaz Khattak on NA34 Nowshera-I, Mehtab Abbasi at Abbottabad, Mahmood Khan at Swat, Akram Durrani at Bannu and Amir Haider Hoti on NA 22 Mardan.

Haider Hoti has resigned from central vice President of Awami National Party after losing election and announced to serve the party as political worker.

The people also rejected the leadership of seven political parties including Sirajul Haq of the JIP, Pervaz Elahi of PTI, Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed of AML, Jahangir Tareen of IPP, Pervaz Khattak of PTIP, Aftab Sherpao of QWP and Aimal Wali Khan of ANP in election 2024.

Pervaz Khattak's sons Ibrahim Khattak and Ismail Khattak and son-in-law Dr Imran Khattak also lost PK and NA seats respectively.

Similarly, PTI Chairman, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan who contested election as independent candidate has won from Buner, JUIF Central Ameer Maulana Fazlur Rehman from Paseen, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari from Larkana, PMLN Quaid Nawaz Sharif from Lahore and PMLN President Shahbaz Sharif from Lahore have secured victory.

The other noted personalities that won elections included former Speaker Asad Qaiser from Swabi, Ali Amin Gandapur from DI Khan, Maryam Nawaz from Lahore, Asif Zardari from Benazirabad (Nawab Shah), Noor Alam Khan from Peshawar and Akhtar Mangal from Balochistan.

In Peshawar, PTI backed independent candidates has clinched four seats out of five of the National Assembly and six out of 13 Provincial Assembly seats in Election 2024.

Except former MNA Noor Alam Khan of the Jamiat ulema-e-Islam (JUIF) who clinched NA 28 Peshawar-I, the independent candidates including Aamir Ayub secured victory in NA 29 Peshawar-II, Ms Shandana Gulzar in NA 30 Peshawar-III, Arbab Sher Ali in NA 31 Peshawar IV and Asif Khan on NA 32 Peshawar V.

Ms Shandana who is the daughter of former Commissioner Peshawar, Gulzar Khan (late) was voted to power after his father's employment and social services.

Asif Khan outclassed veteran politician and former Federal Minister for Railways Haji Ghulam Ahmed Bilour.

Former MNA Arbab Sher Ali retained his seat defeating former Minister for Communications Dr Arbab Alamgir Khan on NA 31 Peshawar IV.

Independent candidates, who won six among thirteen provincial assembly constituencies include Arbab Wasim on PK 73, Sameeullah 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 Parliamentarian 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



In brief

Gilani's votes increased

MULTAN (INP): After the recount in National Assembly constituency NA-148, the number of votes obtained by former PM, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani increased. Upon the request of Independent candidate Barrister Taimur Malik, the process of verification of Form 45 was carried out in the RO office. Resultantly, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani secured victory with 67,377 votes, while Taimur Malik remained runner-up with 67,047 votes. According to Form 47, Gilani had defeated Taimur Malik by a lead of 293 votes previously in the first count. After recounting, Gilani's lead increased to 330 votes.

11 criminals netted

SARGODHA (INP): Police claimed on Sunday to have arrested 11 criminals and recovered narcotics and illegal weapons from their possession. The police teams raided at different localities and arrested Inaam, Wasim, Rashid, Imran, Kamran, Sul-eman, Tahir, Kaleem, Wajahat, Nouman and Khaleel and recovered 6 kg hashish, 1.3 kg heroin, 345 liters liquor, 12 pistols, 04 guns, 235 bullets and valuables worth millions of rupees from them. Further investigation was underway.

SSP appreciates team

SUKKUR (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Sukkur, Zubair Nazeer Sheikh has appreciated his team for playing a key role in conducting peaceful elections in the district. He said that more than 4,000 policemen provided security to all polling stations for two National Assembly and 6 Provincial Constituencies in the district along with security forces including Rangers, army and other law enforcement agencies. He said that he along with his officials remained in different constituencies and monitored the security situation.

Unhealthy meat destroyed

SARGODHA (APP): A Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Bhakkar team on Sunday launched a massive crackdown against slaughter houses which were selling substandard meat in the district. The PFA team, led by its deputy director, raided slaughter houses at Chungi No 8 and sealed a slaughter house which was selling unhygienic meat to citizens. The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) also destroyed 800 kg substandard meat, the spokesman added.

Nine outlaws booked

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Police have registered a case against nine persons for torturing a police official during polling process in Elections 2024. According to police sources, police officials intercepted a group of people who were trying to disrupt a peaceful environment at the polling station Government Boys School Kalarwala, Mauza Sonhra Chandi. A man identified as Shoaib son of Khursheed attacked at police constable Zeeshan Aziz. Resultantly, he sustained injuries. The police team tried to arrest the attackers but could not succeed. The police team trying to ascertain identity of the other attackers. The police registered case against the outlaws for allegedly interfering in state affairs and torturing police officials under PPC sections 149, 148, 186, 353, and 324.

2 gunned down in separate incidents

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Two persons were gunned down in separate incidents took place in Yarik and Shaheed Nawab Khan police stations here.

According to police, Sher Rehman s/o Jannat Khan reported Yarik police that his 24-year-old nephew Ejaz Khan s/o Noor Rehman was coming to home on a motorcycle when two unknown assailants riding another bike opened fire at him on Bannu road. Resultantly, Ejaz Khan died on the spot while the assailants escaped from the scene. He informed the police that his family has an old enmity.

In another incident, Inayat Ullah s/o Akram Khan reported Shaheed Nawab Khan Police that 21-year-old nephew Kaleem Ullah s/o Ikram Ullah and Irshad Khan s/o Habib Khan were present in their street when accused Barkat s/o Aslam and Dajar

s/o Nazir Ullah came there and quarrel with them.

After the exchange of harsh arguments, Barkat and Dajar took out pistols and opened fire at Kaleem Ullah, leaving him dead. Both the accused managed to escape from the scene.

Meanwhile, youth Zaryab son of Meraj Uddin, a resident of Basti Nade Ali Shah reported to Cantt police that some unknown thieves had taken his bike from outside a Masjid situated in Islamia Colony.

Fire breaks out in hospital in DI Khan

A fire erupted at a private hospital here on Circular road on Sunday causing panic among patients and the people around.

According to a Rescue 1122 spokesman, the fire erupted at a private hospital situated near Faqerni-Gate on Circular Road.

The fire fighting teams of the emergency service

Rescue 1122 reached the site soon after receiving information and controlled the fire.

The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained however some eyewitnesses said that it might have been triggered by a short circuit. No loss of life was reported in the incident.

When contacted, the owner of the hospital Waqar Younis told APP that the fire engulfed the whole ground floor comprising around seven rooms and a hall. He said the whole medical machinery including two Ultrasound machines, air-conditioners and others were turned into ashes.

He lauded the efforts of Rescue 1122 teams in controlling the fire. He said that more losses were prevented due to hard work of Rescue teams who took their task professionally and saved the loss of lives and other buildings around.

No one to be permitted to steal nation's mandate

QUETTA (PPI): No one would be permitted to steal the mandate of Hazara nation and citizens of Quetta city.

These views were expressed by Abdul Khaliq Hazara, Chairman, Hazara Democratic Party (HDP) while addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club here on Sunday.

Condemning malpractices and rigging during election in PB-40-Quetta and PB-42-Quetta, he said that HDP and other political parties would launch protest movement besides submitting pleas before other relevant forums for justice.

He said that on the basis of its 15 point election manifesto, HDP fielded candidates from two National Assembly constituencies and two provincial assembly constituencies of

Balochistan, adding that voters of PB-40-Quetta and PB-42-Quetta cast their vote in favour of the candidates of HDP, adding that according to Form-45 collected by the polling agents, Abdul Khaliq Hazara won his PB-42-Quetta seat with 9189 votes over PTI's backed candidate Imran Hazara who came in second with 5974.

Similarly, he added that candidate of HDP won his PB-40-Quetta seat with 6268 votes over candidate of Pushtunkhwa Milli Awami Party's candidate Akhtar Kharoti who came in second with 3940 votes. He said in form "Form-47", results of both PB-40-Quetta and PB-42-Quetta were altogether changed, declaring other candidates from PB-40-Quetta and PB-42-Quetta as winners. He said tempering election

results of election 2024 was a clear message to the democratic parties that these parties should refrain from taking part in democratic process and election. Hazara said that no one would be allowed to pilfer the mandate of Hazara nation and citizens of Quetta city.

On the occasion central leaders of HDP Abdul Qadir Nayel, Mirza Hussain Hazara and others were also present.

Separately, Women Wing, Hazara Democratic Party staged a protest demonstration outside Quetta Press Club against controversial election in PB-42-Quetta and PB-40-Quetta. Demanding the authorities to announce the transparent result of PB-42-Quetta and PB-40-Quetta, protesters said that their protest would continue.

6880 IUB students awarded scholarships

BAHAWALPUR (APP): The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) is providing financial assistance to a large number of students to cater the higher-education needs of the region.

According to the report issued by the Directorate of Financial Assistants IUB, 6880 students of Bahawalnagar Campus were provided 13 different scholarships with a total value of about 434 million rupees.

These scholarships included

Ehsaas Scholarship, Benazir Undergraduate Scholarship Program, PEF Undergraduate, Master, MS Program, HEC Need Based Scholarship, University Funds Scholarship, Financial Crisis Scholarship, Fee Waiver Scholarship, Mora Scholarship, Pakistan Bait Al Mal, British Council Scholarship, Dia Scholarship.

Campus Director Dr. Raffaaf Ali thanked the Higher Education Commission and Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar

for providing scholarships to a large number of deserving students and said that the provision of these scholarships will prove to be the cause of improvement in educational activities.

He also emphasized the need to provide more scholarships to the sub-campus and said that the students of the campus are not less than any other in talent and ability and they should be encouraged by providing more scholarships.

Six suspended over poor performance

MULTAN (APP): Multan sub division, Niaz Hussain metre reader WAPDA Town sub division and Junior clerk Jalalpur sub division Haseeb Ahmad were also suspended.

The suspended staffers were directed to report to various operational offices. **41 power pilferers netted across the MEPCO region**

Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) teams have raided and caught 41 more power pilferers in a day during ongoing operation across the region.

The taskforce teams have raided at various places and got registered 11 new cases against power pilferers.

While office assistant Makhdoom Rasheed sub division Muhammad Arif, Jawad Maqsood New

Over Rs two million fine was imposed on power pilferers.

Nine gamblers held with stake money

Police claimed to have arrested nine gamblers and recovered stake money from their possession during the crackdown.

According to details, SHO Makhdoom Rasheed police station Muhammad Amin Jhandir along with his team raided and arrested the gamblers.

The police have also recovered Rs 7000 cash and other goods from their possession. Police have registered cases against the gamblers and launched legal action.

Seminar on mental health held at IUB

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Under the auspices of the Applied Psychology Department at Islamia University Bahawalpur, a seminar was organized to raise awareness about mental health and the dangers of smoking.

According to a press release issued here Sunday, the Applied Psychology Department of Islamia University Bahawalpur organized a seminar at the

Bahawalnagar Campus of IUB to raise awareness about mental health and the dangers of smoking.

It was part of a campaign to raise awareness among students at IUB about the measures that should be taken for healthcare.

Addressing the seminar, Head of Applied Psychology Department, IUB Bahawalnagar Campus, Nafees Akhtar, and Director,

IUB Bahawalnagar Campus, Dr. Rafiqat Ali, emphasized the need to raise awareness among youth and ask them to pay attention to health.

"It is time to tell our youth that smoking is dangerous to their health, especially mental health," they said. On this occasion, a painting exhibition was also held to raise awareness about mental health.



HYDERABAD: Supporters of PTI and Jamaat-e-Islami hold a protest demanding free and fair results of elections.

Six people including an ASI killed

LARKANA (INP): Six people were killed and five injured on Sunday in a firing incident between two groups near Nodero Bypass Larkana.

According to the private news channel, a fight between two groups over the issue of voting in Larkana's Nodero turned into violence, with firing and indiscriminate use of sticks by both groups. According to the police, as soon as the incident was reported, the Mahota police officers arrived at the scene.

Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Sultan Shah was shot dead, whereas, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Bashir Ahmed Shar and Constable Saddam Hussain were among the injured. Police said that one seriously injured person has been immediately shifted to Karachi for treatment.

852kg hashish seized

GWADAR (INP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an intelligence-based operation recovered 852kg hashish from Pasni city of district Gwadar in Balochistan, reported on Sunday.

According to an ANF spokesperson, the Force was informed that 852 kilograms hashish was being smuggled on 12 camels in Balochistan's Pasni area.

Taking an urgent action, the ANF personnel cordoned off the smugglers and recovered drug worth millions of rupees.

ANF claimed that it was committed to eradicate smuggling from the country.

Last week, ANF while conducting 11 operations recovered over 724 kg drugs and arrested nine accused.

746 grams hashish was recovered from a passenger going to Sharjah from Islamabad Airport. 91 her-oin-filled capsules were re-covered from a passenger going to Dubai from Islam-abad Airport.

159 grams hashish was recovered from two passengers going to China at Karachi Airport.

Seminar on mental health held

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Jan Achakzai congratulates nation

QUETTA (INP): Jan Achakzai, Caretaker Information Minister of Balochistan, extended his congratulations to the nation and winning candidates in the Feb 8 elections.

He also applauded the grace and sportsmanship exhibited by losing candidates who have accepted the results. "We commend the losing candidates who have accepted the mandate of the people of Balochistan," Minister Achakzai stated.

He said that their acceptance paves the way for a peaceful transition of power, which is vital for the stability and progress of our province.

The minister expressed his appreciation for the role of the Armed Forces in ensuring a peaceful and secure environment during the elections.

He commended the leadership of Army Chief General Asim Munir and

the dedication of all security personnel, including the army jawans in Balochistan.

"Thanks to their tireless efforts, no untoward incidents occurred during the polls," he emphasized.

"This allowed millions of voters to exercise their right to vote freely and confidently", he said.

He extended his congratulations to the security forces for their success in eliminating the mastermind behind the Pishin and Qilla Saifullah bombings. It was a great achievement in defeating the forces of evil.

He specifically highlighted the contributions of the FC North and FC South's leadership and their jawans, who played a crucial role in securing the polling environment and allowing for a smooth electoral process.

"We are profoundly grateful to the security forces for their sacrifices

and commitment to ensuring the safety and security of our citizens," concluded Minister Achakzai. "Their dedication is instrumental in promoting peace and stability in Balochistan", he said.

People of Balochistan take keen interest in elections: Domki:

Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has said people of Balochistan took keen interest in the elections and exercised their right of vote.

In a statement, he said people of Balochistan have elected their representatives through free, fair and transparent elections, which were held on time despite the challenges. He expressed hope that newly-elected Members of Provincial Assembly and National Assembly will play their role to put the province on the path of progress and prosperity.

Accused of bank dacoity among 2 held in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police on Sunday arrested two outlaws including an accused of bank dacoity case recovering stolen 15 mobile phones, one bike and weapon along with ammunition from them in different operations.

According to police spokesman, a team of Cantt police station led by SDPO City Circle Muhammad Adnan along with SHO Gulsher Khan, during an operation, arrested an

accused of bank dacoity named Amjad Khan son of Yaqub Khan, a resident of Swabi. The police also recovered a 30-bore pistol along with the ammunition from the arrested accused.

The dacoity was committed by a group of people on November 12, 2021 in the limits of Saddar police station in which Rs 4.2 million were looted from a private bank.

It worth to mention here that five accused of the same dacoity had

already been arrested.

In another successful operation against thieves, a team of City police station led by SDPO City Circle Muhammad Adnan along with SHO Arslan Khan Gandapur arrested accused Ahmad Faraz son of Gul Faraz.

The police recovered 15 mobile phones and a motorcycle that were snatched in different cases. Further investigations were underway from the arrested accused.

‘JI mandate in Karachi stolen’

QUETTA (PPI): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Balochistan Amir Moulana Abdul Haq Hashmi said on Sunday that JI was on the protest against the election 2024 results as JI mandate in Karachi had been stolen.

This he said while addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club with Zahid Akhtar Baloch, General Secretary, JI, Balochistan; Hafiz Nur Ali, Ameer, JI, Quetta; and Abdul Wali Shakir, Information Secretary, JI, Balochistan.

The JI leader said that it was for the first time that two representatives of JI had been elected as members of Balochistan Provincial Assembly after winning seats from Gwadar

and Jaffarabad areas of the province.

Hashmi said that a protest against the recent election was being staged across the country, adding that JI was also staging the protest against the result of election-2024 conducted in Karachi. People of Karachi had rejected a party during previous local bodies election, but the said party had been given representation in Karachi merely to stop the way of JI, he said.

Expressing solidarity with protesting political parties of Balochistan, he said that grievances of those political parties with regard to election results were required to the addressed.

DPO lauds police for foolproof security

SARGODHA (APP): DPO Muhammad Faisal Kamran on Sunday appreciated Sargodha police for playing a key role in conducting peaceful elections in the district.

He said that more than 6,000 policemen provided security to all polling stations for five National Assembly and 10 Punjab Assembly constituencies in the district along with security forces including Rangers, army and other law enforcement agencies.

He said that he himself along with his officials remained in different constituencies and monitored the security situation. Sargodha police utilised its professional skills to provide

security to voters, he added.

State media made special arrangements for elections coverage in Sargodha: State media, including Radio, APP and DGPR gave special coverage to elections in all constituencies of Sargodha.

Radio elections coverage teams under the supervision of station director Ghulam Abbass, the APP special elections coverage team under the supervision of Station In-charge Makhdoom Shah Latif and the DG Public Relations team under the supervision of the Director Public Relations made special arrangements on elections and fulfilled their responsibilities.

Mohabat visits Ali's house

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The losing candidate of Pakistan Muslim League-N from NA-17 Abbottabad-II, Malik Mohabbat Awan, established a new tradition by congratulating the independent winning contestant, Ali Khan Jadoon, on Sunday.

According to the details, the rival families of Abbottabad in politics were opposed against each other in the general elections held on 8th February, where Malik Mohabbat Awan suffered a defeat against Ali Khan Jadoon.

Today, Mohabbat Awan visited the home of the winning candidate and presented a bouquet to Ali Khan Jadoon, congratulating him for his victory. This gesture, the first of its kind by any losing candidate, was praised by a large number of people across the Hazara division.

Security agencies role lauded

SUKKUR (APP): Renowned politician, advocate Syed Shafqat Ali Shah on Sunday said that a peaceful and well-organised electoral process witnessed in Sindh, leading to the successful election of the representatives.

Talking to APP, he extended heartfelt congratulations to the winning candidates. He lauded the outstanding performance of security agencies and administrative authorities.



Death of teenager takes Senegal protest toll to three

DAKAR (AFP/APP): A 16-year-old died following clashes in Senegal's Ziguinchor, the third fatality in unrest after President Macky Sall postponed this month's election, a hospital source and a local politician said on Sunday. Sall's decision to push back the February 25 presidential vote has plunged Senegal into one of its worst crises since independence from France in 1960.

Protests pitting youths against the security forces have turned increasingly violent in a country seen as a haven of stability and democracy in West Africa, a region roiled by coups and unrest.

Landing Camara, who was known as Diedhiou, died Saturday evening in hospital after being wounded in Ziguinchor. His identity papers showed he was 16, after the hospital source said he was 19.

The southern city is a stronghold of jailed opposition figurehead Ousmane Sonko, where youths and security forces clashed throughout the day.

The teenager "took a projectile to the head and died of his injuries in intensive care", the hospital source in Ziguinchor told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"There were several seriously wounded people during the protests and one died. He was hit in the head by a bullet," said Abdou Sane, coordinator of the opposition party Pastef in Ziguinchor.

Two other youths died following protests in the capital Dakar and the northern city of Saint-Louis since Friday. In Dakar, a 23-year-old, was shot "in the stomach with a live round", his brother who was with him told AFP. The circumstances around the death of a 22-year-old at a university campus in Saint Louis remain unclear.

The Saint-Louis prosecutor's office said it had opened an investigation into the death. The interior ministry issued a statement denying that security forces had been operating on the campus.

The US Bureau of African Affairs

shared condolences with the families and friends of the victims in a message on social media.

"Saddened to learn of two lives lost", it said on X, formerly Twitter.

"We urge all parties to act in a peaceful and measured manner, and we continue to call on President Sall to restore the electoral calendar, restore confidence, and bring calm to the situation."

Sall said he postponed the election because of a dispute between parliament and the Constitutional Council over potential candidates barred from running.

He has said he wants to begin a process of "appeasement and reconciliation" and reiterated a commitment not to stand for a third term amid expressions of international concern.

Senegal's parliament backed the move on Monday and voted to keep Sall in office until his successor takes over, which is unlikely to be before early 2025. His second term had been due to end on April 2.

King Charles thanks public for support after cancer diagnosis

LONDON (AA/APP): King Charles III expressed his "heartfelt thanks" Saturday to the public for their support and good wishes in his first message after being diagnosed with cancer. "I would like to express my most heartfelt thanks for the many messages of support and good wishes I have received in recent days," Charles said in his message from Sandringham in Norfolk.

"As all those who have been affected by cancer will know, such kind thoughts are the greatest comfort and encouragement," King Charles said in the statement.

"It is equally heartening to hear how sharing my own diagnosis has helped promote public understanding and shine a light on the work of all those organisations which support cancer patients and their families across the UK and wider world," he added. Buckingham Palace said Jan. 17 that Charles would receive a "corrective procedure" at a hospital for an enlarged prostate.

The palace later issued another statement, that said he had been admitted to the hospital for a scheduled prostate treatment.

Following a three-night stay at the London Clinic, Charles left the hospital. But Buckingham Palace announced Monday that Charles has been diagnosed with an unspecified form of cancer and has begun treatment. Charles ascended to the throne following the death of his long-serving mother, Queen Elizabeth II on Sept. 8, 2022. In May 2023, in the first coronation service in nearly 70 years, he was crowned at Westminster Abbey in London.

King Charles thanks well-wishers after cancer diagnosis: Britain's King Charles III on Saturday



expressed his "heartfelt thanks" to well-wishers, in his first statement since being diagnosed with cancer.

In a message to the public, the 75-year-old monarch added that it was "equally heartening" to hear how sharing his diagnosis has helped promote understanding of the condition.

"I would like to express my most heartfelt thanks for the many messages of support and good wishes I have received in recent days," Charles wrote.

"As all those who have been affected by cancer will know, such kind thoughts are the greatest comfort and encouragement."

The note was published on the monarch's website and the royal family's official page on social media platform X.

"It is equally heartening to hear how sharing my own diagnosis has

helped promote public understanding and shine a light on the work of all those organizations which support cancer patients and their families across the UK and wider world."

"My lifelong admiration for their tireless care and dedication is all the greater as a result of my own personal experience," the king added, signing the letter "Charles R."

Buckingham Palace announced on Monday that Charles had been diagnosed with cancer and has begun treatment and taken a break from public duties.

It has not specified the type of cancer, although it is understood not to be prostate cancer.

The diagnosis comes just 17 months into Charles's reign following the death of his 96-year-old mother, Queen Elizabeth II, on September 8, 2022.

Second protest death deepens Senegal political crisis

DAKAR (AFP/APP): Senegal's political crisis deepened as a second person died Saturday in increasingly violent protests against President Macky Sall's decision to postpone upcoming presidential elections.

The latest violence has brought fresh condemnation from opposition leaders, some of whom were candidates for the presidency. A fresh round of protests is planned for Tuesday.

Market vendor Modou Gueye, 23, died Saturday

after having been shot the previous day during clashes in the capital Dakar, two of his relatives told AFP.

"Tear gas grenades were fired and then we went to the train station at Colobane to go home," his brother, Dame Gueye, told AFP. "It was there that a gendarme shot him in the stomach with a live round."

His brother-in-law Mbagnick Ndiaye said he

had succumbed to his injuries Saturday morning.

Already on Friday, a 22-year-old second-year geography student died in the northern town of Saint-Louis, in circumstances that are still not clear.

In Saint-Louis, Alpha Yoro Tounkara died on the campus of Gaston Berger University where he was studying geography. A hundred of his classmates held an all-night vigil for him.

Videos posted to social

media suggest other people

were also wounded.

The city's prosecutor said it had opened an investigation into the death. The interior ministry issued a statement denying that security forces had been operating on the university campus.

"The international and regional community must bear witness to the excesses of this dying regime," said presidential candidate Khalifa Sall (no relation to the president).

Boss of Nigeria's biggest bank dies in US helicopter crash

ABUJA (AFP/APP): The co-founder of Nigeria's biggest bank has died in a helicopter crash in the United States along with his wife and son, his company said on Sunday.

Access Bank Group CEO Herbert Wigwe was killed when the aircraft crashed in California on Friday, Access Holdings said in a statement.

"Dr Wigwe died alongside his wife and son on Friday, February 9, 2024 in a helicopter accident in the United States," it said. "The entire Access family mourns the loss of Herbert, Doreen and Chizi."

US authorities said two crew members and four passengers were killed. Nigeria's President

Bola Ahmed Tinubu said former Nigeria Stock Exchange president Abimbola Ogunbanjo was among the dead, calling the crash "an overwhelming tragedy that is shocking beyond comprehension."

"The President condoles with the Wigwe and Ogunbanjo families, the business community, and all those impacted by this harrowing incident," his spokesman said in a statement on Sunday.

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said "a Eurocopter EC 130 helicopter crashed near Nipton, California, around 10 pm local time on Friday, Feb. 9. Six people were on board."

The FAA said there would be an investigation. World Trade Organization director general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said on social media she was "terribly saddened by the news of the terrible loss of Herbert Wigwe, Group CEO Access Bank, his wife and son as well as Bimbo Ogunbanjo in a helicopter crash."

Access is Nigeria's biggest bank by assets, according to Bloomberg.

The bank praised Wigwe, who became deputy managing director in 2002, as a "key driving force and a larger-than-life personality who brought his remarkable passion, energy and experience to the transfor-

mation of the Access franchise". US National Transportation Safety Board member Michael Graham told a press briefing on Saturday that the helicopter had departed from Palm Springs, California on the way to Boulder City, Nevada.

About 90 minutes after the charter flight took off, "the helicopter impacted the terrain south of I-15 near Halloran Springs, California," about 75 miles (120 kilometres) northeast of the city of Barstow, Graham told reporters.

"Two crew members and four passengers were on board and were fatally injured," he said, without naming the dead.

Portland: America's liberal utopia loses its shine

PORTLAND (AFP/APP): It's 9 am on a weekday, and real estate employee Erica Heffeld has just watched paramedics try to save the life of a man who has overdosed on the streets of Portland.

"This is a tragedy," she says as three disheveled men smoke fentanyl near her office in a city that was once a byword for laid-back livability.

Portland is a Democratic Party stronghold, a liberal sentinel in Oregon on the US West Coast that for years stood for social justice, empathy and tolerance.

But an experiment in decriminalizing drugs and a hands-off approach to policing has left some bemoaning the fate of a place now scarred by homelessness, addiction, graffiti and litter.

"You have no consequences for your public drug use... no consequences for breaking windows and trying to burn down public buildings," said Heffeld.

"That 'no consequences' attitude has completely changed the face of our city in fewer than four years. It's been a spectacular nosedive."

For decades Portland has been held up by its supporters as a proudly "weird" place, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and equality.

Knitwear-clad hipsters delighted in its small-scale breweries, plentiful coffee shops, vegan food

stores and thriving indie music scene.

It became such a shorthand for bohemian trendiness that a TV series called "Portlandia" gently mocked it as a place "where young people come to retire."

But the last few years have not been kind.

Portland's commitment to social justice was tested during the Black Lives Matter protests as the city was rocked by weeks of destruction, with authorities standing back as demonstrators wreaked havoc. (Supporters say right-wing agitators stirred up violence.)

That was coupled with the economic devastation of the pandemic and the effects of an ill-executed plan to decriminalize drugs that has left police doing little more than handing out leaflets to people zombied out on crack or fentanyl.

Retail giants like Nike and Target have shuttered stores citing repeated thefts, while teleworking has hollowed out the downtown.

Conservatives have seized on the city's misfortunes, with outlets like Fox News featuring horrorscapes from the city and blaming the Democrats who have controlled it for decades.

Former president Donald Trump dubbed it a liberal dystopia where the rule of law has vanished.

"The city is in shambles to this day. The store owners don't even rebuild storefronts anymore," he told NBC last year.

Restaurantier Lisa Schroeder says Portland's decline pains her.

"We got to take care of the city," she told AFP. "We've got drugs on every corner. So now there's even more reasons for people to not come downtown."

Schroeder runs Mother's, a bistro that for 25 years has watched Portland grow from a city known for its left-wing politics into an attractive, well-planned urban area with efficient public transport.

In recent years money was moved away from the police and into social services, aiming to treat drug users instead of punishing them.

But she says the experiment with decriminalizing drugs -- which she voted for -- has been deliberately undermined by a police force she thinks is determined to prove it is bad policy.

"The police took a passive-aggressive approach. They said: 'They took away our funding, we're going to show them what's up. We're going to show them what decriminalization looks like'."

Crime rates in Portland surged between 2019 and 2022, according to official data, before beginning to decline in 2023.

Still, the police take an average of 20 minutes to respond to a high-priority call.

A campaign by a bipartisan citizen group aims to tamp down what it sees as some of the excesses of liberal governance while keeping hold of what makes Portland unique.

In the streets where signs demand "Keep Portland Weird" the group has put up billboards highlighting the failures of the city's district attorney.

"Record drug deaths. Increased shootings. Rampant car thefts," they say.

The campaign's two founders -- one Democrat and one Republican -- say they are aiming for a little moderation.

"We were like a progressive Pantheon, we were like the leading light," says Democrat Kevin Looper. "Now all of a sudden we're a cautionary tale."

In an increasingly polarized America facing its most divisive election in living memory, there must be a middle way, he says.

"Between the far left that thinks all cops are bad, and the far right that thinks we just need a police state, it turns out that most people are just left throwing their hands up in the middle saying: I would just like somebody to answer when I call 911."

New Zealand's capital holds multicultural festival

WELLINGTON (Xinhua/APP): New Zealand's capital Wellington has held a multicultural festival to mark the start of the Year of the Dragon, with various ethnic communities gathering at the National Museum to enjoy a multicultural feast.

This multicultural event held on Saturday featured a fusion of music and dance from Maori, Chinese, Indian, Thai, South Korean, Philippine, Middle Eastern, African and Latin American communities, said the co-host, the China Cultural Centre in Wellington. "It was a good opportunity to enjoy cross-cultural performances with beautiful costumes from diverse communities in Wellington region, and to showcase cultural diversity of local talent," said a statement of the center, which co-hosted the event with the Multicultural Council of Wellington.

Andean farmers use age-old technique amid climate change

ACORA (AFP/APP): From the sky, they look like huge, circular patterns made by aliens -- but in fact, they are an age-old technique farmers have brought back to fight the climate crisis on the Andean plateaus of Puno.

On the border of Peru and Bolivia, the Waru Waru -- an indigenous Quechua word that means ridge -- are once again protecting potato and quinoa crops as they did in the region 2,000 years ago.

"It is an agricultural system that lets us face climate change, which has changed the seasons of the year. It is very beneficial in times of drought and frost," farmer Cesar

Cutipa, 42, told AFP. Puno lies on Lake Titicaca about 3,812 meters (12,507 feet) above sea level. Farmers have made six Waru Waru nearby in flood-prone fields.

Furrows form a rectangular platform, where planting is done. Surrounded by water, the planting beds are up to 100 meters long, between four and 10 meters wide and one meter high.

The water around the plants creates a microclimate, absorbing heat from the sun during the day and radiating it back at night to ward off frost in sub-zero temperatures.

"The Waru Waru cannot flood during the rainy season because they have

an intelligent drainage system that reaches the river. They have many advantages," agronomist Gaston Quispe told AFP.

In 2023, when Puno suffered one of the largest periods of drought in almost six decades, Waru Waru helped farmers cope with lack of water and avoid food shortages.

The area is home to mostly indigenous farming communities, mostly Quechua in Peru -- and up the Andes -- and both Quechua and Aymara in Bolivia. "We are able to live here peacefully because we have our potatoes, our quinoa and barley. We can be in peace without going to the city," said 22-year-old farmer Valeria Nahua.

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Nation’s resolve against poliovirus

The Federal government on Saturday reaffirmed its commitment that the poliovirus would be eradicated from the country on a war footing and the South Asian nation would achieve a decisive victory against the epidemic very soon. According to authorities, over 44.5 million children aged five or below were immunized during the recent nationwide anti-polio campaign, while particular focus has been given to certain areas including Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta where polio transmission is highly active and those regions act as core reservoirs of poliovirus in the country. Whereas polio cases have also been identified in Northern Sindh and Southern. Historically, the polio program’s success has been highly dependent on vaccinating high-risk mobile populations and internally displaced persons (IDPs), who often have inconsistent access to the health system and carry diseases/viruses from one place to another due to frequent mobility and migration. Punjab in recent years Polio teams constituted by federal and provincial health departments vaccinated children through a door-to-door campaign during a week-long initiative in all 159 Districts across the country.

Historically, Pakistan joined the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 1994 with the launch of the Pakistan Polio Eradication Program aimed at eradicating and containing all wild vaccine-related and sabin polioviruses in the country. Over the past two and a half decades, the government of Pakistan in collaboration with its GPEI partners including WHO, UNICEF, CDC, and others has been actively working to contain and curb the spread of poliovirus, however, those collective efforts remained short of achieving the stated goal of Polio Free Pakistan. Unfortunately, Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only countries where the transmission of endemic wild poliovirus has not been stopped so far.

The successive governments along with their global partners have made concerted efforts to eradicate polio from our country over the past decades but cases of polio infections are still being reported in some areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Balochistan.

The government of Pakistan has used all available resources, together with the latest technologies and modern strategies to defeat the deadly virus but no cooperation from the parents in certain areas, based on misconception and delusion regarding the urgency and benefits of polio vaccination, largely resisted the government’s efforts against the poliovirus. There have been multiple conspiracy theories and self-coined religious biases linked to the anti-polio medicines and the purpose of the vaccination which prompted opposition and refusal from parents to administer polio vaccines to their kids. Historically, continued anti-state and anti-public propaganda and false conservativeness pose serious risks to the children’s health, national interests, and the broader well-being of the public. During the decades-long anti-polio campaign, Pakistan not only invested bulk money and resources in this endeavor but over 200 polio workers and security personnel laid their lives for the sacred national cause of eradicating the deadly epidemic from the country. Presently, the government is seriously considering the adoption of legislation to penalize the parents resisting polio administration to their children by introducing harsh measures such as blocking their national IDs, freezing Bank Accounts, imposing fines, or awarding imprisonment, etc.

Presently, the government of Pakistan and its global partners have launched a fresh effort to contain poliovirus and eradicate polio infections in the country, while strict legal and punitive measures are being implemented against those who obstruct the work of the polio team or refuse to immunize children. Hopefully, the Pakistani nation will be able to achieve the status of a polio-free nation in the coming months and years.

The launch of Hajj application

The Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has told the media that a mobile application has been launched online to facilitate the Pakistani pilgrims during their tour to the Land of Hijaz. According to him, this cellphone application will guide the pilgrims from the Hajj flight to their stay in Saudi Arabia and all other relevant details will be available on the app including videos for the training of pilgrims. All the pilgrims would be provided with a free single-colored QR code suitcase so that they could easily identify their belongings. Meanwhile, a free mobile phone SIM from a Saudi company will also be given to each Pilgrim to facilitate his travel, communication, and location during his stay in Saudi Arabia.

Hajj is one of the most important elements of Islam, which not only involves a huge amount of wealth and physical health but also requires visits to the holy land, i.e. Makkah and Madina. Every Muslim man and woman owe an undying quest to perform Hajj and tour the sacred places in Saudi Arabia at least once in their life. Unfortunately, the Hajj has become the most difficult and costly religious ritual due to inflated Hajj fees, unbearable airfares, and boarding and lodging expenses that have made this important religious segment out of the reach of a common Pakistani at this point.

Although, every past government made efforts to reduce Hajj expenses in a bid to provide some financial relief and enable the masses to undertake this important religious activity. The incumbent caretaker government also took significant steps in this regard that involved lowering the cost of Hajj by almost Rs. 0.1 million, the introduction of the Hajj App, and the issuance of free SIM cards, etc. which will surely assist pilgrims during their stay in Saudi Arabia. However, a need for improvement and room to do more always exists. The incumbent rulers must put in efforts to further shortcut the Hajj expenses, so the maximum number of people can perform Hajj this year, which will not only benefit the individual but contribute to the national economy as well.

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The Arab region must prioritize food security

Hafed Al-Ghwel

In the face of growing global food insecurity, a transformative shift in our approach to food systems is urgently needed. We are at a crossroads, where the path we choose today will significantly affect our collective future.

Current food systems, which are characterized by inefficiencies and unsustainable practices, contribute to environmental degradation, climate change, and widening gaps in food security. However, recent analyses suggest the global transformation of these systems could unlock economic benefits worth trillions of dollars each year, while simultaneously addressing these critical issues.

The transformation of food systems in the Arab region is quickly emerging as a pivotal strategy amid the confluence of global challenges spanning health, poverty, inequality, climate change, and the loss of biodiversity.

This transformation, which will be integral to achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, demands a comprehensive reimagining of food systems to ensure that they are resilient, equitable, sustainable and deeply integrated within national and global frameworks.

The enormity of this ambition reflects the critical role food systems play in addressing some of the world’s most pressing issues, and underscores the need for a broad range of actions, practices, and policies.

The urgent need for such a transformation is particularly acute in the Middle East and North Africa, an expansive region that is warming at a rate nearly double the global average. Unmitigated, this environmental shift will continue to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, especially in terms of livability and agricultural sustainability, with the problems compounded by socioeconomic ills such as high inflation, elevated energy prices, and geopolitical tremors.

Additionally, the region’s history of high migration and displacement, rooted in conflict and limited economic opportunities, is also likely to intensify as a result of the intertwined challenges of climate change and escalating food insecurity.

Food security, or the lack thereof, stands out as a principal driver of conflict in the Arab region. Historically, macro and household-level food security have materially influenced the likelihood of prolonged unrest, ultimately leading to major upheavals.

In addition, the region is not insulated from spikes in global food prices; indeed its exposure is high, as was evident in 2008 and 2011, when growing food insecurities in countries such as Egypt, Libya, and Yemen contributed to major social agitations and political upheavals.

The risk of continuing food-related eruptions in the region looms large, given rapidly expanding populations, limited agricultural potential, water scarcity, and the compounding effects of a planet on the verge of runaway

global warming.

To address the food security challenges in the Arab region effectively, a multifaceted approach is required that combines immediate interventions with long-term resilience-building measures.

In stark contrast to the bleak outcomes from solely profit-driven food systems, a complete reformation has the potential to yield substantial socioeconomic benefits; this is not only a matter of the region’s survival but also its prosperity.

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After all, the environmental, social and health costs of current agri-food systems is estimated to be more than \$10 trillion, which is a serious indictment of the practices, inaction and failures that gave rise to this status quo. Left unchecked, by 2050, the planet’s current food systems will leave more than half-a-billion people underweight, while simultaneously exacerbating the obesity crisis by a horrifying 70 percent. Worse still, doing nothing will guarantee further increases in the agriculture sector’s contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, escalating the effects of climate change that, paradoxically, make our food systems even more vulnerable. A do-nothing stance will leave us barreling toward a precipice of enormous economic and human costs, because current food production and patterns of consumption are grossly unsustainable. Not only will inaction erase potential “gains” from climate-related transitions and transformations, it will erode natural resources and increase food insecurity in the world’s most vulnerable regions. It is a path that borrows from the future to satisfy the present, leaving a ballooning deficit for coming generations to face with progressively fewer tools to manage food-related and other crises. Yet, an alternative exists: a Food System

Transformation approach that promises not only to mitigate the challenges but also reverse them. Underpinning this transformative approach is the integration of sustainable practices across the entire food value chain, from production to consumption.
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Thus, a key objective in the Herculean task governments in the Arab region face is to ensure future food systems no longer destroy more value than they create.

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A do-nothing stance will leave us barreling toward a precipice of enormous economic and human costs, because current food production and patterns of consumption are grossly unsustainable.

Also reverse them. Underpinning this transformative approach is the integration of sustainable practices across the entire food value chain, from production to consumption.

This includes the adoption of agricultural methods that minimize environmental impact, such as reduced use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and the embracing of technological innovations that can enhance efficiency and reduce waste.

Furthermore, it entails a significant dietary shift toward predominantly plant-based diets, which research has shown could account for most of the health and environmental benefits of a transformation. This shift is not merely about reducing meat consumption but about fostering a global food culture that values diversity, sustainability, and health.

Achieving this transformation will require concerted action from all stakeholders: governments, businesses, civil society and individuals. Policymaking will play a crucial role, with strategies such as taxation of unsustainable food products, subsidies for sustainable farming practices, and investment in agricultural innovation being key levers.

However, these policies must be carefully designed to avoid any adverse effects, such as price hikes or job losses, to ensure the transition to sustainable food systems is as inclusive as it is equitable.

The economic case is compelling. The costs of transforming food systems are dwarfed by the potential benefits, not just in monetary terms but in the preservation of natural resources, improved public health outcomes, and climate change mitigation.

High-income countries stand to benefit from adopting this transformative approach by avoiding significant economic damage, potentially exceeding the cumulative losses from past financial crises.

Yet, the path to a sustainable food future is not a uniform one. It will require tailored strategies that respect the unique contexts of different countries and regions. In some areas, the focus might be on reducing the consumption of animal products. In others, it might be on improving access to more-nutritious foods to combat lack of nutrition.

The overarching goal, however, remains the same: To create food systems that are resilient, sustainable, and capable of feeding a growing global population without compromising the health of our planet.

The call to transform the global food system represents both a challenge and an opportunity. It is a challenge because it will demand significant changes in how we produce, consume, and think about food. But it is an opportunity to redefine our relationship with food, and to build a future in which food systems contribute positively to human health, the environment, and sustained prosperity.

The next few decades will be critical and we must therefore spearhead progress, one plate at a time.

Biden finally flexes political muscles against Israeli settlers

Yossi Mekelberg

It is gradually creeping into the Biden administration’s consciousness that the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza is much more than just the latest battle between these two sworn enemies.

The conflict is destabilizing the region, with dangerous geopolitical and economic implications that reach far beyond the Middle East and might take a long time to resolve.

One issue that has been neglected, not only by the current administration in Washington but a number of previous ones, is the need to take a firm stance against violence by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, which should never be tolerated, whatever one’s views might be on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its potential resolution.

This month, at last, the Biden administration decided to get off the fence on this issue. Instead of continuing to make ineffectual statements about such ugly behavior, the president imposed sanctions on four Israelis identified as having taken part in settler violence in the West Bank.

For now, it is a gesture with very limited scope, despite some expectations that such sanctions would affect other settlers involved in the violence, including more high-profile ones such as those who incite it.

But although the decision to impose such measures took some time to arrive, it is nonetheless a case of better late than never. It is to be hoped that the message it sends will have the desired effect.

Let us not kid ourselves, Biden’s intention here goes beyond merely making an example of four allegedly violent settlers, and even the issue of settler violence in general. It is also about Washington’s growing exasperation with the actions of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government on a wide range of issues, including the delaying tactics in efforts to secure a ceasefire in Gaza; the blocking of deliveries of humanitarian aid to the territory; allowing ultra-right members of the ruling coalition, several of whom are settlers themselves, to further inflame an already explosive situation; and for refusing to acknowledge the need for a political resolution to the wider conflict between Israel and Palestine based on a two-state solution.

If the US is to rescue what little credibility it still has in the region — which has been further eroded by its unconditional support for the way in which Israel has conducted its war in Gaza, and the horrific price this has exacted on the population of the territory — what is desperately required of Biden is some show of balance and integrity when it comes to the lives of the Palestinian people.

For years, successive American presidents have warned that the violent, anti-Palestinian behavior of Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank was exacerbating a situation that is now on the verge of exploding. It is especially provocative because such violence takes place not only with impunity but sometimes with the support, direct or indirect, of the Israeli army.

By avoiding taking any action to curb this criminal behavior, Washington has become complicit in it. The moral imperative to intervene in defense of innocent civilians — and in most cases this violence affects some of the most vulnerable Palestinians, who live in remote farming communities in Area C of the West Bank, which is under complete Israeli control — should be beyond the need for explanation or justification. After all, the settler attacks are not only wrong but illegal according to the occupier’s own legal standards.

The US invests considerable resources in ensuring coordination between Israeli and Palestinian security forces, which is aimed mainly at protecting Israel from acts of militancy. Because it does not pro-

vide equal protection to Palestinians from settler violence, it is failing both communities.

It is not exactly a state secret that the minority of settlers involved in attacking defenseless Palestinian civilians consists of a mob of mindless thugs motivated by a completely ignorant and excessively zealous interpretation of Judaism. For them, the law of the land is merely a suggestion. It is religious law — as interpreted, or more accurately, distorted, by their own rabbis — that guides them.

By imposing sanctions on a few of the settlers, Biden is making it clear to Israeli authorities that if the country’s financial institutions do not comply with the sanctions and freeze the bank accounts of the individuals involved, they will find themselves on a collision course with US banking authorities.

Settlers, especially those of the ultra-nationalist-religious-messianic ilk, have never lacked confidence in their belief that divinity is guiding them toward the eventual annexation of the West Bank, while in the meantime granting them the right to oppress Palestinians, while harboring plans to force them to move to other countries.

The fact that they now find themselves at the heart of an Israeli government has increased the arrogance of these settlers, leading them to believe they are free to harass and harm Palestinians with no consequences. This sense of invincible supremacy, and their desire for revenge, has become even more pronounced in the aftermath of the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas.

Not only did they feel vindicated in their expressed need to continue their own terrorist activities, they also saw an opportunity, while the country’s attention was focused on Gaza or Hezbollah, to step up their assaults on Palestinians.

The security forces did very little to stop them, mainly because at the head of Israeli decision-making there currently squats a weak and unscrupulous prime minister who does not dare to confront the extremist settlers because of his desperate need to maintain the support of their representatives in the Knesset and the Cabinet, to keep his coalition intact. No one is more afraid of another general election than Netanyahu himself.

In the absence of any moral or practical compass within the government, it falls to Washington to provide one, particularly as it finds itself deeply involved in other regional conflicts exacerbated by the war in Gaza. As Netanyahu continues to operate at his most manipulative and evasive in efforts to reach a ceasefire agreement in exchange for the release of hostages and prisoner exchanges, and even more so regarding the prospects for a two-state solution, it is left to President Biden to attempt to rein him in, not only for the sake of the Palestinians, but for Israel and the US as well.

Imposing sanctions on four settlers is a step in the right direction, and is a warning to several Cabinet members that they might be next should they fail to halt their incitements to violence. The resultant outcry from far-right politicians was only to be expected. But the swift decisions by Israeli banks to comply with the sanctions and freeze the accounts of the sanctioned settlers sent a clear warning that Israel’s closest ally will no longer tolerate settler violence.

It remains to be seen whether the Biden administration is prepared, especially in a presidential election year, to go further by utilizing its financial powers, and other economic and political tools, not to harm or weaken Israel, but to coax it onto a path toward peace and away from the road to self-destruction, by taking steps to prevent political hoodlums from dictating Israeli policies.

For once, there is a flicker of hope about this.

If US wants to be a serious force on global stage, things must change

It has been a bad week for US foreign policy. The divide between the Democrats and the Republicans, and the splits within the Republican Party, have led to political paralysis on Capitol Hill. If it was a bad week for Congress, it was particularly bad for the American people and the nation's partners around the world. The southern border of the US remains unsecured, and no additional funding has been approved for Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Russia and Iran continue to test the resolve of the US and its partners around the globe. At least three US soldiers have been killed and more than 100 wounded as a result of more than 200 attacks by Iranian and Iranian-backed militias.

The Houthis in Yemen continue to disrupt commercial shipping in the Red Sea. President Joe Biden's response has been to launch limited, expensive and seemingly ineffective air strikes that were advertised days in advance. Until the US acts decisively, American troops and international shipping will continue to face attacks. There is no indication that Biden will take a tougher stance.

As for the US Congress, there is no better example of its ineptitude than the issue of American support for Ukraine. Listening to some members of Congress, one would think America is emptying its state coffers to fund Ukraine. In reality, as a percentage of gross domestic product, the US ranks 30th in the world in terms of aid to Ukraine. The last time Congress approved any aid for the country was

December 2022 — more than 400 days ago.

As a result of the inability of Congress to pass additional funding, there are reports that Ukrainians are now rationing ammunition. Consequently, Russia is starting to make some advances on the frontlines in some places.

Viewing the matter strictly from a US point of view, any objective person can see that helping Ukraine is in America's national interest. Russia is one of its main adversaries.

Without a single American soldier pulling a trigger or getting shot at, the US can provide support for an important European partner while delivering a geopolitical blow to one of its leading rivals. At the same time, supporting Ukraine can help deter other adversaries in regions around the world. Even when considering these obvious advantages to the US of support for Ukraine, there are some in Congress who choose to put political pettiness ahead of policy and are doing their best to block further assistance. They essentially are willing to sell out America's partners in Ukraine for the sake of domestic political squabbles in Washington. This sends a horrible message to friends and foes alike.

Europe, which is being destabilized as a result of the invasion of Ukraine, is one of its most important economic partners.

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Luke Coffey

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Korea really depend on Congress to support them during a time of conflict in East Asia?

In the US system of government, foreign policy is mostly the responsibility of the White House. However, Congress is the branch of government that provides the funding for the executive branch to function. Without congressional support, White House foreign policy does not function well. This, in part, is the problem being faced today.

The political situation in

friends and foes alike.

No doubt America's partners and friends are watching this drama unfold. If they are not paying attention to what is happening in Washington, they should be. Considering the lack of support for Ukraine, if you were a US partner in a dangerous neighborhood, it would not be unreasonable to wonder whether you could be the next to be sold out. For example, can Taiwan, Japan and South

the US does not look likely to improve anytime soon. Therefore, American foreign policy will continue to suffer. It remains to be seen how foreign affairs will affect the US presidential election campaign this year, if at all.

Most American voters are driven to the polls on "bread-and-butter" domestic issues such as the economy, the state of the job market, and access to affordable healthcare.

Unless America is directly involved in a war, foreign policy rarely plays a prominent role in US elections. Therefore, there is unlikely to be a grassroots drive to change the current foreign policy approach taken by Congress or the White House.

In fact, the possibility of any meaningful change for the better in terms of foreign policy is bleak for the coming years. Not only should this be a concern for the American people but also America's partners.

It is time for members of Congress to stop playing political games and start reaching across the aisle and working together to find a way forward to reestablish America's reputation and role in the world. The nation's friends, partners, and allies are watching events closely and wondering what the future holds in store. Meanwhile, adversaries can sense weakness, indecisiveness and divisions, not only within the US political establishment but also among the American people.

This gridlock in US foreign policy comes at a dangerous time in global affairs. The inability of the US to develop serious foreign policy has had disastrous, and at times deadly, consequences for Americans and the country's partners.

It is not too late to get US foreign policy back on track. However, it will require political compromise and consensus of the kind the American political system has not seen in years. But if the US wants to be a serious force on the global stage, things must change.

Developing countries need debt relief to act on climate change

Vera Songwe & Ishac Diwan

If developing economies found it hard to manage their debts in 2023, they are likely to face even more formidable challenges this year. Though most possess relatively small debt stocks and are not considered insolvent, many are in dire need of liquidity. As long as this remains true, they will struggle not only to manage their debts, but also to invest in the green transition.

Developing economies have faced a series of external shocks in recent years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, war-related disruptions of food and energy supply chains, and an uptick in global inflation. Moreover, their access to capital markets has been curtailed, preventing them from rolling over maturing loans, as they would do in normal times. As a result, countries have been forced to channel a large share of their tax and export revenues to service their debt, avoiding default at the cost of priorities like infrastructure investment, social welfare programs and climate action.

The outlook for these countries is likely to worsen in the next few years. According to estimates by the Finance for Development Lab, large debt payments are coming due in 2024 and 2026 for at least 20 low- and lower-middle-income countries. As countries hit this "debt wall," their already fragile fiscal positions will deteriorate further. This does not bode well for climate action.

Climate change is not some distant menace; its effects are already being felt worldwide, especially in climate-vulnerable developing economies. But international summits on the topic last year sent a disappointing message: While developed economies pledged to increase climate financing by 2030, developing economy policymakers are struggling against severe fiscal constraints. With medium-term strategies being used to address a short-term threat, developing and emerging economies have been expressing frustration, including at the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact that was held in Paris last June.

Multilateral development banks can provide an essential lifeline, but their capacity would have to be strengthened — and quickly. According to World Bank data, the new concessional loans the world's poorest countries received from these banks in 2022 were smaller than these countries' debt service payments, a large share of which went to private and bilateral creditors. Increasing capital flight from the developing world — driven not least by monetary tightening in advanced economies — will intensify the needs of illiquid lower-income countries.

But it is not only a matter of financial capacity. Multilateral development banks have so far been inconsistent, at best, when it comes to supporting countries struggling to repay their debts. For example, both Kenya and Ethiopia have been under pressure to repay their private and Chinese creditors,

Service Suspension Initiative that the G20 introduced in 2020, the proposal includes stronger incentives for private sector creditors to participate, in addition to longer time horizons.

There are good reasons to believe that creditors can be convinced to join the program voluntarily. It is, after all, in their best interest to remain invested in solvent countries with strong growth prospects; no one benefits from debt crises like those that have ensnared Zambia and Sri Lanka. In any case, creditors would continue receiving interest payments and, as global interest rates fall and economic growth prospects improve in the coming years, debtors may well be able to return to capital markets and resume repayment of the principal.

Shaping a workable blueprint along these lines is a task for upcoming international gatherings, such as the G20 Summit in Brazil later this year.

A better approach would focus on closing the gap between short-term debt concerns and long-term investment needs by unlocking net positive inflows for countries facing liquidity constraints. As the Finance for Development Lab has proposed, an agreement among debtors, creditors and multilateral development banks to permit countries to reschedule debts coming due — delaying maturities by five to 10 years — would create the fiscal space for climate-friendly investments, financed by multilateral development banks. For this liquidity bridge to work, the banks would have to accelerate progress on implementing existing reform plans and increase funding substantially, while the IMF helps manage debt rollover risks. Importantly, private and bilateral creditors would have to agree to the rescheduling. That is why, compared to the Debt Service Suspension Initiative that the G20 introduced in 2020, the proposal includes stronger incentives for private sector creditors to participate, in addition to longer time horizons.

Logistical and financial coordination will be needed to ensure sufficient liquidity. Coordination among the IMF, the World Bank and regional development banks will also be essential to ensure that participating debtor countries pursue investments that genuinely support green growth.

If nothing is done to help countries facing liquidity crises, the world will risk a wave of destabilizing debt defaults and progress on the green transition will be severely undermined, with catastrophic implications for the entire world. Because promising solutions like the liquidity bridge can prevent such outcomes, they deserve broad global support.

On International Day of the Arabian Leopard, together, we can make a difference

Princess Reema Bandar Al-Saud

Wildlife conservation is critical to the planet's biodiversity and to ensuring the long-term survival of countless species ... including our own. While the plight of an animal like the Arabian leopard may seem far removed from the daily life of most, our collective well-being is inextricably linked. Everything in nature is connected to the rest of the world. Your health and the health of your family and community is linked to the vitality of all other species.

In 2021, with fewer than 200 Arabian leopards — a critically endangered species — left in the wild, I started Catmosphere. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it became increasingly clear how our planet, environment, wildlife and our own well-being are all interconnected. And while the survival and longevity of this sub-species may have driven the original initiative, the story is one of determination and hope for our collective future.

As human activities continue to encroach on natural habitats and drive species like the Arabian leopard to the brink of extinction, the need for conservation efforts has never been more urgent. Among the many species threatened by habitat loss, poaching and human-wildlife conflict, big cats stand out as iconic and imperiled symbols of

the challenges facing wildlife conservation. And the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is leading efforts to help ensure their survival. Whether through the Catwalk Trails in Sharaan Nature Reserve, the Royal Commission for AlUla's

Catmosphere has worked with leading experts in the field of conservation to tell the stories of big cats and their conservation challenges to encourage us all to take action to address our collective well-being. The preservation of big cats, including species such as tigers, lions, leopards, jaguars and cheetahs, has been the focal point of Catmosphere's global efforts to protect biodiversity. These majestic creatures play a vital role in maintaining the ecological balance of their respective habitats. As apex predators, big cats help regulate prey populations, which in turn affects the entire food web. However, big cats face numerous threats that jeopardize their survival, including habitat destruction, the illegal wildlife trade and climate change.

breeding and reintroduction program or the Arabian Leopard Fund, the Kingdom is committed to fostering a more sustainable future, including for wildlife.

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servation to tell the stories of big cats and their conservation challenges to encourage us all to take action to address our collective well-being. The preservation of big cats, including species such as tigers, lions, leopards,

So, I was so elated that,

populations, which in turn affects the entire food web. However, big cats face numerous threats that jeopardize their survival, including habitat destruction, the illegal wildlife trade and climate change.

On the first International Day of the Arabian Leopard, Catmosphere is inviting everyone to celebrate by taking part in the third "CATWALK," a mass participation walk that is open to everyone, everywhere. The Arabian leopard and its habitats cannot speak for themselves. We need to speak and act on their behalf. I encourage you to visit the Catmosphere website (catmosphere.org), where you can get involved, participate in the CATWALK and register your support.

This first International Day of the Arabian Leopard is a testament to the idea that truly anything is possible ... it is not too late. Our well-being is interconnected — from reintroducing the native Arabian leopard in AlUla to planting mangroves in the Red Sea, our collective action brings positive change. Together, we can make a difference.

through Catmosphere's efforts, the UN last year recognized the "International Day of the Arabian Leopard," an initiative sponsored by Saudi Arabia and co-sponsored by more than 30 member states. The resolution proclaimed Feb. 10 as the

jaguars and cheetahs, has been the focal point of Catmosphere's global efforts to protect biodiversity. These majestic creatures play a vital role in maintaining the ecological balance of their respective habitats. As apex predators, big cats help regulate prey

Iraq needs reconciliation based on dialogue and word, not violence and blood

Mustafa Al-Kadhimi

Before I became prime minister of Iraq, I recalled many questions that I had carried with me since my forced exile until my return in mid-2003, through all the stages that followed, all the way to the legitimate popular protests in October 2019.

There is a common denominator between these questions: the lack of an important characteristic in their answers — transparency. This is the first step to building an institutional democratic state that enshrines the concept of belonging to the homeland, and requires all of us to put its interest ahead of any other consideration.

I remember what I said in Irbil in October 2022, on the fifth anniversary of the death of former President Jalal Talabani: "Let us adhere to dialogue, dialogue, dialogue... and nothing

else, as it is our only way to resolve the crisis."

I remain confident about this path because of its necessity politically, economically, socially, and structurally, provided it is transparent, clear, comprehensive, deep, and productive, removes past obstacles, and establishes the foundation for reform of our political system.

Why do we lose time? Discussions between elites, officials, and those concerned with public affairs always conclude with an acknowledgment of the failure of the political process that was built after 2003.

This failure extends, first, to the form of the political, economic, and security system; second, the unifying relationship between the social components and segments; and third, to the nature of the discourse directed to the

masses, and the competencies and energies of impulsive youth.

All this failure is manifested by the helplessness of the state as a whole, the weakness of its institutions to perform their tasks, and the difficulty in regenerating itself.

These discussions raise questions and problems that require convincing answers that can be streamlined in media and public discourse, ensuring interaction between political and popular actors.

It is necessary to start from a basic rule that calls for understanding the movement of history and learning from the experiences of others. History moves forward and cannot go backward.

My constant recall of the experiences of others is not a pleasure, as much as it is a sincere invitation to benefit from and learn lessons

and to buy time and invest it, instead of wasting it. We are in a fight against time, and missing the opportunity means delaying the future for years.

Our young Iraqi experience at various levels seems humble in the face of the tremendous leaps that our surroundings and the world are witnessing. The national humanitarian and moral duty requires launching a sustainable reform and development project. This is based on the conviction that the era of coups is over, that military interventions do not build but rather destroy, and that honest discourse is linked to actions, not words.

How can we achieve this?

It is essential to open broad and transparent discussions on all thorny

issues, or those that raise "reservations" and require a kind of consideration and silence. These discussions are based on legitimate questions, imposed by the failure to implement previous visions, and it has become necessary to address them so that they do not resurge in the next few years.

What are the components of our Iraqi national identity? What are the unifying threads between those components? How can they be formulated and re-presented in a convincing way to all national, intellectual and social segments? This problem is the introduction to preserving the history that is deeply rooted in humanity, and it would be the starting point for building our future, for which we fought throughout the years of exile,

defending those who opposed dictatorship inside and outside Iraq.

What is the most appropriate form of government? How can we express the true will of the people? What is the optimal electoral system for this? Do some constitutional provisions need to be reconsidered? Let us define them and propose mechanisms to modify them.

How can we organize the relationship between the central government and the Kurdistan region? Have we succeeded in implementing a federal system? How can we restore prestige to the state and its institutions? What is the most appropriate solution to control the rampant weapons that have become part of the culture of our society?

Has our economic system succeeded in achieving the desired prosperity or

failed in attaining even a minimum level of development? How can we restore the balance between the state's financial resources without total dependence on oil?

What needs to be prioritized: the higher Iraqi interest or the interests of others? Why can't we be like others who put the interests of their country before everything else? Are Iraqis required to be internationalists or patriots? What are the forms of interaction with major issues and their limits? How will we build our state within this geographical, politically conflicting space? How can we turn this threat into an opportunity to make Iraq an arena for meeting, launching, and attracting major projects that achieve economic interconnection with our surroundings?

How do we employ our moral and value system in

our political work without making it an excuse for committing crimes, so that we do not lose those who believed in us and misplace values formulated by human nature?

These problems will remain captive to the idea if they are not transformed into a serious dialogue that produces concepts, through a national institution that brings together the political, intellectual, academic and social elites, cooperating with each other, to find answers and turn them into projects in the hands of those concerned.

In that way we restore lost confidence so that the people will be on the side of a state that is keen to renew itself on the one hand and establish a real reform path on the other, to reach comprehensive reconciliation based on dialogue and word, not violence and blood.



Malik for more efforts to bring about positive economic change

LAHORE (APP): More collaborative efforts from public & private sector, and the civil society are essential to bring about a positive change and to revive the economy by laying emphasis on boosting exports.

Blessed with resources, skilled manpower and the industry, Pakistan can capture lion's share in the global market, the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry's former President Iftikhar Ali Malik stated this during a meeting with business delegation led by Muslim Khan Buner, here

on Sunday.

He added, "Through export capabilities, we can generate revenue; create employment opportunities and strengthen our international standing for which result-oriented economic reforms are also crucial to encourage investment, facilitate ease of doing business, and promote entrepreneurship." He was confident that such measures would help rejuvenate various sectors and attract both the domestic and foreign investors.

He emphasized for

establishment of more special economic zones, offering a basket of incentives to export-oriented industries, and investment in infrastructure that supports efficient production and transportation of goods.

Iftikhar Malik was of the view that investment in vocational and technical training programmes is prerequisite to empower the workforce with modern skills, making them more competitive in the global market. He said consistent power and gas supply is

lifetime for industries, promoting higher productivity and reduced operational costs.

"We must harness the potential of modern technology to streamline administrative processes; reduce corruption; enhance transparency; and create a conducive environment for economic growth.

By taking decisive actions and prioritizing economic revival and export enhancement, we can pave the way for a prosperous and thriving Pakistan," he added.

China-Pak coop constructing smart city through use of AI technology

ISLAMABAD (INP): In the context of the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Chinese and Pakistani researchers are helping Pakistan build smarter and safer cities through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology.

At the beginning of year 2022, the CPInS Lab was officially established at Pakistan National University of Science and Technology (NUST), with joint efforts of NUST and Guangzhou Institute of Software Application Technology.

At present, various researches are in progress in an orderly manner, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

"We have made great progress in areas such as UAV control systems and AI recognition localization. Our lab is starting the application of smart cities in Pakistan," Dr. Wu Jun, the Director of CPInS Lab, told Gwadar Pro.

"Through this platform, our mature research results could be deeply connected with local projects in

Pakistan, providing smart city-related products and intelligent solutions according to local conditions.

We are able to effectively implement core technologies and products such as smart street lights and smart videos to improve local urban governance ability."

"Sci-tech cooperation is of great importance to Pakistan's socio-economic development," Seemab Latif, Head of the Pakistani side of the lab and Associate Professor at the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (SEECs) at the NUST, indicated that China's AI industry leads the world, as well as Pakistan's scientific and technological development has huge potential, thus by deepening bilateral cooperation, Pakistan can make great progress in the field of Sci-Tech, by which own the potential to become an AI development center in South Asia.

According to Latif, that the lab is using technology from China to develop smart city projects such as

efficient traffic management systems and infrastructure monitoring systems in Pakistan.

At present, on the basis of local conditions, the license plate recognition system and intelligent security system developed by the lab have begun to be piloted in Pakistan.

"More Pakistani residents will be able to experience the safety and convenience brought by the application of intelligent systems."

Up to now, the results of cooperation are mushrooming. Dr. Wu told the reporter that considering that Pakistan is often threatened by floods, scientists from both sides pooled their wisdom to develop a vital result "UAV-assisted edge framework for real-time disaster management", which provides a more scientific and effective solution for local flood fight.

Apart from bringing technology overseas, talent exchange and training could be said to be another key purpose of establishing the lab. Nowadays, the lab has recruited four outstanding

postdoctoral fellows from Pakistan to work in Guangzhou for a long time, and will continue to recruit students in years to come.

"We are working on a variety of exciting projects with Chinese counterparts, including activity detection, gait recognition, automatic license plate detection and real-time recognition, as well as waste management," said lab researcher Sahar Ershad.

As an emerging economy, Pakistan's infrastructure is booming day by day. A large number of road cameras and other equipment have not been intellectualized yet, which shows that the CPInS Lab has a great potential in the future.

Generally speaking, the field of artificial intelligence in Pakistan has not yet formed an industry, but the country is never short on sci-tech talents.

"Through further cooperation with China, Pakistan is fully capable of becoming an artificial intelligence development hub in South Asia and the wider region," Wu concluded, full of confidence.

'Stakeholders involvement in policy making vital for economy'

LAHORE (APP): Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman's (FTO) Coordinator Meher Kashif Younis has called for taking stakeholders into confidence in the policy-making decisions as it would not only helps strengthen the economy and leads to transparency but also yields tangible benefits of sustainability of policies in Pakistan.

Sharing his views in a think-tank session on 'The impact of taking stakeholders into confidence in policy making decisions' here Sunday, he added that stakeholders' active involvement in policy making process would

definitely assure better outcomes.

The diverse socio-economic landscape and complex governance structures necessitate a comprehensive approach that considers the perspectives of various stakeholders, including the public sector and private sector especially the chambers of commerce and elected trade bodies, he suggested.

The Coordinator said that policymakers could ensure that decisions were made in a manner that was transparent, accountable, and reflective of the needs and interests of the business community and the people, asserting that it

would foster trust between the public and private sector, thus enhancing the legitimacy of policies and minimizing the risk of resistance or opposition.

He argued that different stakeholders bring diverse expertise, experiences and perspectives to the table, which could enrich the decision-making process and lead to more informed and effective policies.

He said stakeholders could help build consensus and garner support for proposed initiatives.

"Once the stakeholders are taken into confidence and their concerns are addressed, they are more likely to support and

cooperate with the implementation of policies, leading to smoother execution and achieving desired results".

Meher Kashif Younis added that stakeholders could improve the effectiveness and sustainability of policies by tapping into local knowledge and resources.

They have invaluable insights into the ground realities and can give their input on how policies can be tailored to better suit local contexts and needs. This bottom-up approach ensures that policies are more responsive, adaptive, and sustainable in the long run, he concluded.



ISLAMABAD: People busy shopping at Sunday Bazar G-9 in Federal Capital.

Jeff sells roughly \$2b of Amazon shares

NEW YORK (INP): Amazon founder Jeff Bezos sold around 12 million shares of the online retail and cloud services firm for roughly \$2 billion, according to a company filing, soon after laying out a plan to sell his shares over the next year.

The sale took place on Wednesday and Thursday, the filings showed. Last week, Amazon said that Bezos would sell up to 50 million shares in the firm.

The sale plan, which is subject to certain conditions, was adopted on Nov. 8, 2023, and would be completed by Jan. 31, 2025, according to the company's latest annual report.

Jeff Bezos, who stepped down as the company's chief executive and took over as executive chairman in 2021, founded Amazon as a bookseller in 1994.

He is currently the world's second richest person with a net worth of \$200 billion, according to Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Women Chamber to hold seminar

BAHAWALPUR (APP): The Women Chamber of Commerce Bahawalpur is going to organize a seminar here on February 13, 2024, to highlight the importance of women's role in business activities.

Under the supervision of Naheed Masood, the President of the Women Chamber of Commerce Bahawalpur, a seminar would take place on February 13, 2024, to encourage women to participate in business activities in order to empower themselves. "The seminar will be organized with the collaboration of the Government College of Technology for Women Bahawalpur," it added.

"Efforts are underway to bring the maximum number of women into business fields in order to empower them," the press release concluded.

'New govt to take steps to stabilize economy'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has stated that the new government will have to take proactive measures to encounter external and domestic challenges, besides stabilizing the economy.

In a statement issued here today, the PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the upcoming government should be committed to transforming the economy of the country, as the process of transforming the economy is already underway in the country, acknowledging that structural reforms in every sector takes time.

Faheem Saigol mentioned that the new elected government will have to take joint action to combat currency smuggling and narrow the difference in dollar rates between official and open markets.

It is the fact that the interim government has undertaken various initiatives for the betterment of the country. The trade deficit narrowed by 3.6 per cent to \$1.3 billion in December 2023 compared to \$1.9bn in the same period last year, demonstrating positive progress. Additionally, he expressed optimism that the government's efforts would lead to an expansion in export potential and the export market.

He said that the government would encounter the external and domestic challenges, which are enormous but the government will have to take proactive measures to overcome them.

He said that the Pakistan Credit Guarantee Company had been formed for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), emphasizing that the companies had to stand on their own feet and should not rely on subsidies.

He stated that a substantial change should introduce to the FBR to enhance its performance with a view to raise the economic

growth of this country. He said that the economic managers should diligently work on reforms in the FBR and ensure their implementation.

He praised the efforts of the caretaker government and urged consultations with the PIAF in the fiscal budget-making process to facilitate the business community.

Faheem Saigol outlined a comprehensive economic agenda aimed at steering the country towards progress. He emphasized the critical need for a strategic approach to economic development, calling for concerted efforts from both the government and political parties.

At the core of national progress lies a well-defined economic agenda, he stated, underscoring the importance of a cohesive plan to put the economy on a track of sustained growth. He stressed that economic stability is paramount for addressing various societal challenges and fostering an environment conducive to prosperity.

Turning his attention to the international stage, he highlighted the need for the country to actively engage with the global market. He argued that tapping into international opportunities is key to unlocking the full potential of the economy. Encouraging businesses to explore and expand their presence in the global arena, he urged policymakers in the upcoming government to create an enabling environment for international trade and investment.

Furthermore, he called upon political parties to announce clear and robust economic strategies. He argued that these strategies should not only focus on short-term gains but also

encompass a long-term vision for sustained progress. The PIAF Chairman emphasized that such transparency from political leaders is crucial for instilling confidence in the business community and investors.

At the strategic level, he proposed a collaborative approach between the government and the business community. He stressed that the government should actively engage with industry stakeholders to formulate successful economic strategies. This collaboration is especially crucial in the aftermath of the Feb 8 elections. After the polls it is imperative that the government involves the business community in shaping economic policies, he asserted. He argued that aligning the interests of the government and businesses is essential for creating an economic framework that is not only robust but also sustainable in the long run.

A cornerstone of the proposed economic initiatives is the advocacy for a comprehensive 5-year export policy. He emphasized that such a policy would provide a roadmap for enhancing the country's global competitiveness. He outlined that a strategic export policy is vital for diversifying the economy, creating job opportunities, and ensuring a steady influx of foreign exchange. He said that PIAF serves as a rallying cry for a united effort towards economic progress. The call for transparent economic strategies, international engagement, and a collaborative approach between the government and the business community underscores the urgency of prioritizing economic development for the collective well-being of the nation.

Las Vegas Expo: PFC delegation off to USA

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) delegation Sunday left for Las Vegas, USA, to partake in a three-day expo commencing on February 13 to showcase the diverse range of Pakistan's furniture products and to explore new opportunities in the global market.

The delegation comprises representatives from various segments of the furniture sector including manufacturers, designers, and exporters, all poised to highlight the richness and uniqueness of Pakistani furniture designs.

PFC CEO Mian Kashif Ashfaq told the media that with an aim to bolster the country's furniture industry on an international platform, the delegation was set to exhibit the craftsmanship, innovation, and quality

synonymous with Pakistani furniture.

He said the expo in Las Vegas presents an ideal opportunity for the PFC to engage with potential buyers, distributors and investors, fostering partnerships and collaborations that can propel the industry to greater heights. "As Pakistan endeavors to position itself as a prominent player in the global furniture market, the participation of the PFC delegation in this prestigious event would help grab more opportunities for growth and expansion," he remarked.

With determination and dedication, he said, the delegation sets forth to make a lasting impression on the international stage, thus promoting the Pakistan's furniture industry.

China's e-commerce logistics index notches growth in Jan

BEIJING (APP): China's e-commerce logistics index, an indicator of logistics operations in the e-commerce sector, stood at 112.8 points in January 2024, up 0.4 points from a month earlier, according to the latest data released by the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing.

Specifically, the sub-index tracking logistics volume stood at 125.3 points in January, the highest level in 23 months, the organization said.

The sub-index tracking logistics volume in rural areas snapped its losing streak, gaining 1.3 points compared with the previous month to reach 129.1 points in January, the data showed.

Incoming govt needs to set economic priorities as fiscal constraints an uphill task: BMP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has called upon political parties to announce clear and robust economic strategies, as the country has stuck in low economic growth situation, where double-digit policy rate for the last few years, including 22 percent policy rate, has diminished capacity to increase domestic production, and exports, negatively impacting domestic resource mobilization.

The FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar pointed out that the new strategies should not only focus on short-term gains but also encompass a long-term vision for sustained progress. He emphasized that such transparency from political leaders is crucial for instilling confidence in the business community and investors.

The BMP Chairman said that the new government

that comes into office will have its work sharply cut out as far as the economic challenges are concerned. Coming at the back of fast-unfolding climate change crisis and recent Covid pandemic that pushed millions into poverty with little fiscal capacity of government to provide anywhere near close to what was needed in stimulus spending. Then there is acute debt distress, and seriously high inflation at the back of global aggregate supply shock, and accentuated by a world of rising conflicts, mainly in Ukraine, and the Middle East.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that even though Pakistan's economic crisis in 2022-2023 is a recurring factor in the country's political unrest, it has a history of ignoring the nation's true issues, which include poor governance, a broken judicial system, outdated laws, complicated tax system, lack of transparency, duplication in the government system, ineffective bureaucracy, improper use of our human, natural and water resources, lack of efficient

local government, inadequate/unreliable data for country's planning, and the consistent flaws in policies in execution by the government departments. Pakistan's GDP growth rate has always remained below its potential despite efforts to boost economic growth. The development of important sectors and investment prospects was hampered by inadequate revenue collection, structural problems, and governance issues.

Since it has been causing serious governance and economic issues for years, the cost of goods, food, petrol, and other necessities has increased, and inflation has almost reached 45 per cent, which is not bearable for the common man. On the other hand, there has been an increase in dissatisfaction among the public that no state institution is performing well and to save them from the haughtiness and bad administration pervasive in the system. The only way for this to go forward is a failure to a success story, as in other countries, is if the federal and provincial governments defy them and

pursue fundamental changes in governance, fairness, openness, accountability, and the consistent economic policies minimum for 15 years.

Other troubling issues also exist, posing obstacles to our economy's expansion. Pakistan is ranked 173rd internationally for tax payments. According to a World Bank analysis, Pakistani businesspeople pay 47 taxes yearly, compared to those of Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Ireland, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and India, which are the countries with whom Pakistan must compete. A single business that conducts business in four different Pakistani provinces annually disburses five corporate income taxes, twelve employer-paid pension contributions, twelve Social Security payments, one property tax, one professional tax, one vehicle tax, one stamp duty payment, one fuel tax payment, and twelve payments of goods and sales tax. An exporter needs 75 hours to complete border compli-

ance and document compliance. Additionally, Pakistan dropped 23 spots on the indicator for corporate loan availability. The nation was ranked 105th this year as opposed to 82nd last year. There wasn't much money left to fund the company's expansion because of the government's expanding budget financing requirements. Pakistan's Human Development Index as of 2022 is 0.544, placing it 161st out of 192 nations. The HDI of Pakistan is among the lowest in Asia, right below Yemen and Afghanistan. The country dropped one spot, moving to positions 142 and 170 on the indices for registering businesses and properties, respectively.

There are 12 different treatments, and it takes roughly 18 days to finish them all. Similarly to that, it took many days to register a property. The nation climbed nine spots in the rating for handling building permits, landing at position 141. It takes an investor 252 days to complete 15 different types of procedures to obtain a building



In brief

ITF Pakistan C'ships begin

ISLAMABAD (APP): The qualifying rounds of boys singles of ITF Pakistan Khawar Hyat Khan Memorial World Junior Championship Leg-1 were held at PTF SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad on Sunday. As many as 45 international players, both boys and girls from Kazakhstan, Turkey, USA, Hongkong, China, Russia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Romania, Switzerland, Sri Lanka and Thailand are participating in the Championships. Pakistan has fielded 27 players, both boys girls are in the championships. The results are as under: BOYS SINGLES QUALIFYING FINAL ROUND: Lin Kieran(USA) bt Hamza Rehmat (PAK) 6 - 0 , 6 - 1 ; K a n g Kaigaoge (CHN) bt Park Joel(USA)6-2,6-3 ; D a n i i l Varaksa(Balarus) bt Cetinkaya(TUR) 6-4,4-6(11-9); Ivan Makarov (RUS) bt Dalbusin Ulad (Balarus) 6-1,6-4 The main draw matches will start on Monday at 10:00 am.

Leach out of rest of series

H Y D E R A B A D (Agencies): England spinner Jack Leach has been ruled out of the remainder of the Test tour of India with a knee problem. Leach injured his left knee while fielding in England's win in the first Test in Hyderabad. The 32-year-old, who has taken 126 wickets in 36 Tests, subsequently missed the second Test in Vizag. He will now fly home and England currently have no plans to call up a replacement for Leach with the third Test in Rajkot starting on Thursday. They will instead keep faith with inexperienced spin trio Tom Hartley, Rehan Ahmed and Shoab Bashir, plus Joe Root as a fourth spin option, for the remainder of the five-match series. Left-arm spinner Leach had only just returned to the side having missed last summer's Ashes series against Australia with a stress fracture in his back. The Somerset player has endured a series of health and injury issues which have hampered his England career since he made his debut in April 2018. The series is level at 1-1 with three games to play.

Djokovic sets eyes on target

PARIS (Agencies): Novak Djokovic, a 24-time Grand Slam champion with over 100 career trophies, has set his eyes on one specific target in 2024 to complete his Greatest of All Time (GOAT) legacy. According to a tennis commentator, Nick Lester, the Serbian star will concentrate on winning a gold medal at the Paris Olympics to achieve one of the few remaining milestones in his career. Among the modern greats, such as Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray, Djokovic has yet to secure an Olympic gold medal. Lester told Tennis365 that the Serb will be determined to join them by triumphing in the tennis event at Roland Garros in Paris. "For me, the Olympic gold medal is massive for him this year and he will set his sights on that one big target," Lester told Tennis365. "It is the only thing that's missing from his CV and he will tailor everything around that. When you have achieved everything and only one final prize is missing, it would make sense to make it your priority." "For me, he is still the man to beat on a hard court when he is fully fit and motivated.

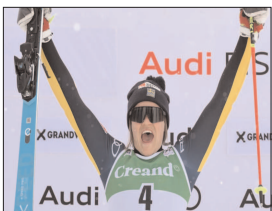
OGDCL cricket team dominates MPCL in semi



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: MPCL batted first setting, a competitive 184 runs in the Semi Final of OGCC T20 Championship played at ARL Ground Rawalpindi which was chased down with ease by Team OGDCL in just 16-overs. OGDCL's batsman Nasir Mehmood played a scintillating innings of 101 runs in just 56 balls, earning the Man of the Match award. He remained unbeaten throughout, anchoring the chase and leading his team to victory. Amir Khan provides valuable support with a well-made 55 runs. Rehan Malik and Muhammad Bilal bowled in style and claimed two wickets each. Team OGDCL clinches victory in an impressive display of grit and determination. The team's enthusiasm and high morale bode well for even greater success in the future.

Larsson benefits from Shiffrin, Vlhova absence



SOLDEU (AFP): Sweden's Anna Swenn Larsson won the women's World Cup slalom at Soldeu becoming the first skier apart from injured duo of American superstar Mikaela Shiffrin and Olympic champion Petra Vlhova to win a race in the discipline this season. "It's sad that two queens are not here but I'm so happy to grab a victory," said Swenn Larsson, who became the first woman other than Shiffrin or Vlhova to win a World Cup slalom in over a year. Swenn Larsson posted the fastest time in the first leg and rammed home her advantage in the second run to time 35 hundredths of a second faster than second-placed Croatian skier Zrinka Ljutic. The 32-year-old Swede collapsed in the snow in delight after achieving her first outright World Cup race on her 140th start, having shared victory with Swiss Wendy Holdener in Killington last season. "It's a dream come true and even if it was so nice to share the first victory with Wendy, it's special to stand on the top by yourself as

well," said Swenn Larsson. The Swede had a difficult start to the season and had not finished higher than 15th in the first four slalom races and failed to make the second run in the second race in Levi. "From not qualifying in Levi to standing on the top (of the podium), it's amazing," she said. "It's a journey and I'm so proud of myself." Shiffrin's compatriot Paula Moltzan finished third, 83 hundredths of a second slower than the winner in the Pyrenees. The two injured stars were both missing from the same World Cup slalom race for the first time in nearly 13 years, opening up the possibility of a first-time winner, which Ljutic almost became. Shiffrin, who has five wins in the discipline this season, missed Soldeu as she recovers from a knee injury. Shiffrin holds a commanding lead in the slalom World Cup standings -- second-placed Vlhova is 125 points behind but the Slovak three-time winner this season has been ruled out for the rest of the campaign due to injury. However, Shiffrin will have work to do when she returns to clinch a sixth overall World Cup crown. On Saturday, in-form Swiss skier Lara Gut-Behrami leap-frogged her at the top of the standings with victory in the giant slalom.

Under-19 Cricket World Cup Australia clinch 79-run victory over India

BENONI (Agencies): Australia won the Under-19 World Cup for the fourth time after a 79-run victory over India in the final. Australia posted a competitive 253-7 from their 50 overs as Harjas Singh top-scored with 55 while Raj Limbani took 3-38 for India. India opener Adarsh Singh compiled a patient 47 but only three other India batters made double figures as they were dismissed for 174. Mahli Beardman finished the pick of the bowlers for the Aussies with 3-15. Australia's victory was the first time they had won the trophy at U19 level since 2010. Victorious Australia captain Hugh Weibgen said: "I'm so proud of this group of boys and the coaches. A lot of work has gone in over the last few months. "India are obviously a class side. They dominated the whole tournament and they were on the wrong side today but they have a lot of class." South Africa fast bowler Kwena Maphaka was named as the player of the tournament after he picked up 21 wickets at an average of 9.71.



Australian players celebrate with the trophy.

Sri Lanka beat Afghanistan by 155 runs to secure 2-0 series win



KANDY (AFP): Sri Lanka secured a convincing 155 run win over Afghanistan in the second one-day international on Sunday, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three match series. Afghanistan, set a target of 309 to level the series, were shot out for 153 inside 34 overs as leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga starred with four wickets. "We are quite disappointed with the way we performed today," Afghanistan's skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi said. "We are a better side than this." Afghanistan were well placed at 128 for one in pursuit of their target, but once Rahmat Shah (54) and Ibrahim Zadran (63) were dismissed there was little fight from the rest of the batters. The pair had added 97 runs for the second wicket and Asitha Fernando, playing his first ODI in 15 months, provided the breakthrough by having Ibrahim caught behind. Leg-spinner Hasaranga then produced two wickets in an over as he trapped Rahmat leg before wicket, while Shahidi was bowled. Hasaranga was backed up by seamers as Dilshan Madushanka claimed two wickets in an over and Asitha Fernando, who also ended with two wickets. "Dropped several catches" - Afghanistan collapsed losing eight wickets for 10 runs, as Sri Lanka dominated under lights. "Credit to all the bowlers who helped to pull this off", Sri Lankan skipper Kusal Mendis said. It was a back to the wall unbeaten 97 by Charith Asalanka that enabled Sri Lanka to a total of over 300 runs. The Sri Lankan vice-captain was involved in two crucial partnerships, first adding 111 runs off 98 balls with Janith Liyanage (50) for the fifth wicket.

A 50 run partnership followed for the sixth wicket with Hasaranga off 32 balls. Asalanka scored 62 runs in 35 balls in the last 10 overs and finished unbeaten on 97, a score he hit off 74 balls with nine fours and two sixes. Sri Lanka got off to a poor start, losing the openers with 36 runs on the board. Mendis and Sadeera Samarawickrama scored half-centuries, while being involved in a 103 run stand for the third wicket. Both batsmen fell for strokes. Samarawickrama hit one straight to mid-wicket, while Mendis took on the deep mid-wicket fielder but failed to clear him. Azmatullah Omarzai was the pick of the bowlers for Afghanistan finishing with three wickets. Afghanistan were sloppy on the field dropping as many as five catches, a performance that cost them dearly. "We dropped several catches...that's not on" Shahidi said. "We bowled well I thought compared to the first game. But the mistake was on the part of fielding", he added. The third and final ODI will be played on Wednesday at the same venue. The hosts won the tour's sole Test by 10 wickets. The current series will be followed by three T20 matches, all in Dambulla.

Arsenal thrash West Ham in their biggest PL away win

LONDON (Agencies): Arsenal secured their biggest Premier League away win with a ruthless dismantling of West Ham to move back to within two points of leaders Liverpool. Mikel Arteta's side stay third but are now behind second-placed Manchester City only on goals scored after wiping out a six-goal deficit on a stunning afternoon at the London Stadium.



It is West Ham's heaviest home Premier League defeat and joint-heaviest of all time, along with a 8-2 loss against Blackburn in 1963-64. An extraordinary first half saw the Gunners race into a 4-0 lead, thanks to goals from William Saliba, Gabriel, Bukayo Saka and Leandro Trossard, leaving the home side stunned. Saka waltzed through a static Hammers defence to score his second after the break, before Declan Rice made it 6-0 with a rocket of a shot from distance against his former club. Arsenal cruise to stunning victory After the jubilation of last weekend's win over Liverpool, Arsenal produced another statement performance to restate their title credentials. It is their joint-biggest margin of victory in an away league match and their first since a 7-1 win over Aston Villa in December 1935. They had to wait 32 minutes to break the deadlock, when Saliba rose highest at the far post from Rice's corner to nod home from close range. West Ham had been defensively disciplined up to that stage, but completely lost their shape as Arsenal ran in three more goals before the break. The second came from the penalty spot when Saka ran on to a ball over the top and was fouled by goalkeeper Alphonse Areola. The England international, who missed from the spot against West Ham last season, converted this time for his 50th Arsenal goal. Gabriel made it 3-0 with another close-range header from Rice's free-kick, before Trossard curled superbly into the top corner in first-half stoppage time. The pace of the game dropped after the break but Arsenal's dominance remained, with Saka collecting Martin Odegaard's pass inside the area before rifling into the near post. Rice then fired in a superb sixth from distance, though the England midfielder refused to celebrate on what was his second appearance back at his old club since his £100m summer move. West Ham slump continues West Ham fans streaming out of the London Stadium before half-time will be a worrying sight for David Moyes, who has come under pressure from some sections of the fanbase this season. The Hammers were looking to beat Arsenal three times in the same season for the first time in 99 years, after winning 3-1 at home in the EFL Cup in November and then 2-0 at the Emirates the following month. But the Hammers have yet to win since that December night in north London, meaning they have begun a calendar year winless in their first seven games for the first time since 1997. This game was lost in a disastrous 15-minute spell before half-time as West Ham's previously stubborn defence disintegrated, with the half-time break failing to inspire any sort of response. With Moyes' contract expiring at the end of the season, a result from a limp performance like this will only add to the uncertainty about his future. The Scot will be hoping West Ham's next four games, all against sides currently in the bottom seven, offer an opportunity to kick-start their faltering season. Man City beat Arsenal to reach Women's FA Cup last eight: Manchester City booked their place in the Women's FA Cup quarter-finals at the expense of league rivals Arsenal in a damaging week for the Gunners. City remain one of the favourites to win a fourth FA Cup crown thanks to Laia Aleixandri's winner at Meadow Park. Arsenal slipped six points behind leaders Chelsea in the Women's Super League title race with defeat by West Ham last Sunday and had already failed to progress in Europe. This latest defeat will be a devastating blow for Jonas Eidevall's side, who have won just one trophy in the past five years. Aleixandri pounced on a loose ball in the box from a City free-kick to poke in from close range, after striker Khadija Shaw had come very close with two headers earlier in the second half. City proved more ruthless in the end despite a late flurry of chances from Arsenal - including a touch from Kim Little on a corner which they believed had crossed the line but was not given as a goal.

Magnificent Maxwell's record-equaling century sets up series win



ADELAIDE (Agencies): An unstoppable Glenn Maxwell equalled Rohit Sharma with a record fifth T20I century as Australia wrapped up the series after a comfortable victory over West Indies at the Adelaide Oval. Maxwell flattened a full-strength West Indies in perfect batting conditions with eight sixes and his unbeaten 120 runs off 55 balls was the second highest T20I score for a batter at No.4 or lower. Australia's 241 for 4 was their highest on home soil and proved well beyond the reach of West Indies despite an attractive 63 from 36 balls from skipper Royman Powell. Marcus Stoinis claimed three wickets, while left-arm quick Spencer Johnson, in his first home international, took 2 for 39 as Australia clinched the series following their 11-run game one victory at Bellerive Oval. There was late controversy when Alzarri Joseph was short of his ground attempting a tight single, but he remained at the crease after umpire Gerard Abood said there had been no appeal. Tim David insisted he had appealed as Australia remonstrated in heated scenes, but the incident ultimately didn't affect the match's outcome. The series has effectively started T20 World Cup preparations for both teams with the third and final game to be played in Perth on Tuesday. Marsh dominates powerplay before Maxi magic Josh Inglis started well in Hobart to kick-start the race over who will partner opener David Warner at the T20 World Cup. He hit 39 off 25 balls in the series-opener but couldn't back up and fell for 4 in the second over. The dismissal brought

captain Mitchell Marsh to the crease, who did not bat in the powerplay in game one and played having tested positive to Covid-19. He was feeling better and relished batting in the powerplay by blasting 29 off 12 balls. He smashed a first-ball boundary before unfurling his power with a six over backward point and another over the legside boundary. Attempting to maximise the powerplay, Marsh holed out in the sixth over and Australia soon fell to 64 for 3 when Warner was dismissed in the next over. Maxwell started slowly and should have been run out on 10 when wicket-keeper Nicholas Pooran missed a shy at the stumps. He capitalised on the next delivery with an incredible sliced six over cover point off Romario Shepherd to ignite his innings. Maxwell completely dominated a half-century partnership with Stoinis and targeted Powell with a trio of boundaries, including a clever reverse sweep. He raced to his half-century off 25 balls before producing another inventive stroke with a switch hit for six off left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein. Maxwell notched an incredible century off 50 balls in the penultimate over of the innings to reach a second T20I ton in his last three

innings. Joseph bowls rapidly, but West Indies fall away. Despite his attack conceding 213 for 7 at Bellerive Oval, Powell again decided to bowl but he bafflingly stuck first up with Hosein who was hit for six on the second delivery by a reverse swat from Warner. But their seamers had much better success against Warner, who had blasted 70 off 36 balls in Hobart, as they bowled a straighter line with Joseph producing swing and hitting speeds close to 150 kmh. A frustrated Warner groaned loudly when he fell to a slower Shepherd delivery, but West Indies were then monstered by Maxwell. With Maxwell in a mood, West Indies were made to look helpless and there probably wasn't a lot they could do. But some of their tactics were head-scratching, including often not having a third man despite their strategy of bowling wide yorkers. Hometown hero Johnson impresses West Indies, of course, came out swinging and smashed 42 off the first over fours. That was despite Josh Hazlewood delivering a wicket- maiden in the second over as left-arm quick Jason Behrendorff's tough series continued with his first two



In brief

Murder case solved

RAWALPINDI (APP): The mystery of murder case in the jurisdiction of Saddar Barooni police station has been resolved here on Sunday. A police spokesman revealed that the perpetrator turned out to be a friend of the victim. The accused lured the victim into the desert, where he robbed him of his money and fatally slashed his throat with a knife. Shockingly, the victim's friend was behind this heinous act. Shakir and Asif have been apprehended as prime suspects in the case. They meticulously planned the murder and fled the scene after disposing of the body in the desert. Saddar Barooni police tracked down the killers using advanced scientific technology. SP Saddar Muhammad Nabil Khokar commended the police team for their exceptional performance. He emphasized that the arrested individuals will face the law.

Suspect arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested suspect for stabbing to death a man few days ago here on Sunday. According to police spokesman, the arrested suspect Zeeshan Haider stabbed a man namely Haider Abbas to death over petty dispute. The case of the incident was registered in the Bani police station. The Bani police, by using the intelligence and human resources through using scientific method, traced and arrested the accused who was fled away after committing the crime. SP Rawal Faisal Saleem said that the accused would be challaned and punished. The arrest of such accused involved in heinous crimes is important for ensuring the justice, he said.

380 kites confiscated

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested five kite sellers and confiscated 380 kites and strings from their possession during operation here on Sunday. According to spokesman, Saddar Wah police conducted raid and held Salman besides recovering 120 kites from his possession. Similarly, Rata Amral police recovered 100 kites from Hamza and Riaz. While, Cantt police recovered 100 kites from Al-Sabah. Following operation, Naseerabad police recovered 28 kites and 02 strings from Afaqa and Sadiqabad police recovered 32 kites from Raza. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. SSP Operations Hafiz Kamran Asghar appreciated the performance of police teams said that kite flying is a dangerous game, strict action against kite-flyers and kite-sellers will be continued without any discrimination.

Three member gang arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested three member gang and recovered 07 stolen motorcycles, Rs 81,000 and 05 mobile phones from their possession during crackdown here on Sunday. According to police spokesman, Cantt police conducted raid and held gang members who were identified as Shiraz, Parvez and Khalid. Police have registered separate cases against all of them, and started investigation. SP Potohar Nasir Nawaz commended police team and said that strict action will be taken against those involved in such criminals activities. He made it clear that it is prime duty of police to protect the lives and properties of people.

PTI backed candidates winning's seats snatched on gunpoint: Babar Awan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Babar Awan addressed the media outside the Election Commission of Pakistan on Sunday stated that worst election rigging happened in the recently held general elections and alleged that number of seats that earlier won PTI backed candidates later

snatched on gunpoint. He stated that not only PTI but the entire world condemned and rejected the election day midnight horrible attempt of snatching PTI willing seats. Awan alleged that PML-N head Nawaz Sharif is

attempting to secure victory through hidden hands since February 9, claiming that pre-poll rigging persisted for two years.

Babar Awan emphasized the controversial nature of the elections, labeling them as the most disputed in Pakistan's history. He challenged the results in Sargodha and Faisalabad, asserting that PTI candidates emerged victorious in these constituencies. Furthermore, Awan called for the immediate release of PTI founder Imran Khan, urging the President to exercise the power of pardon.

Speaking passionately, Awan declared, "Nawaz Sharif gave a victory speech without a vote; we reject the results of February 9. The entire world has denounced these results, but Nawaz Sharif continues to exert force since February 9. We hold the majority with 179 seats, and we refuse to accept the decision of February 9."

Awan criticized the election process, drawing attention to the unorthodox victory speech by Nawaz Sharif. He stated, "One side was eggplant, and the other side was the billion-dollar man."

Plantation drive on Rwp Ring Road to be started on Feb 15: Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta has said that the plantation drive on both sides of Rawalpindi Ring Road would be started from February 15.

The Commissioner said that the ring road project would be completed within the stipulated time frame as over 20 percent physical work of the ring road project had been completed.

After the traffic network design to link the ring road

with the motorway, work on the Thalian Interchange would be started, he added.

He said that the authorities concerned had been directed to complete Swan Bridge as soon as possible.

The rest area being built on the ring road would be developed on the pattern of Bhera rest area, Liaquat Ali Chhatta informed.

The Ring Road project would prove to be a game changer for the people of Rawalpindi, he added.

Once the ring road is

completed, the residents would get employment opportunities near their respective areas, he said.

Special attention should be given to the quality of the construction work,

Liaquat Ali Chhatta instructed and warned that no compromise would be made on the quality of the construction work. He said that after the completion of the ring road project, there would be a clear difference in the traffic flow of Rawalpindi city.

PR putting maximum efforts retrieve land

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has accelerated the efforts to retrieve the major portion of around 13,972 acres of land worth billions of rupees found under the illegal occupation of private individuals and different government departments across the country.

"Around 5,809 acres were occupied in Punjab, 1,181 acres are under encroachment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,948 acres in Sindh and 1,034 acres land occupied in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry told APP.

He said the category of land under illegal occupations included commercial, residential, agricultural and various persons or departments. Giving details of the land, the official said that around 769 acres were commercial in all the provinces, 3,309 residential, 5,512 acres agricultural and 4382 were under encroachment of various persons or departments.

The official said the

department had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups, and even business organizations which were using it for residential, commercial and agriculture purposes for decades.

"The joint procedure orders have been issued to all Divisional Superintendents of Pakistan Railways to retrieve the railway land from encroachers," the official added. Accordingly, he said the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached Railway land all over the Railway network are being initiated by the concerned divisions and notices are issued to encroachers under the Possession Ordinance 1965 for vacation of Railway land/structure within 14 days.

The official said that Pakistan Railway Police, District Administration and law enforcement agencies

are informed of necessary assistance in anti-encroachment operations.

To further control and restrict new encroachments, he said the responsibilities defined for Railway officers within Railway Station premises, Station Master concerned, within/around the colony premises, inspector of works and Railway Police. "The anti-encroachment schedules, on a three-month basis, are being prepared and sent to all concerned in line with the joint procedure order," he said adding that the operation will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the relevant provincial governments.

The official said PR owned 167,690 acres of land across the country, of which 90,326-acre was in Punjab, 39,428-acre in Sindh, 28,228-acre in Balochistan, and 9,708-acre in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

1886 cameras installed in Rawalpindi city

RAWALPINDI (INP): As many as 1886 cameras under Rawalpindi Safe City Project have been installed at 306 locations to make Rawalpindi a safe city.

A Punjab Police Integrated Command, Control, and Communication Centre in Rawalpindi has been set up and the security arrangements of the city is being monitored through cameras on the digital wall. According to a district

administration spokesman, 1886 cameras had been installed at 306 locations across Rawalpindi city under the Safe City Project.

He said that the project had been completed swiftly and the plans were underway to launch similar projects in 18 other cities of Punjab. The spokesman said that the Punjab government was committed to improve facilities in Rawalpindi and several other projects were under-

way such as the construction of the Ring Road, Dadocha Dam, Signal Free Corridor from Katcheri Chowk to Pirwadhai Mor, and other roadworks.

Rawalpindi district police and administration were making tireless efforts in the city's development, he added. He said that the high-quality safe city project was completed with amazing speed and one year's work was completed in just 45 days.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor preparing garland to attract the customers at Supper Market in Federal Capital. —APP Photo



ISLAMABAD: Labourers along with their tools sitting on roadside waiting for clients to be hired for work during morning time. —APP Photo

Malik awarded honorary Ph.D. degree

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's honor, Malik Abrar Hussain has been awarded an honorary Ph.D. degree by the State University of Maryland, America through a ceremony held in Dubai on Sunday.

This honor was given by the American University to 50 experts from 30 countries of the world in the ceremony of awarding honorary degrees in Dubai in recognition of their excellent services in their respective fields, said a news release issued on Sunday.

Another honor of Pakistan, the famous Pakistani educationist Malik Abrar Hussain was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by the State University of Maryland, USA, in recognition of his valuable services in the field of education.

Central President of All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association Malik Abrar Hussain has received this honor for Pakistan and made immense efforts for the improvement of private educational institutions.

Citizens to take responsibility

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General (DG) of the Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) Farzana Altif Shah on Sunday urged the citizens to take the lead and responsibility to overcome environmental pollution in the country which was polluting its rivers, oceans, natural ecosystems and damaging human and wildlife health through disastrous impacts.

Talking to PTV news channel, she said that if we not controlled on pollution then the climate change will not just a subject, it could become a major cause of impact on all kinds of flora, fauna and human beings in our country.

She highlighted various efforts by her organization to confront the environmental challenges. She guided citizens about the prevention the cutting of trees and should be a ban on converting agricultural lands into settlements.

Malicious propaganda about army's deployment during elections exposed

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The fabricated and malicious propaganda related to the army deployment on election duty has been exposed, according to a Radio Pakistan report on Sunday.

According to the details, some miscreant political elements are misguiding their supporters for political gains and after inciting the security troops, deployed for election duty, recording videos of riots and anti-army propaganda on social media.

Similarly, from the Elections Day till today, various anonymous propaganda accounts have been creating chaos and agitation in the country. By spreading lies, propaganda and disinformation, these anti-national ele-

ments aim to create chaos and instability in Pakistan.

Absconder YouTubers, sitting outside the country, are leading this anti-Pakistan and disinformation campaign. Such malicious elements who are engaged in this propaganda on social media are being identified and the relevant institutions have started work to take strict disciplinary action against them as per the law.

It is pertinent to mention that according to the notification of the Election Commission of Pakistan and the Ministry of Interior, troops of the Army and Civil Armed Forces are required to provide security outside the offices of ROs until the election process is completed.

The purpose of this deployment is to ensure the security of the Election Commission and the polling stations during the sensitive election process.

Troops of Army and Civil Armed Forces are stationed outside the offices of Returning Officers for security and have nothing to do with the election process. They are only deployed for external security of the offices of ROs.

In order to mislead the people, these evil political leaders and their supporters are busy inciting the troops stationed outside the offices of ROs and recording videos of riots and later spreading anti-army propaganda on social media.

Roadmap made for promotion of digital economy for upcoming govt: Dr. Saif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif has said that a roadmap has been made for the promotion of the digital economy for the upcoming government.

Addressing the Town Hall meeting arranged by IT Association (PASHA) in Karachi he said, the country could generate billions of dollars in revenue if the upcoming government continues the initiatives taken by the caretaker government in the IT sector.

He said the SIFC forum has also proven to be a great support for the upcoming elected government in the process of building and developing the country, and the elected government will also reap the benefits of the measures by the caretaker government.

"We are confident that with the presence of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the upcoming government will also be able to make timely decisions for the country's development

and public interests because we mustn't compromise on our economic stability and public interests," he said.

The minister said, "We need to avoid departmental obstacles. Instead of unnecessary delay tactics, quick and effective decisions must be taken in the interest of the country and the nation. For this purpose, SIFC is the most effective forum."

Dr. Umar termed IT and telecom sector as a backbone of the country's economy. He said that in the past 60 days, the policies of the IT ministry have led to a record 32% increase in IT exports. Furthermore, he mentioned that ICT export remittances have increased by US\$ 64 million (8.99%) to US\$ 1,455 billion during July to December 2023 of FY2023-24, compared to US\$ 1,335 billion reported for the same period last year.

In December 2023, he added, ICT services export remittances surged to US\$ 303 million, marking a remarkable increase of 22.67% compared to US\$ 247 million in December 2022. Compared to the previ-

ous month of November 2023, ICT services export remittances increased by US\$ 44 million in December 2023, representing a month-to-month increase of 16.99%.

The minister further said "We have achieved 13 out of 15 important targets for the promotion of the IT & Telecom sector in a short period of 5 months in the caretaker set-up."

Chairman of PASHA, Zohaib Khan, expressed gratitude to Dr. Umar Saif for his unwavering dedication and exemplary service to the IT sector. He lauded Dr. Saif's initiatives, which have instilled renewed confidence within the industry and paved the way for unprecedented export growth.

Khan noted, "Dr. Umar Saif's visionary leadership and strategic foresight continue to chart a course toward a vibrant and prosperous digital future for Pakistan." Ayesha Morani, Additional Secretary MOITT, Nadeem Malik, General Secretary PASHA, and a representative from the IT Industry were also present at the event.

Teachers express annoyance over unpaid remuneration

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) gears up for the centralized exams of primary and middle standard scheduled to begin on Monday, female teachers assigned to conduct exams have raised concerns over unpaid remuneration for the past three consecutive years and the absence of essential facilities.

Despite repeated attempts to address these concerns with FDE authorities, the teachers claim that their issues have not been resolved yet. Teachers complained that they haven't been paid for their exam work for the last three years in spite of assurances by the concerned officials.

Expressing their grievances under the condition of anonymity, several teachers disclosed a history of unfulfilled promises and neglect by FDE authorities. Despite assurances of payment for exam duties, teachers

lamented that they have not received remuneration for the last three years.

A teacher highlighted the financial strain incurred while performing exam-related tasks, including the collection of exam materials. Having personally hired taxis to transport materials to exam centres, she emphasized that neither taxi fares nor transport facilities have been provided by the FDE.

"Moreover, I am expected to conduct exam duties daily starting Monday, with no transport facilities provided. The daily taxi fare to and from the school where I am deputed amounts to Rs. 2000, a cost I am compelled to bear personally for the entire 15-day examination period which is hard to manage during the prevailing price hike situation," the teacher said.

"It is disheartening that the authorities not only fail to pay our pending remuneration but also neglect to

provide essential transport facilities", the teacher said.

Talking to APP, many teachers emphasized the lack of financial support for purchasing essential materials such as clothes, sealing wax, thread, and packing material required for packaging answer scripts.

They criticized the absence of paper collection facilities provided by the authority, exacerbating logistical challenges.

Highlighting additional challenges, another teacher shared, "I have to purchase essential materials such as clothes, sealing wax, thread, and packing materials to pack the answer scripts daily, but no funds have been provided for these expenses. Moreover, there is no paper collection facility provided by the FDE. I cannot afford cab fare for transportation of answer scripts to FDE daily."

A headmistress of a school stated, "Teachers

have recently undertaken exhausting election duties, sacrificing sleep for two nights. In addition to their teaching responsibilities, teachers perform additional duties like census duties, election duties, invigilation, and deworming duties. Despite their contributions, teachers feel neglected and under-supported by FDE authorities, who have been unresponsive to their repeated pleas for assistance."

The headmistress emphasized that the FDE authorities should acknowledge and facilitate their efforts. At least their pending dues of three years should be released.

When contacted, a senior official of the concerned authority said that the teachers are paid a specific amount for performing duties during the centralized exams of Class V and VIII. However these payments were pending with the AGPR.

Woman gives birth to triplets

SAMANGAN (Ariana News): A woman has given birth to healthy triplets at the Samangan Provincial Hospital, Samangan Province of Afghanistan officials confirmed. This was her fourth pregnancy said Sayed Osman Hamidi, director of the hospital. According to him, she gave birth to two girls and one boy. Two babies weighed 2.5 kgs and the third weighed 3 kgs. Hamidi stated that the mother and babies are healthy.

ATN signs deal

KABUL (Ariana News): Ariana Television Network officials signed an agreement with the Afghanistan National Volleyball Federation on Sunday to broadcast this year's exciting volleyball league tournament. The tournament will get underway on Thursday, February 15 and eight teams will take part. The draw for matches meanwhile takes place on Monday, February 12. Details of each match will be posted on Ariana Television's social media pages and Ariana News' website.

National labor conference to be held next month

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Works said that in order to investigate the causes of unemployment and increase job opportunities in the country, a national labor conference will be held next month.

Samiullah Ebrahimi, the spokesman for the Ministry of Public Works, said that the Islamic Emirate is committed to reducing unemployment in the country and efforts are underway to create job opportunities.

He said: "Our effort is to hold a national labor conference in the country in the next month of 1402 (solar year), and the purpose of holding this conference is to reduce the level of unemployment and investigate the causes of unemployment in the country so that there are more job opportunities in the country."

Meanwhile, a number of educated youths criticized the lack of job opportunities in the country.

Masihullah Shirzad, who has a bachelor's degree, said about unemployment: "The level of unemployment in the country is very high. Many young people are interested in getting an education and then having a good job, but unemployment causes the youth in the country to be disappointed."

Unemployed youth said that they have to go abroad to find work and to have an income.

"We ask the caretaker government to create job opportunities for the youth in various institutions in the country so that the youth do not go abroad and stay in the country," said Mohammad Zaker, a Kabul resident.

"Our young generation is very talented and they should be provided with job opportunities in the country so that they can contribute to the development and progress of the country," said Matiullah, a Kabul resident.

The Ministry of Public Works also said that since the beginning of this year, it has created work opportunities for 110,000 people in private and government institutions, including 26,000 women.

Cooperation in transit and trade discussed

KABUL (BNA): Nooruddin Azizi, the Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, held a meeting with Ruslan Edelgeriyev, the advisor to the President of the Russian Federation, to discuss cooperation in transit and trade between Afghanistan and Russia.

According to a statement from the Ministry, Azizi and Edelgeriyev, who was in Afghanistan to participate in a climate change conference, discussed a range of topics.

These included bilateral trade, transit routes between the two countries, preferential tariffs, Islamic banking, the resumption of the Joint Economic Commission, Russian investment in Afghanistan, and the facilitation of issuing trade visas.

They also discussed the establishment of a permanent Afghanistan trade center in Moscow and Afghanistan's participation in the fifteenth International Economic Forum of Russia and the Islamic world.

COP29: Russia voices support for Kabul's participation



KABUL (Ariana News): A Russian official has said that Afghanistan's representatives should have presence in international climate change meetings including this year's COP29 UN climate summit that will be held in Azerbaijan's Baku.

Ruslan Edelgeriyev, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change of the Russian Federation, said this as he met with Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in Kabul on Saturday.

The meeting focused on bilateral relations between IEA and the Russian Federation, economic cooperation, cooperation in the area of climate change and ways to upgrade diplomatic relations between the two countries, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Stressing on enhanced bilateral relations, Muttaqi said that further progress can be made in several areas by upgrading diplomatic relations, adding that despite Afghanistan not being a greenhouse gas emitter, it remains vulnerable to hazardous effects of climate change.

Urging Russia to cooperate in providing training to the staff of the relevant bodies in environment protection and forestation, Muttaqi requested Russian support in ensuring the participation of Afghan representatives in international forums on environmental protection.

Exchanging views on upgrading bilateral diplomatic relations, Edelgeriyev pledged to duly reflect developments in Afghanistan to the Russian president, according to the statement.

He emphasized that Afghanistan's representatives should participate in international climate change meetings, highlighting that Russia will support participation of the Afghan delegation in COP29 to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

He also stressed on the commencement of the work of the bilateral trade commission between Afghanistan and Russia.

The Russian official separately met also with Acting Industry and Commerce Minister Nooruddin Azizi, where they discussed expansion of trade relations.

This comes as a two-day international conference on climate change began in Nangarhar province on Saturday.

IEA: Activists arrested due to illegal activities

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate said that Manizha Seddiqui, an activist for women's rights, and two other activists for education were arrested because of their illegal activities in the country.

The Islamic Emirate's spokesperson, Zabiullah Mujahid, responded to Amnesty International's statement by saying that the individuals were detained based on documentation and proof.

Mujahid added that no one has the right to operate against Islamic Sharia and the laws of the country.

"They were involved in illegal activities and were arrested based on the documents. When the courts make the decision, whatever judgment the courts make they will be held accountable. No one has the right to go against the laws of the country, public security and Sharia principles," the spokesman noted.

This comes as, Amnesty Intl South Asia once again called on the Islamic Emirate to immediately and unconditionally release Manizha Seddiqui, a women's rights defender.

Amnesty International in a statement claimed that Manizha Seddiqui has not been charged with any offences but is still in prison. "She has not been charged with any offences. Manizha Seddiqui must be released immediately and unconditionally," the statement reads.

Meanwhile, the US special envoy for Afghan human rights and women, Rina Amiri, once again expressed concerns over the "detention and endured abuse of women" in Afghanistan and said that there must be "accountability & an end to the abuse of Afghan women."

"It is squandering the potential of half of the population and robbing Afghanistan of self-sufficiency, stability, & hope," Amiri said on X.

According to some human rights activists, the Islamic Emirate should take steps in order to put an end to the national and international concerns about women. "We ask the Islamic Emirate to provide women with their Islamic and Sharia rights," said Frozan Daudzai, a women's rights activist.

According to the statement of Amnesty International, Manizha Seddiqui, was sent to prison on 5 December 2023.

Another statement from the organization reads that Ahmad Fahim Azimi and Seddiquillah Afghan, two activists working with the education organization Fekre Behtar, were sent to Pul-e-Charkhi prison on 27 December 2023.

Car crash kills one, injures four

BADAKHSHN (Ariana News): At least one person was killed and four others were injured when a car ran off road and crashed in northern Badakhshan province on Saturday evening, local officials said.

The incident happened in Kotal-e-Zuharak area of Darayim district.

Provincial police said in a statement that the victims were in a Corolla type car that was moving from Shahr-e-Safa, the center of the district, to Zuhark village, and due to a technical problem in Kotal-e-Zuhark, it ran off road and fell into valley.

In a separate incident in the province, one person died as a result of coal gas poisoning in Baharak district on Saturday.

Islamic Emirate rejects Central Asia concerns over drug trafficking

KABUL (TOLONews): The spokesman of the Islamic Emirate said that since the return of the Islamic Emirate, a serious fight against narcotics has been carried out in Afghanistan, and the concerns voiced by countries are baseless.

Zabiullah Mujahid rejected the claims of drug trafficking out of Afghanistan, and called on the world to cooperate in the area.

"Islamic Emirate is serious about smuggling. Our fight has had three aspects, first, we ban poppy cultivation of drugs. The farmers should be helped and, the countries which have been affected by drugs and the money they used in this regard should be given to the Afghans," he added.

Meanwhile, some Central Asia media outlets have recently reported that Tajikistan wants to manage its borders with the financial cooperation of Japan to reduce the threat of drug trafficking from Afghanistan.

Quoting the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Tajikistan, The Times of Asia reported that the Japanese government, through its Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), is also funding the Border Management Project, an initiative to support the Tajik Government in controlling its national border with Afghanistan.

"The project aims to both secure the length of the Tajik-Afghan border and facilitate cross-border trade, the report reads.

Meanwhile, several military analysts believe that some superpower countries are making efforts to destabilize Afghanistan.

"The borders of our neighboring countries are safe from drugs, Japan is of the same opinion with America, that's why it wants to transfer the war of the Arabic world to Central Asia, especially to Afghanistan," said Kamran Aman, a military analyst.

"In the half of a century the eastern and western superpowers have fought for special goals in the geography of Afghanistan, which led to the increasing terrorism and cultivation and smuggling of drugs," said Akhtar Rashikh, a military analyst.

Before this, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary General, Imangali Tasmagambetov, at the joint meeting of the Council and the 16th plenary session of the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly in Moscow expressed concerns about the increase of terrorist group activities, drug smuggling, and the smuggling of weapons in Afghanistan, claims which were rejected by the Islamic Emirate.

Environmental issues should not be politicized, says NEPA

KABUL (BNA): Hafez Aziz Rahman, the head of the National Environmental Protection Authority (NEPA), and Ruslan Edelgeriyev, the advisor to the President of the Russian Federation, held a discussion on climate change issues in Afghanistan.

The meeting, which also included Dmitry Zhirnov, the Ambassador of Russia to Kabul, was reported by the central NEPA office.

Edelgeriyev, recognizing climate change as a global threat, emphasized the importance of Afghanistan's representation in international conventions on climate change, desertification, and biodiversity.

He pledged to invite Afghan representatives to these crucial meetings and revealed Russia's plans to hold a conference on environmental issues. The conference will invite Afghan environmental protection officials and offer collaboration in training and capacity-building.

Rahman highlighted Afghanistan's vulnerability to climate change, despite its minimal contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. He called on industrialized nations, which are responsible for major emissions, to support vulnerable countries like Afghanistan with technology, financial assistance, and cooperation.

The officials underscored that environmental issues should not be politicized, as they impact human well-being and the entire planet.

Dr. Zain al-Abidin Abed, the deputy head of NEPA, expressed concern over the Climate Change Convention's lack of response to re-establishing relations with Afghanistan.



Girls in Afghanistan at risk of early marriage: SIGAR Report

KABUL (Khaama Press): Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or "SIGAR," in its latest report cited by OCHA, the UN humanitarian coordination office, has stated that Afghan girls and women are exposed to early marriages, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation.

This entity added in its report on Thursday, February 8, that systematic violations of women's rights in Afghanistan under the re-emergence of the Taliban regime have no parallel elsewhere in the world.

SIGAR, citing the UN Women's section, writes that 28.7% of girls are married by the age of 18 and 9% of girls are married by the age of 15.

UN agencies in Afghanistan have also stated that with the worsening economic situation in the country, the rate of forced and early marriages has increased.

These organizations have warned that early marriages are considered one of the primary threats to girls in society.

Since the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan in August 2021, about 100 decrees related to women's lives have been issued, including deprivation from education and work, prominent examples of its imposition.

On the other hand, UNAMA's recent report for the year 2023 stated that there is no accountable authority for gender-based violence in government offices.

According to the report, 80% of girls are deprived of secondary education, and about a hundred thousand more girls have dropped out of universities.

Considering these constraints, the recognition of "gender apartheid" in Afghanistan has become one of the focal points of human rights organizations globally.

No achievement on women's day in science due to suppressive restrictions

KABUL (Khaama Press): While the world celebrates International Day of Women and Girls in Science and Technology, Afghanistan stands as the only country with no achievements to celebrate on this day.

The United Nations stated on February 11th, coinciding with the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, that full and equal participation of women and girls in science, technology, and innovation is essential for economic development.

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has designated February 11th as the "International Day of Women and Girls in Science," celebrated worldwide.

While countries around the world honor this day to showcase their contributions towards gender equality and social welfare, women and girls in Afghanistan are deprived of their most fundamental rights, including the right to education. All universities, schools, and educational centers in Afghanistan have been devoid of girls' presence over the past two and a half years.

The Taliban regime has not issued any statement commemorating this day, despite Afghan women and girls achieving remarkable advancements in the field of science and technology before the Taliban takeover.

An education activist from a school in Kabul told

Khaama Press, "Formal education starts from schools, and all those who have succeeded in the fields of science and technology have certainly passed through the school system. However, girls in Afghanistan are deprived of even starting this journey."

She urged girls to respond to the "inhuman reality in Afghanistan" by accepting alternatives such as online education, learning international languages, and pursuing studies in foreign universities.

Approximately 900 days have passed since the Taliban seized power and deprived girls of attending schools. During this time, millions of girls (80% of girls) have been confined to their homes and faced

the repercussions of mandatory deprivation, including psychological problems, suicide attempts, early and forced marriages, and humiliation.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) wrote on the occasion of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on the social media platform X, stating that "full and equal participation of women and girls in science, technology, and innovation is not only essential for economic development but also crucial for all sectors of society."

UNESCO also wrote in a message on this day that biased attitudes and stereotypical threats against women and girls must be stopped immediately.

whose buildings have been legally and technically affected in squares and neighborhoods. He urged the Kabul Municipality to prepare a plan for compensating the rights of affected individuals in Kabul.

Houses affected in development projects to be compensated

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, in conjunction with the Kabul Municipality, convened a session to discuss the development of Kabul city and the impact on buildings during these development projects.

As per a statement from the ministry, the session was chaired by Sheikh Hamdullah Numani, the Acting Minister of the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing. During the session, officials outlined the master plan for Kabul city proposed by JICA, while representatives from Kabul's municipality presented the city's development plan designed by the Sasaki organization.

The objective of this discussion was to identify the differences and features between the plans, ensuring the adaptation of development plans, balanced expansion of roads and



development in Kabul, and safeguarding the rights of affected individuals while preventing any arbitrary actions in the city.

Sheikh Hamdullah Numani stressed the need to compensate individuals

ECP halts results of PB-21, orders vote recount

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), upon the request of Ali Hassan Zehri, on Sunday halted the results of PB-21 Hub and ordered a recount of the votes. This decision was taken in accordance with the powers vested in the ECP under Section 95(6) of the Elections Act, 2017, Article 218(3) of the Constitution, and all other enabling powers, an ECP press release said.

The ECP has directed the Returning Officer (RO) to issue notices to the contesting candidates regarding the time, date, and venue of the recounting process.

PPP's CEC to discuss overall political situation, formation of govt

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has convened a meeting of the party's Central Executive Committee (CEC) would be held on February 12 (Monday). According to a press release issued by the party secretariat, Bilawal Bhutto has instructed all members of the CEC and senior party leaders to reach in Islamabad for the meeting. The agenda will include discussions on the overall political situation in the country and the formation of the government following the recent general elections. Bilawal Bhutto is scheduled to hold meetings with other political leaders during his visit to the Federal capital.

MQM-P denies demand of Sindh governorship

LAHORE (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) Convener Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui denied the demand of Sindh governorship during the party's meeting with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership. Speaking to media representatives, the MQM-P convener said that matters related to the formation of the government were not discussed in the meeting.

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that the talks in the meeting were largely related to public issues and the recently concluded General Elections 2024.

"There was no discussion on government formation. We did not demand Sindh governorship or anything else," the MQM-P convener reiterated.

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui added that the issues being faced by the people of Pakistan were discussed in the meeting. The MQM-P convener said that all the reports regarding the demand for the Sindh governorship are baseless. "We neither placed any demand before the PML-N nor made any agreement.

7 suffer burn injuries after fire erupts in govt hospital in Karachi

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Seven paramedical staff members suffered burn injuries on Sunday after a fire erupted in the emergency department of Karachi's Sindh Government Hospital Liaquatabad, according to police. Central Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Zeeshan Shafiq Siddiqi told Dawn.com that officers rushed to the spot after receiving information about an "explosion" inside the hospital. "Seven persons were injured and were moved to the Burns Centre of Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi for treatment," SSP Siddiqi said.

He said the Liaquatabad police superintendent and deputy superintendent, as well as the Sharifabad police station house officer, visited the spot while the Bomb Disposal Unit (BDU) was also called in to determine the exact nature of the explosion. SSP Siddiqi said that as per the initial investigation, a short circuit occurred in the hospital's emergency ward, which triggered a fire. He added that the compressor of a fridge, where medicines were stored, had then exploded. Police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed said all of the injured were paramedical staff, adding that were performing their duty when the incident occurred.

President Alvi congratulates people on participation in elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi Sunday congratulated people on taking part in the voting process during the general elections.

In a statement on X, he said he must congratulate the people of Pakistan, specially the women for coming out in huge numbers and strengthening democracy. "The youth deserve a special mention, and I praise them for having decided to take charge of the country by participating peacefully in the

voting process. They have put their faith in democracy. This belief is very precious, it will write history and must be recognized," he added.

He said, "A true mandate is essential to come out of the severe financial crunch, to make difficult decisions, to repair, and to heal the bitterness of the past. We must celebrate this effervescent new focus and show it to the outside world.

"My confidence in our brilliant future has been

strengthened as the people have not only spoken but have shouted out their will." "Nothing can crystallise unless this huge mandate of my citizens is respected and recognized. Politicians, their parties, and our institutions must embrace this God sent opportunity.

Allah is definitely very gracious to Pakistan. Come rise my people, unite, put everything together, repair and build. The world awaits you," he concluded.

Philippine landslide death toll climbs to 54

MANILA (Reuters): The number of people killed by a landslide in the southern Philippines has risen to 54, the provincial government said on Sunday, as rescue workers dug more bodies from the mud.

The landslide struck on Tuesday night near a gold mine in Maco town in the province of Davao de Oro, burying homes and vehicles ferrying employees to the site operated by Apex Mining (APX.PS), opens new tab.

Davao de Oro's provin-

cial government said in a Facebook post that 54 people had died in the landslide, raising its previous death toll of 37 earlier in the day as rescue workers found more bodies.

The tally of missing people stood at 63 people, with the provincial government saying the number remains unverified. A total of 32 people were injured in the landslide.

Edward Macapili, an official at Davao de Oro, said over 300 people were involved in the rescue, but

operations were being hampered by heavy rain, thick mud and the threat of further landslides. Rescue work resumed on Sunday morning, Macapili said.

Asked if there were still survivors, Macapili said it was already "unlikely", but the search would continue.

"The rescue team is doing its best, even if it's very difficult," Macapili said by phone.

Torrential rains have battered Davao de Oro in recent weeks, triggering floods and landslides.

PTI secures triple century in National, Provincial Assemblies

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has emerged as the sole party to clinch 300 or more seats across the national and provincial assemblies. The latest results reveal that PTI-backed independent candidates have secured 95 seats in the National Assembly, 116 in the Punjab Assembly, 83 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 11 in Sindh.

With a total of 305 seats, PTI has established a commanding presence in both the national and provincial legislative bodies, surpassing all other political contenders. Notably, the Election Commission has announced unofficial official results for 257 seats of the National Assembly.

Independent candidates backed by PTI have emerged as the largest group in the National

Assembly, securing 95 seats, outnumbering other independent members by a significant margin.

The runner-up in the current electoral standings is the Muslim League-N, which has garnered 76 seats thus far, followed by the People's Party with 54 seats, and MQM Pakistan with 17 seats. Additionally, Muslim League-Q and JUI-F have secured 3 seats each, while IPP has clinched 2 seats.

Responding to the released results, PTI spokesperson Rauf Hasan has raised allegations of seat misappropriation, asserting that approximately 60 seats have been unjustly taken away from their party. Promising to reclaim these seats through legal recourse, Hasan emphasized their commitment to presenting com-

PELLING evidence before tribunals and potentially the courts if necessary. He highlighted the absence of Form 47 in certain constituencies as a procedural hurdle, vowing to pursue all available legal avenues to secure their rightful share.

Furthermore, Hasan affirmed PTI's determination to uphold their party's legitimacy and safeguard against any attempts at electoral manipulation. He underscored the meticulous selection process for independent candidates, contrasting it with the alleged unethical practices of rival parties.

With legal challenges looming, PTI remains resolute in their pursuit of electoral justice and preserving the integrity of democratic processes.

Russia is using Starlink in occupied areas, Ukraine says

KYIV (Reuters): Russian forces in occupied Ukraine are using Starlink terminals produced by Elon Musk's SpaceX for satellite internet in what is beginning to look like their "systemic" application, Kyiv's main military intelligence agency said on Sunday. The terminals were rushed in to help Ukraine after Russia's February 2022 invasion and have been vital to Kyiv's battlefield communications. Starlink says it does not do business of any kind with Russia's government or military. "Cases of the Russian occupiers' use of the given devices have been registered. It is beginning to take on a systemic nature," the Ukrainian defence ministry's Main Directorate of Intelligence (GUR) quoted spokesman Andriy Yusov as saying.

In a statement, the agency said the terminals were being used by units like Russia's 83rd Air Assault Brigade, which is fighting near the embattled

towns of Klishchiivka and Andriivka in the partially-occupied eastern region of Donetsk. The remarks were Ukraine's first official statement about Russia's alleged use of Starlink.

In a post on Sunday made on X, Musk said, "To the best of our knowledge, no Starlinks have been sold directly or indirectly to Russia." "A number of false news reports claim that SpaceX is selling Starlink terminals to Russia," Musk said in the post on X, which he also owns. "This is categorically false." Russia's defence ministry did not immediately reply to a Reuters request for comment.

Two Ukrainian government sources told Reuters earlier this week that Russian use of Starlink had been detected in occupied Ukrainian territory. One said they were trying to obtain data on the scale of such use.

The GUR agency said it had intercepted an exchange between two sol-

diers discussing setting up the terminals. It posted what it said was an audio clip of the exchange on the Telegram messenger by way of evidence.

GUR did not say how it thought the terminals had been obtained by Russian forces - whether for instance they had been procured from abroad or captured from Ukrainian forces. Starlink said on Feb. 8 that its terminals were not active in Russia and that SpaceX had never sold or marketed the service in Russia, nor shipped equipment to locations in Russia.

In a statement posted on X, Starlink did not say anything about their possible use in occupied areas of Ukraine.

"If SpaceX obtains knowledge that a Starlink terminal is being used by a sanctioned or unauthorized party, we investigate the claim and take actions to deactivate the terminal if confirmed," it said.

Jl holds protest demos against election results

KARACHI (APP): Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan on Sunday organized protest demonstrations in different areas of Karachi against election results and accused of changing of the results.

Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi's Emir Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman and other leaders led the protests at Shahrah-e-Faisal, Nazimabad, Korangi and other areas and demanded the issuance of election

results as per the Form 45 issued to the contesting candidates by the presiding officers. Addressing the protest demonstration at Star Gate, Hafiz Naeem accused the ROs of changing the results.

He demanded that the Election Commission of Pakistan not notify official results of the polls held on February 08 before the counting of the votes as per Form 45 was not carried out

by Returning officers.

Jamaat-e-Islami will approach the concerned judicial forums to get rectified results, he said and accused their candidates have being deliberately defeated in the elections by manipulating results. Due to the protest sit-in, the traffic system remained affected in the areas of the protests and people were advised to take alternate routes.



RAFAH: A displaced Palestinian woman holds her son as she waits to get him examined by a doctor, outside a medical tent, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

Maqbool Butt an icon of Kashmir freedom movement: Mushaali

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaali Hussein Mullick on Sunday said Maqbool Butt Shaheed was an icon of resistance movement who sacrificed his life for the noble cause of freedom of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He was a man of integrity and honesty who devoted his entire life for the collective cause, went through trials and tribulations and ultimately sacrificed his life in pursuit of long-cherished ideals, she added.

She was speaking in a function organized at Koshar School at refugees camp Mankpiyan to mark the 40th martyrdom anniversary of Maqbool Butt. Quran Khawani and special prayers were also offered on the occasion.

The SAPM said that the legendary

Kashmir liberation leader had been sent to the gallows in New Delhi's infamous Tihar jail on February 11 in 1984 for his role in Kashmir freedom movement.

She lamented that the fascist Indian authorities had not handed over the dead body of the Kashmiri leader to his heirs despite lapse of four decades, who was buried in the premises of infamous jail.

Mushaali said the people of Kashmir were neither given the right to live nor to die. They even did not have the right to bury their loved ones. Mushaali said that her husband Yasin Malik was being subjected to brutal and inhuman treatment as he was denied all legal, constitutional and fundamental rights.

She feared that the Indian government was hell-bent to hang Yasin Malik as he had been implicated in frivolous and politically-motivated

cases to silence his voice.

The SAPM called upon the world community and UN bodies to force India to ensure his release and let Kashmiris decide their fate as per their aspirations.

She said that the Kashmiri people would leave no stone unturned and continue their struggle till last drop of their blood to break the yoke of Indian slavery.

She said that the Indian government should bear in mind that it could not dampen the courage of brave Kashmiri people. The day was not far when the Kashmiris would see the dawn of freedom. On the occasion, her daughter Rizia Sultana urged for the unity of people of Kashmir to realize the dream of freedom of Kashmir. On the occasion, the participants held a special prayer for Yasin Malik and other detained Kashmiri leaders and activists in Indian jails.

Hamas had command tunnel under U.N. Gaza HQ, Israeli military says

GAZA (Internews): Israeli forces have discovered a tunnel network hundreds of metres (yards) long and running partly under UNRWA's Gaza headquarters, the military says, calling it new evidence of Hamas exploitation of the main relief agency for Palestinians.

Army engineers took reporters for foreign news outlets through the passages at a time of crisis for UNRWA, which has launched an internal probe and seen a string of donor countries freeze funding over allegations last month by Israel that some of its staff doubled as Hamas operatives. The Palestinians have accused Israel of falsifying information to tarnish UNRWA, which employs 13,000 people in the Gaza Strip and has been a lifeline for the aid-dependent population for years. The agency runs schools, primary healthcare clinics and other social services, and distributes aid, describing its activities as purely humanitarian.

UNRWA Headquarters is in Gaza City, among northern areas that Israeli troops and tanks overran early in the four-month-old war against the governing Islamist faction Hamas, sending hundreds of thousands of civilians fleeing southward. Reporters on the closely escorted trip entered a shaft next to a school on the periphery of the U.N. compound, descending to the concretelined tunnel. Twenty minutes of walking through the stifling hot, narrow and occasionally winding passage brought them underneath UNRWA Headquarters, an army lieutenant-colonel leading the tour said.

The tunnel, which the military said was 700 metres long and 18

metres deep, bifurcated at times, revealing side-rooms. There was an office space, with steel safes that had been opened and emptied. There was a tiled toilet. One large chamber was packed with computer servers, another with industrial battery stacks.

"Everything is conducted from here. All the energy for the tunnels, which you walked through them are powered from here," said the lieutenant-colonel, who gave only his first name, Ido.

"This is one of the central commands of the intelligence. This place is one of the Hamas intelligence units, where they commanded most of the combat."

But Ido said Hamas appeared to have evacuated in the face of the Israeli advance, preemptively cutting off communications cables that, in an above-ground part of the tour, he showed running through the floor of the UNRWA Headquarters' basement.

It appeared that heavy Israeli barages and sustained winter rains may also have played a part in the departure: Several stretches of the tunnel were clogged with dislodged sand and knee-high water.

In a statement, UNRWA said it had not been officially informed of the tunnel by Israeli authorities and had vacated the headquarters on Oct. 12, five days after the war began. It was therefore "unable to confirm or otherwise comment" on the Israeli finding.

"UNRWA does not have the military and security expertise nor the capacity to undertake military inspections of what is or might be under its premises," the

statement said.

"In the past, whenever (a) suspicious cavity was found close to or under UNRWA premises, protest letters were promptly filed to parties to the conflict, including both the de facto authorities in Gaza (Hamas) and the Israeli authorities."

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri dismissed the Israeli statements about the tunnel as "lies". He said that Israel aimed to undermine the work of UNRWA and was "covering up to that decision by making these allegations". UNRWA's supporters say it is the only agency with the means of aiding Palestinians in deepening humanitarian distress. Israel says the agency is "perforated by Hamas" and must be replaced. Hamas has denied operating in civilian facilities.

"We know that they (Hamas) have people working in UNRWA. We want every international organization to work in Gaza. That is not a problem. Our problem is the Hamas," Ido told reporters. Lack of cellphone reception in the tunnel made geolocating it as under UNRWA Headquarters impossible. Instead, reporters were asked to put personal items in a bucket that was lowered by rope into a vertical hole on the grounds of the headquarters. They were reunited with the still-tethered items during the tunnel tour.

As a condition of taking journalists on the trip, the Israeli military did not allow photographs of military intelligence such as maps or certain equipment in the convoy of armoured vehicles they traveled in. It also requested approval before transmission of photographs and video footage taken on the trip.

Senate advances Ukraine aid bill despite Trump opposition

WASHINGTON (Reuters): A narrowly divided U.S. Senate moved closer to passing a \$95.34 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan on Sunday, showing undiminished bipartisanship despite mounting opposition from Republican hardliners and Donald Trump.

The Democratic-led Senate voted 67-27 to clear the latest procedural hurdle and moved the foreign aid measure toward an ultimate vote on passage in the coming days. Eighteen Republicans backed the legislation after Trump, the dominant Republican White House candidate, criticized the bill on social media by saying that the foreign aid should take the form of a loan.

The money is viewed as crucial by Kyiv, as it grinds toward the second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But Senate passage would send the bill on to the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, where it faces an uncertain future.

Democratic President Joe Biden, who has been seeking the aid for months, on Friday said Congress would be guilty of "neglect" if it

failed to pass the measure.

The bill could move more quickly if Democrats and Republicans reach an agreement to fast-track the measure. But no such deal has emerged so far.

It includes \$61 billion for Ukraine, \$14 billion for Israel in its war against Hamas and \$4.83 billion to support partners in the Indo-Pacific, including Taiwan, and deter aggression by China.

It also would provide \$9.15 billion in humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza and the West Bank, Ukraine and other conflict zones around the globe.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, who has a slim 219-212 Republican majority, has indicated that he could try to split the aid provisions into separate measures once the bill arrives from the Senate.

But a standalone aid bill for Israel fell victim in the House last week to opposition from Democrats who favor the broader Senate legislation and from hardline Republicans who wanted compensating spending cuts, in a pair of humiliating defeats for Johnson. During a visit to Kyiv on Friday,

a bipartisan delegation of House lawmakers vowed to do their part to pass the measure.

Senate Republicans believe bipartisan passage would help stir support among Republicans in the House.

"It will shape the environment such that ... more Republicans will feel comfortable advancing the bill," Senator Todd Young, an Indiana Republican, told reporters.

Republican support for the measure could grow and the pace of progress could quicken if Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and his Republican counterpart, Mitch McConnell, can reach an agreement allowing votes on Republican amendments.

Republicans want amendments that could address the record flow of migrants across the U.S.-Mexico border and forgo humanitarian assistance provisions by restricting foreign aid to weapons and materiel.

But some Republicans who oppose further aid to Ukraine have vowed to delay consideration by forcing the Senate to comply with a labyrinth of time-consuming parliamentary rules.