

Final results announced Struggle for forming govt picks pace

Independents grab 101 NA seats, PML-N 75 as ECP finally completes vote count

Khayyam Abbasi / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Around 60 million eligible voters participated in the electoral process in Pakistan on February 8, 2024, casting their ballots to elect representatives across 265 National Assembly and 590 Provincial Assembly constituencies. This marked one of the nation's most fiercely contested political battles, with an estimated voter turnout ranging from 45 to 50 percent. Following a period of heightened anticipation and amidst considerable turmoil, the general elections have concluded without major incidents, and the results have been officially announced. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has announced official results for the majority of constituencies, revealing a fragmented political landscape.

However, the outcome has triggered a flurry of discontent among contestants, with accusations of electoral irregularities and rigging flying between rival parties. Legal challenges have been mounted against the declared results. Nonetheless, behind the scenes, political maneuvering is underway as parties engage in negotiations to woo independent candidates and bolster their positions to secure government formation at both the national and provincial levels. Meanwhile, the incoming government is poised to confront a myriad of pressing issues, spanning from economic instability and

Continued on Page 06

Zardari 'demands *PM's slot for* **Bilawal Bhutto**

PML-N suggests Shehbaz Sharif PM, Maryam CM in Punjab

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD/ LAHORE/SUKKUR: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif told his party leaders that former president Asif Zardari has demanded prime minister's slot for Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and major ministerial portfolios, a newspaper reported citing sources. In a major development, the PPP has agreed to make a coalition government with the PML-N on the condition that Bilawal will be made the PM. Shehbaz told the party leaders that

Countrywide protests against 'rigged' results PTI, National Party, PPP, JUI-F, BAP, **BNP-Mengal**, PkMAP, PkNAP, stage sit-ins

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI:Widespread protests erupted across Ba-lochistan and Karachi on

Sunday as several political

parties rejected the recent-

ly announced election results, alleging widespread rigging. Following hotly contested polls, major par-

ties including the National

Party, PPP, JUI-F, BAP,

BNP-Mengal, PkMAP, and

PkNAP, have staged sit-ins

at district returning offices,

demanding recounts and

challenging the declared

outcomes. Discontentment

ran high in Quetta, with

protests engulfing major thoroughfares like Sari-

ab Road, Buleli Road, and

Anscomb Road. Similar

demonstrations raged in

Chaman, Chagai, Dalban-

din, Loralai, Qila Abdullah,

Kharan, and Sibi, effectively

shutting down vital national

highways in Naseerabad,

Continued on Page 06

LAHORE: A man is detained by police officers as PTI supporters protest demanding free and fair results of the election in Lahore. - DNA

Govt formation MQM turns down reports of talks on govt formation

Coalition govt strengthens federation, stresses Azam Tarar

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Following a high-level meeting with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's leadership Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Convener Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has called for political stability in the country. Speaking to the media, Siddiqui turned down the reports suggesting that the Karachi-based party is holding talks with the PML-N over matters pertaining to the formation of the government. His remarks come as attempts are underway by political parties including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the PML-N, to rope in independents and form alliances after neither of the parties managed to secure a simple majority following the results of the February 8 polls which have been released so far. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed independent candidates have emerged as the largest group with 93 National Assembly seats so far, whereas the PML-N and PPP have

PTI looks towards COAS Asim for mandate acceptance

Gohar, while responding to the COAS's "unified government" stance, added that it does not necessarily mean a coalition government

Continued on Page 06

Daesh

Briefs President congratulates people

Pays tribute to youth for huge interest

on polls

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: 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.

Siraj demands resignation of CEC Says ECP failed to ensure free, fair polls

DNA

LAHORE: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 lead ership held a meeting in its headquarters Mansoora with Siraj in the chair to discuss post-election scenario. Siraj lambasted the ECP and said it supported the PML-N, the PPP and the MQM in the general elections. He assert ed 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

Pakistan general elections US lawmakers advise Joe Biden against recognising results

"We must protect democracy and the will of the people," says Congressman Greg Casar

DNA

WASHINGTON: Several lawmakers of the United States, on both sides of the aisle, have urged President Joe Biden's administration not to recognise election results in Pakistan until alleged irregularities are investigated. "Claims of interference or fraud should be fully investigated," the US State Department's spokesperson said in a statement on Friday, expressing concerns about the allegations of interference in the electoral process. "We join credible international and local election observers in their assessment that these elections included undue restrictions LAHORE: Newly-'elected' eight indeon freedom of expression, association and pendent candidates of National and peaceful assembly," the statement said. "Giv- Provincial Assemblies joined Pakien the recent strong statements by House stan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N).

Continued on Page 06

Independent candidates join PML-N PTI Lahore Secy General also joins PML N

BUREAU REPORT

Continued on Page 06

commander eliminated in Khyber IBO Daesh commander Surat Gul remained involved in

terrorist activities. says ISPR

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Security forces eliminated a "high-value target" Surat Gul aka Saif Ullah of Daesh in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Khyber district on Sunday. On the reported presence of a high-profile terrorist, security forces swung into action immediately and carried out a raid in the tribal district, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. An intense fire exchange occurred during the conduct of the

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) top leader Barrister Gohar Khan Sunday demanded the release of the party's "political prisoners," including founder Imran Khan, in reaction to Chief of the Army Staff General Asim Munir's "healing touch" statement on general elections. Congratulating

KHAYAM ABBASI

Continued on Page 06

Attacks on Rafah Egypt may suspend peacetreaty with Israel Egypt fears a mass influx of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees

News Desk

RAFAH: Egypt is threatening to suspend its peace treaty with Israel if Israeli troops are sent into the densely populated Gaza border town of Rafah, and says fighting there could force the closure of the territory's main aid supply route, two Egyptian officials and a Western diplomat said Sun-

day. The threat to suspend the Camp David Accords, a cornerstone of regional stability for nearly a half-century, came after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said sending troops into Rafah was necessary to win the four-month-old war against the Palestinian militant group Hamas. Over half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million

Continued on Page 06

Post-election scenario: PDM Part-II on the anvil

ANSAR M BHATTI

ANALYSIS

ISLAMABAD: The February 8 election will undoubtedly be remembered as a pivotal moment in Pakistan's parliamentary history, marked by

intense controversy surrounding the exclusion of a specific political party from the entire electoral process. The unfolding events have raised serious questions about the fairness and transparency of the electoral procedures.

Initially, the key leadership of the PTI found themselves behind bars, facing allegations of involvement in the May 9 incidents. Subsequently, the party faced another setback when it was stripped of its election symbol, the 'bat.' As if that wasn't enough, numerous winning candidates from the party were purportedly denied their rightfully earned seats, adding fuel to the already heated situation. The international community, too, expressed apprehensions about the legitimacy of the election process. The United States, in particular, promptly voiced its concerns, emphasizing the need for a thorough investigation into the allegations of fraud. This global response underscores the significance of ensuring a fair and just electoral process that up-

The Australian government has conveved its concerns regarding the conduct of the 2024 elections, expressing regret over the limitations imposed on the Pakistani people in their electoral choices. The restriction on certain political parties from participating in the elections is viewed as a setback to the democratic process. 'Australia remains steadfast in its support for a democratic, stable, and prosperous Pakistan, emphasizing the importance of upholding commitments to democratic principles. These principles encompass not only the electoral process but also extend to fundamental rights such as human rights, media freedoms, freedom of expression, and freedom of association'.

The European Union and the Commonwealth states have both released statements that share a striking resemblance. The Commonwealth observers' mission, during their visit to Pakistan, acknowledged certain irregularities in the elections, albeit in a discreet manner during their media interaction. Notably, an interesting comment arose from a high-ranking diplomat stationed in Islamabad, questioning the legitimacy of the Commonwealth observation mission chief, given the presence of the current Interior Minister of the Pakistani government seated beside him during the mission's proceedings. This observation raises intriguing questions about the perceived objectivity and independence of the mission in the context of the political dynamics at play. The excessive delay in releasing the final

election results was a concerning deviation from a healthy electoral process. Ideally, the Election Commission should have promptly announced the results within two days of the election, yet regrettably, even after four days, the conclusive outcome remains elusive. This prolonged delav not only raises evebrows but also lends credibility to speculations suggesting on-

going post-election manipulations. The extended timeframe offers an opportunity for certain political entities to exert influence, particularly on independent candidates. The delay grants these 'favorite' parties ample time to maneuver and manage alliances or exert pressure on independents, potentially impacting the final outcome. Once the official results are disclosed, this window of influence may no longer be available.

With all factors considered, the pivotal inquiry emerges regarding the establishment of governments, both at the national and provincial levels. The electoral outcomes in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) indicate that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in Sindh and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in KPK are poised to effortlessly shape governments independently. Furthermore, the PPP is anticipated to take on a prominent role in the government formation in Baluchistan, collaborating with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F). At the federal level, the competition for the prestigious position of the Prime Minister of Pakistan demands a display of political prowess from various parties.

Ideally and logically the PML N seems better poised to get this post as the party supremo Nawaz Sharif travelled all the way from UK to Pakistan despite a load of cases against him; got himself freed from all those cases and secured reasonable number of seats in the national assembly, though much short of what he and his party had claimed.

However Shehbaz Sharif may also emerge as the consensus candidate for the position of Prime Minister. In such a scenario, Asif Ali Zardari aims to secure the role of President of Pakistan, while Bilawal envisions a position akin to Deputy Prime Minister or an equivalent role. If these arrangements materialize, Maryam Nawaz could be viable candidates for the Chief Minister post in Punjab.

Another possible scenario: A strategic negotiation between Asif Zardari and other key players may result in Bilawal obtaining the Prime Minister's position, with Nawaz Sharif assuming the role of President. The MQM is poised to play a significant role in the federal cabinet, and their interest in retaining the governorship of Sindh is apparent. If all these parties join hands then it may be dubbed as an extension or continuation of the PDM government, which came into being after dislodging of the PTI government.

Though PTI has claimed that it would form governments in KP, Punjab and at the federal level however it may not be possible. This raises important questions such as: Why was the PTI government removed in the first place? What led to the imprisonment of key party figures? Why was their election symbol confiscated? These factors contribute to a broader skepticism about PTI's potential to succeed in forming governments again.

Summing up, the powers who wanted to keep PTI out, PML N down and the PPP in seem to have successfully completed their task. Convicting Imran Khan in consecutive cases appears to be a strategic move in this game plan, intended to incite PTI supporters and drive them to vote in large numbers. This increased voter turnout effectively curtailed PML N's chances of securing a simple majority, and the PPP was unable to attain a majority as well. As per reports, PTI's majority was allegedly converted into a minority on many seats. Consequently, the ultimate outcome is that the influential forces have established a strategic advantage, positioning themselves as key players in determining the formation and sustainability of any government without their consent.

Regardless, it appears highly likely that the government formed through these negotiations and maneuvers may face significant challenges in maintaining its stability over an extended period. The inherent fragility of the current administration could potentially lead to the initiation of snap elections or even an internal power shift. In the context of Pakistan, the tenure of an elected government is typically expected to last a maximum of two to two and a half years, contingent on the dynamics between civilian authorities and the military.

holds democratic principles.

NATIONAL

Western nations expressing concerns over elections

President of Pakistan Economy Watch, said that it is unfortunate that not a single party could get a whole mandate in the elections

Adil Shaheen

02

ISLAMABAD : Dr Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch, said on Sunday it is unfortunate that not a single party could get a whole mandate in the elections. In the absence of a majority, a party can only form a government with the help of other parties; therefore, ensuring political and economic stability in the country would be challenging. He added that the major parties and the independent candidates are meeting to agree on the new government while those who lost elections are accusing rigging. In a statement today, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that many Western countries are concerned about elections that interfere with Pakistan's internal affairs. The Western countries that are expressing reservations about the electoral process in Pakistan are ignoring the massacre of Palestinians and extending all possible help to Israel. Dr. Murtaza

Mughal said that the party coming to power would have to do it with the help of other parties and independents, resulting in an army of ministers and advisers. A coalition government will spend billions of rupees to keep allies happy. It will not be able to find time and resources to strengthen the economy or provide relief to people. It will further burden the masses, who are already reeling under the cost of living crisis.

He remarked that the establishment of coalition governments in the center of Punjab and Balochistan is written on the wall, which may impede development. It seems that the PML-N and PPP will form a government by joining hands as both parties criticized each other during the election campaign but within limits. Dr. Mughal said political leaders should complete consultations and form the government as delay will damage the economy. To stabilize the economy for the next few years, severe economic decisions would be necessary, while a fresh IMF program would also be necessary. Given the ideological differences between the PML-N and PPP, a coalition administration can substantially impact the intended results of tax reforms and raise revenue. The PML-N and PPP have quite different approaches regarding the privatization of state-owned businesses. This is a persistent problem that has been unsolved for many years. Since the caretaker administration has already started implementing a privatization strategy, PML-N and PPP must agree, as these companies are causing the country trillions in losses. The question is whether the ruling coalition, which promised the masses much during the election campaign, would accept these challenging choices. He said the stock market is already falling due to uncertainty that should not be allowed to spread, adding that the coalition government may be unable to deliver as expected by the masses.

LESCO detects 484 power pilferers

LAHORE : 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, Sheikhupura, 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 op-

erations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer

PR putting maximum efforts retrieve 13,972 acres land also decided to accelerate ISLAMABAD : Pakistan

Railways has accelerated its ongoing anti-encroachthe efforts to retrieve the ment operation against major portion of around land grabbers across the country to recoup its land 13,972 acres of land worth billions of rupees found unfrom different individuals, der the illegal occupation of groups, and even business private individuals and diforganizations which were ferent government departusing it for residential, comments across the country. mercial and agriculture "Around 5,809 acres were purposes for decades. occupied in Punjab, 1,181 "The joint procedure oracres are under encroachders have been issued to ment in Khyber Pakhtunkhall Divisional Superintenwa, 5,948 acres in Sindh dents of Pakistan Railways and 1,034 acres land octo retrieve the railway cupied in Balochistan," an land from encroachers. official in the Ministry told the official added. Accord-APP. He said the category ingly, he said the anti-encroachment operations for of land under illegal occuparetrieval of encroached tions included commercial, Railway land all over the residential, agricultural and various persons or de-Railway network are being partments. Giving details initiated by the concerned of the land, the official said divisions and notices are issued to encroachers that around 769 acres were commercial in all the provunder the Possession Orinces, 3,309 residential, dinance 1965 for vacation

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

LAHORE : 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. of land across the country, "As Pakistan endeavors to



Islamabad **POST**

Monday, February 12 , 2024

PFC delegation off to USA for Las Vegas Expo

LAHORE : 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 comprehensive approach that considers the perspec-

effective policy making tives 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 build consensus and gar ner 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.

Rwp Ring Road plantation drive set for feb 15: Commissioner

to link the ring road with ring road is completed

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 LES-CO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice.

On the 152nd consecutive day of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged detection units. with Among the seized connections 12 were commercial. 04 agricultural and 468 domestic, and all these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 378,023 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 11.796 million. During the 152 days of the grand anti-theft campaign, the spokesman mentioned, the LESCO detected pilferage on 52,419 power connections and 48,038 FIRs have been registered against electricity thieves in the relevant police stations, while 17,520 accused have so far been arrested by the police. The LESCO has so far charged a total of 72,018,869 detection units worth Rs 2,785,054,865 to all the power pilferers.-APP

5,512 acres agricultural and 4382 were under encroachment of various persons or departments. The official said the department had

of Railway land/structure within 14 days. The official said that Pakistan Railway Police, District Administration and law

of which 90,326-acre was in Puniab, 39,428-acre in Sindh. 28,228-acre in Balochistan, and 9,708-acre in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.-APP

Lahore ranks 5th in global air pollution ranking

"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

LAHORE : 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 Puniab Environment Protection Department (EPD) also started various initiatives to control smog, under which smog dissolution "weather generators" have been installed in Lahore. EPD Directors Naseem-Ur-Rehman Shah told APP that anti-smog generators were operating successfully in Russia, 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.-DNA

CM Naqvi inaugurates FM Radio at P&SHD

He inspected the studios and various sections of the FM Radio and recorded a message for the FM Radio Sehat Zindagi

ABID RAZA

LAHORE : 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 50km range of Lahore. The P&SHD minister 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 video link along with the coaster project. Provincial Minister for P&SHC Dr. Jamal Nasir, Chief Secretary, Secretary C&W, Secretary Health and officials concerned were also present. Earlier on ,CM reviews progress on Mazar Bibi Pak Daman road. 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 project and reviewed the progress being made on construction of the road to link the Mazar Bibi Pak Daman

with the Empress Road. Mohsin Naqvi inspected the allocated site for car parking along with the construction of the new road and also inspected the construction activities from the Empress Road up to the Mazar along with removing the building structure causing obstruction during the construction work. He ordered to remove the remaining structure at the earliest. The caretaker CM ordered to expeditiously complete the road construction work. He said the pilgrims would be provided easy access to the Mazar with the construction of 20 feet wide road up to the Empress Road. More space is being allocated for parking of vehicles. Secretary Communication and Works gave a briefing about progress being made on the project. Officials of C&W, Lahore Development Authority, Infrastructure Development Authority Punjab (IDAP) and other administrative officers were also present.

DNA

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 ring road project would be the international stage, thus completed within the stippromoting the Pakistan's furulated time frame as over niture industry.-APP 20 percent physical work of the ring road project had been completed. After

DPO lauds police for foolproof security

SARGODHA : District Police Officer Muhammad Faisal Kamran on Sunday appreciated Sargodha police for plaving a key role in conducting peaceful elections in the district. Talking to APP, 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. Sargoda police utilised its professional skills to provide security to voters, he added. -APP

the motorway, work on the Thalian Interchange would RAWALPINDI : Commisbe started, he added. He sioner Rawalpindi Division, said that the authorities Liaquat Ali Chatta has said concerned had been that the plantation drive on directed to complete both sides of Rawalpindi Swan Bridge as soon as Ring Road would be startpossible. ed from February 15. The The rest area being built on the ring road would be Commissioner said that the

developed on the pattern of Bhera rest area, Liaquat Ali Chatta informed. The Ring Road project would prove to be a game changer for the people of Rawalthe traffic network design pindi, he added. Once the

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 Chatta 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.



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China-Pak coop constructing smart city through AI tech

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

DNA

ISLAMABAD: 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 an vital result "UAV-assisted edge framework for real-time disaster management", which provides a more scientific and effective solution for local flood fight.

Pak fully capable of becoming AI development hub in South Asia

ISLAMABAD: Dr Wu Jun, the Director of CPInS Lab Sunday said that Pakistan through further cooperation with China, was fully capable of becoming an Artificial Intelligence (AI) development hub in South Asia and the wider region. The CPInS Lab was officially established at Pakistan National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in the beginning of year 2022 with joint efforts of NUST and Guangzhou Institute of Software Application Technology. At present, various researches are in progress in an orderly manner. "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 said in an interview. "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," he said.-DNA

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 counterparts, including activity detection, detection and real-time recognition, as well

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.



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Disposable Food Packaging Association (DFPA) has said that political stability is essential for smooth economy and high growth, as the newly-elected government that comes into office after general elections would be faced not by only stagflation, and a very difficult debt situation, but will have to make a lot of climate-related expenditure so that the country can meaningfully move towards becoming a climatechange-resilient economy. The DFPA President Ahsan Shahid said that business community is anxious to improve the economic situation in dialogues with the new government because the central thing in dealing with all of these issues is that the economy grows at a meaningfully high rate, and that such growth is inclusive, and green. Ahsan Shahid said that the outlook of global economic risks is also quite challenging, as pointed out by the recently released 'Global risks report 2024' by World Economic Forum, which pointed out in this regard as we enter 2024, results of the Forum's Global Risks Perception Survey 2023-2024 highlight a predominantly negative outlook for the world over the short term that is expected to worsen over the long term. Surveyed in Sept last, the majority of respondents anticipate some instability and a moderate risk of global catastrophes, while another 27 percent expect greater turbulence and 3 percent expect global catastrophic risks to materialize in the short term. Only 16 percent expect a stable or calm outlook in the next two years. The outlook is markedly more negative over the 10-year timeframe, with 63 percent of respondents expecting a stormy or turbulent outlook and less than 10 percent expecting a calm or stable situation.-DNA

Tourists urged to follow traffic rules

RAWALPINDI: 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.-APP

1886 cameras installed at 306 locations

RAWALPINDI: 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 underway such as the construction of the Ring Road.





Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15 Bomb Disposal.....15 Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16 Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122 Motorway Police...9266044 Motorway Police.9270601-20 Women Police Stations Islamabad......9222596 Rawalpindi......9270601-20



Enguiry

EdhiAmbulance.....115 PIA Flight Info.....114 PIA Cargo.....9280979 Railway Inquiry.....117 Railway Exchange9270831-5 WASA Rawalpindi..5555489 ..9281092 CAA



Hospitals

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СМН5611111	
MH561116	
Cantt Hospital9270907-11	
DHQ5556311-4	
RGH9290301-7	
Holy Family9290322-7	
PIMS9261170-79	
Polyclinic9218300-09	
Shifa International 4603666	



Departments

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
ТМА	5770886
Cantonment B	Board 9270151-3

Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: A vendor on his way while displaying a herd of sheep to attract the customers in the Federal Capital. -ONLINE

Female teachers express annoyance over unpaid dues

ISLAMABAD: 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 ex 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.-APP

Significant economic tasks await incoming administration

Pakistan has borrowed 23 times from the IMF, and if the domestic system is not improved, more IMF loans will not be able to save the country

and inflation has made survival very diffi-

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, the former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), stated on Sunday that the new administration will have major economic issues like debt servicing and inflation. The middle class is shrinking and the underprivileged are facing severe hardships due to continued inflation which cannot be tamed despite best efforts, he said. He said that after the transition to power, the rulers would have to pay close attention to the economy so that the country's threats could be reduced and the people could experience some relief. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that, at present, inflation is on the rise despite having interest rates at the highest level of twenty-two percent; price shocks have made life very difficult for the middle class and people experiencing poverty, cult. He said the new government should avoid deciding to seek quick popularity and focus on achieving long-term results. He added that electricity, oil, and gas prices are bleeding the public white. The business leader said that interest rates have made it impossible to do business; foreign debt has reached \$128 billion, while this year, about \$ 28 billion and \$ 77.5 billion loans to August 2026 need to be paid. Repaying these loans is only possible with the new IMF program, and getting loans will become equally difficult and expensive over time. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the annual expenditure of the government is over Rs14 trillion, which is much higher than its income, so funds have to be borrowed. Tax revenue, exports, and remittances must be improved to run the country. He said that while the population is constantly increasing, the youth need jobs, which is becoming a problem. A small segment has been robbing domestic resources for decades, which has pushed the country to the brink. Other countries improve their economy through loans, while in Pakistan, money is borrowed for luxuries, and all the burden has to be lifted to the people. Mr. Butt said that unnecessary dependence on borrowing has caused irreparable damage to the domestic economy, and now the country needs wise economic policies to survive. The necessary changes to address our budgetary imbalances will be quite painful. A postponement will make the necessary adjustment larger and more painful. Though some options might be preferable, there are no simple answers to this serious problem. Currently, the only way to reduce the pressure on inflation is to make corrections in our fiscal account. Pakistan has borrowed 23 times from the IMF, and if the domestic system is not improved, more IMF loans will not be able to save the country.



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04

TWIN CITIES

Islamabad **POST** Monday, February 12, 2024

Briefs

New govt will have to announce long-term economic plan: FRIA

ICCI hopes new govt to put economy on right track

WMB safely rescued female leopard cub in Dhirkot

ISLAMABAD : The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) on Sunday safely rescued a female cub of leopard from the scenic Dhirkot Tehsil of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) which is known for its deodar jungle. The Wildlife Spokesperson told the media that the female leopard cub was five to six months old and was rescued from Dhirkot area as the AJK Wildlife Department lacked the wildlife rehabilitation facility and requested the IWMB for assistance. He added that the local people broke the teeth and fractured the legs of the female leopard cub. However, during the medical examination, the female leopard cub was found to have severe dehydration along with skin infections, he said. "The condition of the female leopard cub is out of danger due to the provision of emergency medical facilities. The IWMB has chosen Lucky as the name of the female leopard cub because it was successfully kept alive. Lucky has also started taking her meal and will be transferred to the Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in the next few days after providing veterinary medical care," the IWMB official said.-DNA

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that streamlining the regulations and ensuring policy consistency should be the key focus of the newly elected government to attract local and foreign investment and promote business activities in the country

FAISAL SHEIKH

DNA ISLAMABAD: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has said that the newly-elected government will have to put in place a long-term financing plan to meet its very large external debt obligations for the next few years, as a timely announcement of the results, leading to a smooth formation of a new government will reduce policy and political uncertainty.

The FRIA senior vice chairman and PIAF EC member Shahbaz Aslam said that this is crucial for the country that is facing very challenging macroeconomic conditions, with fragile balance of payments, weak growth and high inflation. He said that political stability is essential for economic stability. The business community is anxious to improve the economic situation, however, the caretaker government deserves congratulations for holding free and impartial elections. Shahbaz Aslam said that the government will need to negotiate for another International Monetary Fund program, after the current one expires in April 2024. Until a new program is agreed to, Pakistan's ability to secure loans from other bilateral and multilateral partners will be severely constrained. Even under a new IMF program, the new government will be tested on its willingness and ability to implement and sustain reforms, particularly revenue-raising measures, that may be politically unpopular, but required to improve macroeconomic conditions, he added. He said that Pakistan's sovereign dollar bonds extended losses to more than 5 cents, data showed on Friday, as both Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif claimed victory in neck-and-neck results from Thursday's elections in the

President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in a statement hoped that the newly elected government would put the economy on the path of a sustainable growth trajectory by taking priority measures to address the key issues of the business community and maximizing ease of doing business in the country. He said that Pakistan has plenty of natural resources and a great potential to emerge as a strong economy. He stressed that the newly elected government should focus on good governance and regulatory reforms to unlock the true economic potential of the country and make it a hub of business and investment activities. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the rising inflation, high energy prices, unaffordable bank markup, policy inconsistency, complicated regulatory regime, import restrictions, etc. are some of the major factors that are hindering the growth of business activities and emphasized that the newly elected government should engage the private sector in consultation to address these issues on priority basis and facilitate the better growth of trade and industrial activities in the country. ICCI President said that the newly elected government should focus on enhancing regional trade to promote exports and investment opportunities. He said that the new government should encourage ex-



port diversification and cooperate with the private sector in producing value-added goods to boost exports. He said that the new government should facilitate the private sector in embracing digital transformation that would help foster innovations and create new jobs for youth. He reiterated that ICCI would extend all possible cooperation to the

new government in endeavors targeted to make Pakistan a hub of business and economic activities.Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that high energy costs in Pakistan have made the industry and exports uncompetitive and emphasized that the newly elected government should focus on renewable energy to reduce high production

costs and make exports competitive in the international market. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that streamlining the regulations and ensuring policy consistency should be the key focus of the newly elected government to attract local and foreign investment and promote business activities in the country.

Serious economic problems awaiting the new government

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Saturday that significant economic challenges await the incoming administration as the middle class is dwindling, and the impoverished face extreme hardships. He said that after the transition to power, the rulers would have to pay close attention to the economy so that the country's threats could be reduced and the people could experience some Shahid Rasheed relief.

IMF program, and getting rise despite having interest rates at the highest level of loans will become equally twenty-two percent; price difficult and expensive over shocks have made life very Shahid Rasheed time. Butt said that the annual difficult for the middle class and people experiencing expenditure of the governpoverty, and inflation has ment is over Rs14 trillion, which is much higher than made survival very difficult. He said the new governits income, so funds have to ment should avoid deciding be borrowed. Tax revenue, to seek quick popularity exports, and remittances and focus on achieving longmust be improved to run the country. He said that term results. He added that electricity, oil, and gas pricwhile the population is cones are bleeding the public stantly increasing, the youth white. The business leader need jobs, which is becoming said that interest rates have a problem. A small segment made it impossible to do has been robbing domestic business: foreign debt has resources for decades, which reached \$128 billion, while has pushed the country to the brink. Other countries imthis year, about \$ 28 billion and \$ 77.5 billion loans to prove their economy through

lifted to the people. Mr. Butt said that unnecessary dependence on borrowing has caused irreparable damage to the domestic economy, and now the country needs wise economic policies to survive. The necessary changes to address our budgetary imbalances will be quite painful. A postponement will make the necessarv adjustment larger and more painful. Though some options might be preferable, there are no simple answers to this serious problem. Currently, the only way to reduce the pressure on inflation is to make corrections in our fiscal account. Pakistan has borrowed 23 times from the IMF, and if the domestic sys-

Financial issues, serious economic challenges await new govt: APBF

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As not a single party has gained simple majority in the National Assembly in the general elections and there would be a coalition federal government the All Pakistan Business Forum has warned that the financial constraints and the economic challenges are awaiting the incoming government amidst highest record inflation and unemployment in the country. The APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the new government would have to face mammoth economic challenges. The country is facing challenges like higher inflation and unemployment rates, ongoing IMF program and possible engagement for fresh program to improve balance of payments situation, debt restructuring, framing new resource sharing formula between centre and provinces, National Finance Commission (NFC) and privatization of loss-making state-owned entities. However, it would be a challenging task for

the coalition government. He said that results of the current general elections are indicating for establishing a coalition government at the federal level, which would have to deal with plethora of economic issues including higher inflation and unemployment rates, dealing with Internation-al Monetary Fund (IMF), debt restructuring and oth-The Pakistan Stock ers. Exchange opened the day on a negative note as the benchmark index plunged over 2,000 points on Friday as uncertainty surrounded election 2024 results. The KSE-100 shares index, the bench mark of the country's capital market, fell below the 62.000 mark by losing 2,145.53 points or 3.34% during the intraday trading. APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi said that the stocks, a day before the general elections in Pakistan, closed on a higher note, boosted by a pre-election rally and hopes of an upgrade in the country's credit rating, but trading volumes remained thin as investors stayed cautious. The PSX gained 344.85 points or 0.54% to ernment.

close at 64,143.87 points on Wednesday. Ibrahim Qureshi said that the global ratings agency, the S&P has recently stated that a more stable political environment in Pakistan is likely an important precondition to repairing the government's creditworthiness. The rating agency in a note on Pakistan stated that together with new policy moves to improve investor confidence and bring down inflation, this could lift fiscal and external metrics sufficiently for the sovereign ratings to move to the "B" rating category. It further stated that if the coming elections yield a government that has popular support and able to work with key institutions in the country, it will have a better chance of securing external financing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the country is currently witnessing higher inflation rate, which would be a main challenge for the new coalition gov-

debt-laden nation

Citizens to take responsibility in overcoming pollution

ISLAMABAD : Director General (DG) of the Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) Farzana Altaf Shah on Sunday urged the citizens to take the lead and responsibility to overcome environment 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.-APP

Butt said in a statement issued here today that, at present, inflation is on the

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The con-

cerned citizens and the

experts urged all the po-

litical parties and state

institutions to respect the

mandate given to the can-

didates in the February 8

elections. They said espe-

cially the majority of Paki-

stan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

supported Independents

shall be given a rightful

chance to take the course.

An inclusive and collabo-

rative political governance

shall pave the future devel-

opment discourse in the

absence of clear majority

at the federal level. Even

the majority parties in the

provinces shall take other

parties on board for an in-

clusive democratic stability.

The participants said the

majority win of Independ-

ents reflect that the public

August 2026 need to be loans, while in Pakistan, monpaid. Repaying these loans ey is borrowed for luxuries, is only possible with the new and all the burden has to be

has rejected the political on Saturday. The speakers

included former senator

Farhatullah Babar, consti-

tutional expert Zafarullah

Khan, Executive Director

for Geopolitical Studies

Munir Ahmed, Associate

Professor of International

Relations at the Lahore Gar-

rison University Dr. Zainab

Ahmed, Associate Pro-

fessor of political science

at the Kinnaired College

for Women Dr. Khushboo

Ejaz, Associate Professor

at Bahria University Islam-

abad Dr. Hassan Daud Butt,

political activists Amina

Sadaf and Sabeen Younas

from Islamabad and Zam-

mar Shahid from Quetta,

National Defence Universi-

ty PhD scholar and Govern-

ance specialist T.A. Bhutta,

development experts Aftab

Alam Khan and Qiser Eiaz.

An overwhelming participa-

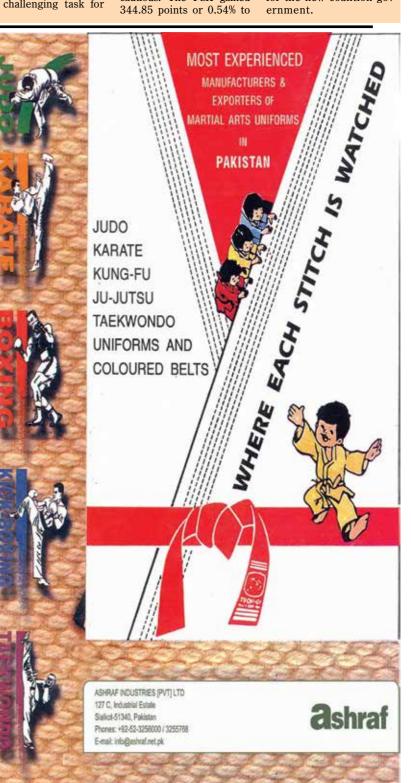
tion of citizens and youth

Centre

Devcom-Pakistan

tem is not improved, more IMF loans will not be able to save the country.

presented their opinion. Farhatulla Babar envisaged no role of establishment in Pakistan's future political scenario. They should understand that the public's political awareness has increased, now the political engineering and maneuvering would create extreme situations. In the emerging scenario, only inclusive alliances in the parliament would deliver results. The split-mandate and populous politics may harm the democratic process if the rigidity reigned. Only stronger institutions within their mandate can control populism. He urged all the stakeholders to respect everyone's vote. Za farullah Khan said our political system is governed by many confusions and illusions. We need to sort it out for clarity of perceptions and practices. The present situation reflects that the public has rejected the role of establishment and its undue fiddling in the political process. Secondly, we shall accept the mandate given to the candidates and their role in the future discourse shall not be diminished.



PAC Board of management members intends to promote regional culture

Experts urge inclusive parliamentary democratic system

engineering and the estab-

lishment's fiddling in the

political process. They also

questioned the Election

Commission of Pakistan's

capacity to tabulate and an-

nounce the election results

in time. Contrarily, the bit-

by-bit announcement of

results by the TV channels

has created doubts on the

tabulation process, cast

delusions and confusion.

The internationally rec-

ognized standard process

for the election results

tabulation and announce-

ments shall be adopted in

future elections. These

views were expressed by

the concerned citizens and

experts at a webinar on

"Pakistan's Elections 2024:

Emerging scenarios and fu-

ture challenges," organized

by the Devcom-Pakistan

(Development Communi-

cations Network) and DTN

The meeting participants said the food and culture festival was postponed till April due to PSL matches

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Third meeting of the Board of Management of Punjab Arts Council was held under the chairmanship of President Board Sakib Rafik, Secretary Board Waqar Ahmed and members Asma Butt, Muhammad Azim Iqbal, Babar Niazi, and Muhammad Aslam Mughal participated in the meeting. President Board Sakib Rafik said that the land of Punjab is extremely fertile in terms of literature and culture. Punjab is an ancient cultural center and a province rich in folk heritage. The board is fully active for the promotion of art and culture. In the proceedings of the meeting, the President Board and all the

members agreed to write a letter to the Executive Director Punjab Arts Council to include the name of former resident director Punjab Arts Council Naheed Manzoor in the board.

The meeting participants said the food and culture festival was postponed till April due to PSL matches. It has also been agreed to hire staff for the audio video studio, release funds for cultural



activities and create a craft bazar to increase the income of the Arts Council. Board Secretary Waqar Ahmed told the board members that Punjab Arts Council is going to organize singing and painting competitions in Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jehlum and Murree, for which the names of the judges have been finalized. Talent competitions will be held at district, division and provincial levels. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed to hold a Jashan Baharan musical gala at the Arts Council on February 24. Nooran Lal, Sana Nemat and versatile dance group from Lahore will perform in the musical gala. President Board Sakib Rafik and other board members emphasized on wide publicity for the musical gala.

05

Ukraine's President and general: political-military blur

OLITICS doesn't end in wartime, even when it has been subsumed by D more immediate, existential matters. With the passage of time, Winston Churchill's wartime leadership can appear as if it were unassailable - yet in reality, criticism grew loud enough that the House of Commons held two votes of confidence in 1942. Though some have compared Volodymyr Zelenskiy to Churchill, the Ukrainian president will be grateful that he has not faced anything approaching that kind of challenge. The "rally round the flag" effect, along with his charisma, effective diplomacy and personal courage as Russia invaded, created a remarkably enduring mood of national unity. Even those criticising the decisions or conduct of those around the president shrank from questioning his. But by last autumn, it was clear that the country was seeing the return of politics. It is still far from business as usual. But Mr Zelenskiy's decision to fire Ukraine's admired commander-in-chief, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, on Thursday has turned up the volume. Mr Zelenskiy says politics played no part. But he has not explained the move beyond citing the need for "renewal" in the armed forces. Disagreements between the men over strategy and tactics were open knowledge and it was widely reported last week that the president had asked for the general's resignation. Military decisions can be political and economic too - like Mr Zaluzhnyi's desire to mobilise half a million troops, which his boss regarded as unrealistic.

The president was also reportedly annoyed when the general said the war had reached a stalemate in an interview late last year. That was seen as unhelpful to the diplomatic push for more arms donations, and as venturing on to political turf. The general is wildly popular in Ukraine and aides explored a future political career even as he denied an interest, according to The Showman, a new biography of Mr Zelenskiy by the journalist Simon Shuster. It is hard to see the change of command transforming Ukraine's fortunes on the battlefield, not least because Gen Zaluzhnyi's replacement, Oleksandr Syrskyi, the commander of Ukraine's land forces, has a mixed record and at best a mixed reputation among troops. But curiously, it is also hard to see much political benefit to Mr Zelenskiy. Gen Syrskyi is seen as the president's man, and as lacking political ambition. Gen Zaluzhnyi will be out of the spotlight, but equally will not take the blame for any future military shortcomings. His departure also encourages discussion of whether the president is willing to accept questioning of his decisions. While some western officials have expressed concern about the change of personnel, Mr Zaluzhnyi's removal is more likely to be a pretext than a reason for Republicans in the US to block further aid: wrangling over the \$60bn aid package continues. This is primarily a domestic issue.

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Labour's green u-turn threatens growth plan

RADOW chancellor Rachel Reeves promised to be Britain's first "green chancellor" when she announced in 2021 that a Labour government would invest £28bn a year in greening the economy. A little over two years later, and the Labour party has unceremoniously dropped this commitment, instead pledging to spend a more modest £4.8bn a year over the next parliament on green investment, over and above the government's existing investment plans. Labour says this is part of its broader commitment to fiscal responsibility; but in the week that the EU's climate service announced that global heating had exceeded 1.5C across an entire year for the first time, environmentalists have expressed concerns that it might signal a diminishing commitment to tackling the climate crisis. While Labour's plans still represent a significant increase in green investment, there are certainly questions about whether it goes far enough. Moreover, the reduction leaves a big hole in the party's plans to expand the economy by boosting lagging levels of public and private investment. Because the government shifted its planned spending on the green transition since Reeves' 2021 announcement, Labour's original commitment to spend £28bn a year amounted to an additional £20bn a year on top of government plans. The revised announcement reduces that by three-quarters, with about 40% funded through hiking windfall taxes on oil and gas. The rest will be funded through additional borrowing, which Reeves is assuming will still allow Labour to meet the fiscal rules she has set. Labour has justified this scaling back because, as it rightly points out, the cost of government borrowing has risen sharply since its original announcement, thanks to rising inflation and interest rates in the last two years. It is also true that it was unrealistic to believe that a new government could raise spending on green investment to this level immediately on taking office.

That said, this planned reduction could have an impact not just on the speed at which the UK can transition to net zero, but also on energy bills. Labour's warm home plans will be cut by a fifth, meaning many fewer homes will be insulated during a first Labour term. There will also be implications for the transition to electric vehicles. The party is still planning to spend £8.3bn to achieve its clean power pledge to decarbonise the UK's energy supply by 2030, although this will be made more difficult by delays in building the new nuclear power station Hinkley Point C. So the implications for the UK's green transition are concerning, although there is no question that a Labour government would be far better for the climate than a Conservative one. But there are also implications for economic growth. The beauty of Labour's "green prosperity plan" was that it was double-headed: it would be good for the climate, but also provide a vital and significantinjection of public investment to kickstart Britain's sluggish productivity growth. By effectively adopting the arbitrary fiscal rule Jeremy Hunt has set that debt must be forecast to be falling in five years' time - a rule that Paul Johnson, director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, calls "basically silly" - Reeves is hemming a Labour government into the Tories' macroeconomic worldview.

The stolen elections-2024

Qamar Bashir



PPP is poised to form the government in Sindh, while PTI is expected to do so in KP. In Punjab, PML(N) holds the majority with 144 seats, closely trailed by PTI. The battle for Lahore's throne is anticipated to be fiercely contested between the two parties. In Balochistan, PPP has secured the most seats and is likely to pursue a coalition government, a common occurrence in the province's political landscape. Mr. Rauf Hassan of PTI asserted that the party is poised to form governments in Punjab, KP, and at the federal level. Mufta Ismael remarked on the significant voter turnout for PTI...

HE nation nears the conclusion of the exhaustive election process, amid accusations of rigging and the misuse of state power in favor of PML(N), leading to widespread condemnation from the media and PTI, who have labeled the election as stolen. The mandate appears highly fragmented across the country, surprising both observers and influential figures. Allegations abound regarding the manipulation of results by state entities to benefit PML(N) and hinder PTI from securing a clear majority, both nationally and in the crucial province of Punjab. The election outcomes, though shocking and demoralizing, saw PML(N) exhibiting resilience by claiming victory in Punjab and at the national level. However, the humbling results prompted a shift in demeanor, with PM-L(N) adopting a more conciliatory tone. Leader Mian Nawaz Sharif extended an olive branch to all political parties, the judiciary, and the Armed Forces, emphasizing a desire for collaboration to overcome the country's challenges. He pledged PML(N)'s commitment to avoiding confrontation and instead advocated for unity to elevate

future course of action once the total results are announced and discussions with over 16 independents progress further. Turkey's Anadolu Agency echo similar apprehensions. Al Jazeera reports on rigging claims and internet disruptions, with Reuters highlighting

At present, PTI is embroiled in a protracted legal struggle to reclaim what they allege as a stolen mandate, restore their party status, and explore options to align with smaller parties to secure seats reserved for women. As it stands, PTI has emerged as the largest party at the federal level (95/265), closely followed by PML(N) with 67 seats, PPP with 52, MQM with 8, IPP with 3, JUI with 2, and BNP Mengal with 1.

PPP is poised to form the government in Sindh, while PTI is expected to do so in KP. In Punjab, PML(N) holds the majority with 144 seats, closely trailed by PTI. The battle for Lahore's throne is anticipated to be fiercely contested between the two parties. In Balochistan, PPP has secured the most seats and is likely to pursue a coalition government, a common occurrence in the province's political landscape. Mr. Rauf Hassan of PTI asserted that the party is poised to form governments in Punjab, KP, and at the federal level. Mufta Ismael remarked on the significant voter turnout for PTI, surprising all political stakeholders. Salman Akram Raja, in a Vlog, disclosed that despite leading with 80,000 votes according to Form 45, the Returning Officer (RO) unlawfully denied him Form 47 and expelled him from his room. He has filed an appeal with the Lahore High Court and urged PTI leaders and workers to remain vigilant to safeguard their victory. Mr. Jabran Nasir of PTI asserted that even the aggregate votes in Nawaz Sharif's Form 47 did not reconcile, suggesting widespread rigging nationwide. He accused the pervasive rigging, conducted with impunity, of fueling disillusionment, anger, and frustration among the populace. An analyst alleged that the election outcomes in over 60 constituencies were manipulated in favor of PML(N), with numerous presiding officers coerced into altering results under threat of severe repercussions. The international media's headlines resound with concerns over transparency, rigging allegations, and perceived bias favoring PML(N). The New York Times warns of a shadow cast by rigging accusations, while the BBC raises questions about the election's fairness amidst irregularities. France's Le Monde, Hindustan Times, and

Turkey's Anadolu Agency echo similar apprehensions. Al Jazeera reports on rigging claims and internet disruptions, with Reuters highlighting Western observers' worries about irregularities. CNN International reports on unexpected delays in vote counting. The Associated Press calls for transparency from the international community, while TRT labels the 2024 elections as the least fair and transparent in Pakistan's history.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Amnesty International condemned the suspension of internet and cellular services, highlighting Pakistan's temporary closure of border crossings with Iran and Afghanistan for security reasons. Analysts criticized the election as the least credible since Pakistan's independence, citing allegations of pre-poll rigging and a crackdown on Imran Khan's PTI party. The banning of PTI's cricket bat symbol on ballots disadvantaged illiterate voters, while TV stations were prohibited from airing Khan's speeches. Political violence marred the lead-up to the vote, exemplified by twin blasts targeting campaign

the nation to greater heights of prosperity.

He announced the formation of two-member teams, led by Shahbaz Sharif and Ishaq Dar, tasked with initiating immediate dialogue with Asif Ali Zardari of PPP, MQM, and JUI. The objective was to persuade these parties to form a coalition government with PML(N) aimed at fostering prosperity and development in Pakistan. However, PML(N) is cognizant of the potential hefty cost associated with such a coalition. It may entail relinquishing the premiership to Bilawal Bhutto and granting the presidency to Asif Ali Zardari, among other costly demands from various parties. This could leave PML(N) in a precarious position, rendering it ineffective for practical purposes. Mr. Ishaq Dar sounded a warning to PTI, suggesting that while independents may have secured significant victories, they cannot independently form a government and will likely align with other parties to do so. He proposed Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister with himself as Finance Minister.

On the other hand, Syed Khurshid Shah of PPP struck a cautious tone regarding Mian Nawaz Sharif's proposals. He stated that it is premature to discuss coalition formation until all results are finalized. PPP will determine its offices in Balochistan, claimed by the Islamic State Pakistan Province militant group.

In the aftermath of the 2024 elections, Pakistan finds itself at a critical juncture, grappling with the fallout of allegations of widespread rigging, transparency concerns, and the polarization of political forces. As the nation awaits the finalization of results and potential coalition formations, the need for transparency, accountability, and a commitment to democratic principles has never been more pressing. The international community's scrutiny, coupled with domestic calls for justice and electoral integrity, underscores the imperative for thorough investigations and corrective measures. It is incumbent upon all stakeholders, including political parties, electoral authorities, and civil society, to work towards restoring faith in the democratic process, ensuring that the voices of the Pakistani people are heard and respected. Only through genuine dialogue, accountability, and a collective commitment to democratic values can Pakistan chart a course towards a more stable, inclusive, and prosperous future.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

Balance between emotion and logic in voting

Amina AG



PML-N promises to create 10 million jobs and reduce poverty from 38% to 25% in five years. They plan to lower electricity bills and strengthen ties with China. They aim to cut taxes for businesses, increase the tax money the government

gets and sell off stateowned companies that are not making a profit. They also want to get rid of a government body called NAB and bring back...

OTING is really important and before you vote, it is crucial to know about the people's will and what they stand for. In the past, decisions made because of emotions sometimes turned out badly. So, it is essential to learn from those mistakes and make smart choices. Right now, during the election season, it is challenging to balance emotions and logic when making decisions. People talk a lot about their favorite leaders and political parties. But some think that it is not fair that only adults can vote. Some suggest letting kids as young as six votes to help them understand how democracy works. No matter what people say about "it is time for a change," we should vote thoughtfully as responsible citizens in a democracy. Let's promise to be well-informed voters this time, understanding what each party wants to do. Voting shouldn't be just about feelings; it should be a careful choice based on knowledge.

Before we vote, it is crucial to know what changes each party wants to make. This includes important things like the economy, helping people in need, creating jobs, legal and court matters, education, supporting women, dealing with other countries, farming, water and energy plans, taking care of the environment, healthcare, controlling the populationand protecting human rights. It is better to rethink our opinions if they're wrong instead of sticking to them blindly. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) wants the country to grow economically. They have big plans like increasing the economy by 6%, making exports worth \$60 billion every year and getting \$40 billion in remittances from people living abroad. They also want to improve infrastructure, make sure there's enough energy and boost the economy. PML-N promises to create 10 million jobs and reduce poverty from 38% to 25% in five years. They plan to lower electricity bills and strengthen ties with China. They aim to cut taxes for businesses, increase the tax money the government gets and sell off stateowned companies that are not making a profit. They also want to get rid of a government body called NAB and bring back certain parts of the Constitution. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has focused on helping poor people in their manifesto. They want to reduce poverty and hunger, protect the rights of minorities and marginalized groups and strengthen the country. PPP has five main goals for a new people's economy, including economic stability, more public and private investment, protecting vulnerable groups, managing money well and handling debt. They plan to double the income of workers, provide free electricity to the poorest people, use solar and wind energy, build 3 million houses for women in charge of their households and introduce special cards for different sectors. PPP wants to fund these plans by getting rid of unnecessary government offices, saving money through the 18th Amendment and ending subsidies. They also promise to protect the 18th Amendment, criminalize forced disappearances, hold intelligence agencies accountable, and change discriminatory laws. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) wanted to create a country inspired by Islamic values in their manifesto. They focus on following the law, good governance, justice, and accountability. PTI suggests changing the constitution to make the Prime Minister's election process different, reducing the time the National Assembly and Senate stay in power, and changing how Senators are elected. PTI wants to set up a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' to bring people together in the country. Other things PTI promises include tax changes, expanding free healthcare with the Sehat Card, bringing back the Ehsaas program and making a uniform education system. PTI emphasizes holding people accountable for white-collar crimes, creating special anti-corruption teams in each province and starting an elite anti-corruption academy. During the election campaigns happen, it was important to pay attention to party manifestos. These were the plans that political parties have for the country. It is crucial to check these plans independently and involve the public in the political process. Understanding the goals, policies and changes proposed by candidates in your area is important. Making an informed of the decision when you vote is not just for you but for the benefit of future generations. The vote has the power to make significant changes.

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WORLD / SPORTS



Maxwell shines as Australia triumphs over WI in T20

FROM PAGE 01

picks pace

security concerns to the increasingly urgent matter of climate change. The National Assembly comprises a total of 266 seats, with 133 seats needed for a party to secure a majority and form a government. Official results have been disclosed for 262 constituencies, reflecting a voter turnout of 45.49%, with 58,284,465 votes cast. Results for only two constituencies are still pending, while outcomes for NA-15, NA-46, NA-47, NA-48, and NA-88 constituencies have been withheld. Furthermore, elections for NA-8 have been postponed.

Zardari 'demands PM's slot...

FROM PAGE 01 Zardari offered, in exchange, the PPP would support the PML-N to make its government in Punjab. Newspaper reported that it learnt from the PML-N sources that former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif met former president Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal on Friday night and discussed the future coalition. Party sources said on Saturday the PML-N leaders had discussed different options for making the future government in Centre as well as in Punjab. In this regard, a meeting of PML-N leadership was held on Saturday, which was headed by Shehbaz Sharif.

MQM turns down reports...

FROM PAGE 01 secured 78 and 54 seats, respectively - meaning that either a hung parliament is in the making. Commenting on his party's interaction with the PML-N leadership in Lahore, Siddiqui, in a press conference in Karachi, categorically denied demanding the post of Sindh overnor for the MQM-P. "The news [reports circulating] in the media regarding government formation are not correct," he said while calling for the stakeholders to act beyond their respective political interests. Separately, speaking to the media. senior PML-N leader Azam Nazeer Tarar termed the MQM-P's delegation's visit a "goodwill gesture" and stressed that the party will decide on forming its government in the centre after consulting with its allies – whoever they may be.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ADELAIDE: Big-hitting Glenn Maxwell slammed a 50-ball century as Australia beat the West Indies by 34 runs in the second Twenty20 international to seal the series in Adelaide on Sunday. The 35-year-old was in ominous touch, blasting eight sixes and 12 fours in a blistering 120 not out from 55 deliveries. It propelled Australia to 241-4 and the visitors could only muster 207-9 in reply, led by skipper Rovman Powell's battling 63.

"It was good fun, that's for sure. Always good batting here, we saw in the Big Bash how good the wickets were during the tournament," Maxwell said.

Australia take just 6.5 overs to destroy woeful West Indies in 3rd ODI "The wicket was nice and true. I have always relied on my hand speed and it worked for me today. I give myself the best chance always and nice to play a positive knock." The hosts won the first clash in Hobart by 11 runs, with one match to play in



Perth on Tuesday. West Indies opener Johnson Charles hit a giant six off the first ball he faced in the run chase, knowing his team must come out swinging. A wicket maiden by Josh Hazlewood stymied the threat, with Brandon King caught on the ropes for five.

Nicholas Pooran then took apart the next over from Jason Behrendorff, smacking three sixes in a row, but he didn't last, spooning to midwicket on 18 as left-arm

quick Spencer Johnson picked up a wicket in his first home international. Marcus Stoinis removed Shai Hope (0) and Charles (24) in his first over to leave them on 62-4. Johnson collected his second of the night to remove Sherfane

Rutherford (0) and Stoinis got his third in Andre Russell (37 off 16), before Powell's 36-ball knock proved in vain. "The boys showed courage, they started aggressive but we keep losing wickets and in the middle we failed to get big partnerships," Powell said.

"But credit to the Australian guys, they bowled well." Earlier, Australian opener Josh Inglis lasted just six balls before being caught in the deep trying to hit Jason Holder out of the ground.

Skipper Mitchell Marsh whacked an enterprising 29 to propel the hosts to 58-2 off their power-play, but he tried one slog too many and was well caught at mid-on by Holder off Alzarri Joseph, with David Warner following soon after for 22. That brought Maxwell to the crease and he was looking for the boundary with every delivery, finding it frequently with a range of magnificent shots to reach a half-century off 25 balls. He shared an 82-run partnership with Stoinis (16) before being joined by fellow big-hitter Tim David (31 off

14) in a 95-run stand that saw him

bring up his fifth T20 century.

Egypt may suspend peacetreaty with Israel

Islamabad **POST**

Monday, February 12, 2024

FROM PAGE 01 have fled to Rafah to escape

fighting in other areas, and are packed into sprawling tent camps and UN-run shelters near the border. Egypt fears a mass influx of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who may never be allowed to return. The stand-off between Israel and Egypt, two close US allies, comes as aid groups warn that an offensive in Rafah would worsen the already catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, where around 80 percent of residents have fled their homes and where the UN says a quarter of the population faces starvation. Netanyahu, in an interview "This Week with George Stephanopoulos," suggested civilians in Rafah could flee north, saying there are "plenty of areas" that have been cleared by the army. He said

US lawmakers advise Joe Biden...

Israel is developing a "de-

tailed plan" to relocate them.

FROM PAGE 01 Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, Ranking Member Gregory Meeks and other prominent lawmakers in support of Pakistani democracy, we urge the Biden Administration and Congress to look into strong concerns of vote counting irregularities and ballot tampering," the committee's chairman stated. A senior member of the powerful House Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman Brad Sherman, said: "Press organisations in Pakistan should be free to report vote tabulations and there should be no unwarranted delay in announcing results." Along with that Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib stated, "We must stand with the Pakistani people as their democracy is at serious risk. They should be able to elect their leaders without interference and tampering with the process and the US must ensure our

Djokovic has his eyes on one specific goal in 2024

"From what I heard in Melbourne, he wasn't particularly well out there," he stated. "Maybe that led to him not being quite as engaged as he had been in previous years

PARIS: Novak Djokovic is a 24-time Grand Slam champion with over 100 career trophies but he will have 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, Diokovic has yet to secure an Olympic gold medal. Lester told Tennis365 that the

Dhoni reveals reason

behind choosing

jersey No. 7

ISLAMABAD: Former India captain and current Chennai

Super Kings (CSK) skipper MS Dhoni gave a humorous ex-

planation for selecting the number seven as his jersey num-

ber. He revealed that it corresponds to the day his parents

decided he would be born on Earth, making it an easy choice

for him to pick his jersey number. The No. 7 jersey holds

significant symbolism for Dhoni, who led India to World Cup

glory in 2007 (T20) and 2011 (ODI). In recognition of his

immense contributions to Indian cricket, the Board of Con-

trol for Cricket in India (BCCI) retired the No. 7 jersey in

December 2023. During a recent event, Dhoni was asked

to divulge the reason behind his choice of the number sev-

en. Renowned for his quick wit, the Indian cricket legend

provided the explanation at a promotional function. "That is

the time or day my parents decided I would come on earth.

So, I was born on the 7th of July. So July again, the seventh

month. 81 was the year so 8-1=7. So it was very easy for

me to go out there when they asked me, 'okay, what num-

ber do you want'," Dhoni said. Dhoni is widely regarded

as one of the finest white-ball cricketers in history. Hailing

from Ranchi, he initially gained recognition for his explosive

batting prowess before cementing his reputation as one of

the greatest finishers the game has seen. In his illustrious

career, the 42-year-old featured in 350 ODIs for India, accu-

mulating 10,773 runs at an impressive average of 50.57 and a

strike rate of 87.56, including 10 centuries and 73 half-centu-

ries. Dhoni also represented India in 90 Tests and 98 T20Is,

scoring 4,876 and 1,617 runs respectively. - Agencies



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 media person. "It is the only thing that I missing from his CV and he will tailor everything around that. When you have achieved everything and only

"For me, he is still the man to beat on a hard court when he is fully fit and motivated. He could easily win another four Slams over the next couple of years if he stays fit and the desire

is there. If he still has the passion to chase records and great records." Djokovic's recent loss to Jannik Sinner in the Australian Open semi-finals led to speculation about his diminishing dominance in men's tennis. However, this assessment may be premature for a player who was highly successful last year, winning three Grand Slams and reaching the final of the fourth. Lester also suggested that Djokovic may have struggled physically during his time in Melbourne, which could have contributed to a slight decline in his performance. "From what I heard in Melbourne, he wasn't particularly well out there," he stated. "Maybe that led to him not being quite as engaged as he had been in previous years. "Let's be honest, the level of motivation he has displayed for so long is going to tail off at some point. He's doing things at

We're not on Real Madrid's level: Michel

"We took points from Barca, but that's not our league, and Atletico – they are three giants." Girona beat both Barcelona and Atletico Madrid to become Los Blancos' main title rivals

MADRID : Girona coach Michel Sanchez admitted his team could not handle Real Madrid in a crushing 4-0 defeat at the Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday in La Liga. League leaders Madrid opened up a five-point gap on shock title challengers Girona, second. "Really we're not at that level, we can use this to improve," Michel told reporters. "When you face opponents of such a level, it lets you see what your reality is, a bit." Jude Bellingham struck twice for Madrid and Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo were also on target as Madrid dominated. Girona's only two league defeats this season have both come against Los Blancos, conceding seven against Carlo Ancelotti's side without reply across both matches. "We are still second, we're having an incredible season," added Michel. "We have to recognise that this league is not ours, and keep working ... we're a step or two away from being at Madrid's level, which is very high.

"We took points from Barca, but that's not our league, and Atletico - they are three giants." Girona beat both Barcelona and Atletico Madrid to become Los Blancos' main title 'We've seen a very powerful Real Madrid, and if they stay at this level it will be very hard for them to drop points and not end up as champions," added Michel. - Agencies

PTI looks towards COAS Asim..

FROM PAGE 01

the nation over the conduct of the February 8 polls, the army chief, on Saturday, said the nation needed stable hands and a healing touch to move on from the politics of anarchy and polarisation. Gen Munir had said that Pakistan's diverse polity and pluralism would be well-represented by a unified government of all democratic forces imbibed with national purpose. According to the military's media wing, the COAS had said the nation needs stable hands and a healing touch to move on from the politics of anarchy and polarisation, which does not suit a progressive country of 250 million people. "Elections are not a zero-sum competition of winning and losing but an exercise to determine the mandate of the people."

Daesh commander eliminated...

FROM PAGE 01 operation in which the 'ring leader' of the outlawed terrorist outfit was killed by the security forces. "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 extortion and was highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies.'

one final prize is missing, it would make sense to make it your priority.

Leach to miss

remaining

three India

Tests

DNA

NEW DELHI: England spin-

ner Jack Leach has been ruled

out of the remaining three

Tests against India with a left

knee injury, the country's

cricket board said Sunday.

The series is level at 1-1 after

two matches and will resume

in Rajkot for the third Test

starting Thursday. "Leach

sustained the injury during

England's first Test victory

in Hyderabad and missed the

second Test," the England

and ECB said in a statement.

India's Kohli to miss remain-

ing three England Tests

"England will not be calling

up a replacement," it added.

England, led by Ben Stokes,

won the opener to hand the

hosts just their fourth loss

at home since 2013 but Ro-

hit Sharma's team bounced

back in the next match with

a 106-run victory.

will stop happening for him." – DNA

his age that have never been done before

and at some point, you have to think it

Chinese cities cancel Argentina matches after Messi no-show

BEIJING: The sports bosses in China have cancelled two friendly matches featuring Argentina's Lionel Messi as the soccer star failed to make an appearance for his club Inter Miami in a Hong Kong exhibition match recently. Argentina had scheduled a tour of China from March 18 to 26, during which it was set to clash with Nigeria in Hangzhou and Ivory Coast in Beijing. But last week a high-profile friendly between Inter Miami and a select XI in Hong Kong led to criticism and calls for refunds, after Messi did not take to the field, citing injury. Some nationalist politicians and outlets have interpreted the no-show in the 4-1 Inter Miami win - and Messi's subsequent appearance at a similar match in Japan - as a snub to China, without offering evidence. "Beijing does not plan, for the moment, to organise the match in which Lionel Messi was to participate," the Beijing Football Association, which oversees football in the capital, said in a press release Saturday. The Hangzhou match had already been cancelled on Friday evening. "Given the reasons that everyone knows, according to the competent authorities, the conditions for the event to take place are not met," said the Hangzhou Sports Bureau. Widely considered the best player of his generation, Messi is a highly marketable sportsman who people around the world will pay top dollar to see, even in the twilight of his trophy-laden career. Spectators who had paid upwards of 1,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$125) to see the 36-year-old in the southern Chinese city chanted "Refund!" when he sat out the match, gave thumbs-down signs and drowned out the team's co-owner David Beckham with jeers as he tried to thank the crowd. The Hong Kong government demanded an explanation from the match's organisers, Tatler Asia. Tatler has since promised spectators a 50% refund. Just days after the no-show, however, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner played 30 minutes of a friendly match in Japan – causing outrage and accusations that he had singled out China. – Agencies

tax dollars don't go to anyone undermining that."

Independent candidates join PML-N

FROM PAGE 01 Independent candidates Raja Khurram Nawaz from NA-48, Barrister Aqeel Malik from NA-54, Pir Zahoor Hussain Qureshi from NA-146, Sardar Shamshir Mazari from NA-189 and Barrister Mian Khan Bugti from NA-253 announced joining the PML-N. Similarly, Khurram Wark from PP-48 and Muhammad Sohail from PP-240 also joined the PML-N. Meanwhile, Rana Fayyaz from Pasroor, who won in Punjab provincial constituency PP-49, also joined the PML-N. Barrister Aqeel in a video message congratulated his supporters and said his seat belonged to Nawaz Sharif, adding, "I congratulate our leadership Mian Nawaz Sharif, Mian Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz."

Countrywide protests against...

Bellingham's double guides Madrid to crush Girona England midfielder scores in each half before coming off with an injury

SPORTS DESK

MADRID: Jude Bellingham struck twice as leaders Real Madrid took control of La Liga with a punishing 4-0 win over second-placed Girona, opening up a five-point cushion. Vinicius Junior drove home the opener and then set up Bellingham for the second as Carlo Ancelotti's side dominated the Catalan minnows, leaving the surprise title contenders reeling. Bellingham tapped in the third after the break from close range but limped off with an ankle problem early in the second half. Rodrygo kept the goals flowing with a fine individual effort as the record 35-time Spanish champions taught Girona, in the top flight for only the fourth year in their history, a compelling lesson. Victory leaves Madrid 11 points clear of champions Barcelona, third, who host Granada on Sunday. "Jude is a star, he scores a lot of goals and I hope he can keep going," Vinicius told Real Madrid TV. "Jude has been the best this season, we're doing things well and we're happy because we're a family." Real Madrid coach Ancelotti reserved high praise for Vinicius, a constant thorn in Girona's side. "When he plays like this and with this attitude, he's the best in the world, in my personal opinion," said the Italian. Madrid's triumph was convincing,

with swagger but also sweat to keep the league's top goalscoring side quiet, despite significant injury absences.

Ancelotti started with a makeshift central defensive pairing of Dani Carvajal and Aurelien Tchouameni, with all four of the club's specialists in the position out.

"Today we beat the world record for centre-back injuries," joked Ancelotti. Girona were without the suspended Daley Blind and Yangel Herrera, as well as coach Michel Sanchez, watching on helplessly from a high vantage point as his team were dismantled. "When you face opponents of such a level, it lets you see what your reality is, a bit," admitted Michel, who said his team were still having an "incredible" season despite the result.



They started well against Madrid but conceded early in a thorough 3-0 home defeat in September, and committed the same mistake again at the Santiago Bernabeu. This time Vinicius broke the deadlock in only the sixth minute, cutting in from the left and bending a vicious strike beyond Paulo Gazzaniga and in at the far post.

Bellingham, who started the match level with Girona's Artem Dovbyk on 14 goals as the league's joint top scorer, doubled Madrid's lead. The England international rounded Gazzaniga and then stroked home from a tight angle after a superb Vinicius pass sent him hurtling in on goal. Bellingham tapped in his 16th of the season in La Liga early in the second half after

Gazzaniga could only tip Vinicius' shot into his path. It was his last contribution, Ancelotti quickly withdrawing him afterwards for an ankle injury which he iced.

Madrid face RB Leipzig in the Champions League on Tuesday and will hope he is fit, after Bellingham reached 20 goals in 29 games across all competitions.

However Los Blancos have plenty of other firepower if he needs to rest. Rodrygo rattled in the fourth after darting into the area as Girona collapsed - and perhaps their unlikely title bid has too. "All games are (important), but this one was a bit more so," Rodrygo told Real Madrid TV.

FROM PAGE 01 Jafarabad, Sohbatpur, Kalat, and Nushki. The protests transcended provincial borders, reaching Karachi, where Jamaat-e-Islami, JUI, and PTI announced demonstrations against claimed election manipulation. JUI plans protests in Sohrab Goth, Quaidabad, and Northern Bypass, while mobilizes Jamaat-e-Islami supporters at Stargate, Korangi, Shahrah Pakistan, UP Mor, Orangi, Hassan Square, Quaidabad, and Nazimabad. The PTI aims to rally outside the Election Commission office. Meanwhile, in Islamabad, the capital police has asserted that Section 144 is in force in the city and that legal action will be taken against any illegal assembly of people. "Some people are inciting illegal gatherings around the election commission office and other government institutions. It should be noted that incitement to gather is also a crime," it

said in a tweet on X.

BUSINESS / WORLD

Russia

prepares

economy for

prolonged

war:

07

Briefs EU chief warns Israeli operation risks humanitarian catastrophe



Israeli operation in Rafah would lead to 'unspeakable humanitarian catastrophe,' warns EU's foreign policy chief

News Desk

Stoltenberg BERLIN :Russia prepares its economy for a long war, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in an interview. "Because Russia is gearing its entire economy towards war, we also have to do more for our security," Stoltenberg said in an interview with the German daily Welt am Sonntag. Stressing that NATO is not looking for a war in Russia, he said: "But we have to prepare ourselves for a confrontation that could last decades." "If (Russian President Vladimir) Putin wins in Ukraine, there is no guarantee that Russian aggression will not spread to other countries," he said, adding that supporting Ukraine and investing to advance the alliance's military capabilities are the best defensive tools against Russia. "We need to restore and expand our industrial base more quickly so that we can increase deliveries to Ukraine and replenish our own stocks," the NATO secretary general said "This means switching from slow production in times of peace to fast production, as is necessary in conflict," he added. "NATO does not seek war with Russia, but we need to brace ourselves for potentially decades of confrontation," he added- Agencies

Finland approves 22nd military aid for Ukraine

ATHENS : Finland has approved the 22nd military aid package for Ukraine worth some 190 million (\$205 million), local media reported on Friday. The latest package would bring the total value of military aid packages Finland has approved for Ukraine since the war in Ukraine started almost two years ago to

ATHENS: EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned Saturday that a potential Israeli operation in Rafah would lead to a humanitarian catastrophe. "I echo the warning by several EU member states that an Israeli offensive on Rafah would lead to an unspeakable humanitarian catastrophe and grave tensions with Egypt," he wrote on X. "Resuming negotiations to free hostages and suspend hostilities is the only way to avert a bloodshed." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked the army Saturday to remobilize reserve soldiers in preparation for a ground offensive in Rafah in southern the Gaza Strip, Israeli media reported. Palestinians have sought refuge in Rafah as Israel has pounded the rest of the enclave following an Oct. 7 incursion by the Palestinian resistance group, Hamas. The ensuing

Israeli bombardment has killed more than 28,000 victims, caused mass destruction and shortages of necessities. The offensive has left 85% of Gaza's population internally displaced amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicine, while 60% of the enclave's infrastructure was damaged or destroyed, according to the UN. Last month, the International Court of Justice issued an interim order demanding Israel stop obstructing aid deliveries into Gaza and improve the humanitarian situation in the enclave following a lawsuit by South Africa that accused Tel Aviv of committing genocide. Menawhile, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE express concerns about Israel's plans to attack Rafah Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) condemned on Saturday the Israeli army's plans to attack Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry "expresses its deep concern about the Israeli occupation

forces' plans to attack the city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip after forcibly deporting its civilians." It reiterated Kuwait's stance that rejects "aggressive practices and displacement schemes against the Palestinian people." It also reaffirmed its position that urges "the international community and the Security Council to fulfill their responsibilities in protecting innocent Palestinian civilians." The agency encouraged "the activation of international accountability mechanisms to put an end to the ongoing Israeli violations of international law, humanitarian law, and legitimate international resolutions." Qatari "strongly condemned the Israeli threats to invade Rafah." Doha warned of "a humanitarian catastrophe in the city, which has become the last refuge for hundreds of thousands of displaced people inside the besieged enclave." It asked "the United Nations Security Council to urgently act to

prevent the Israeli occupation forces from invading Rafah and committing genocide in the city." Qatar reiterated its "firm rejection of attempts to forcibly displace the Palestinian people from Gaza." The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its "serious concern about the Israeli army's plans and preparations to launch a military operation in the densely populated area of Rafah, which is filled with displaced Palestinians." The UAE warned of "the serious humanitarian repercussions that Israeli military operations in Rafah may cause." It emphasized that such actions "threaten to cause further innocent fatalities and exacerbate the humanitarian disaster in the region." The UAE reiterated "its strong condemnation of any forced deportation of the Palestinian people and any practices that violate international legitimacy, international law, and humanitarian law." It called on "the international community to

exert all efforts, without delay, to achieve an immediate ceasefire to avoid further escalation of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanvahu ordered the military on Friday to submit a dual plan to evacuate Palestinian residents from Rafah, home to more than 1 million residents seeking refuge from war, and to defeat the remaining "Hamas battalions." Palestinians have sought refuge in Rafah as Israel pounded the rest of the enclave following an Oct. 7 incursion by the Palestinian resistance group, Hamas. The ensuing Israeli bombardment has killed 28.000 victims and caused mass destruction and shortages of necessities. The Israeli offensive has left 85% of Gaza's population internally displaced amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicine, while 60% of the enclave's infrastructure was damaged or destroyed, according to the UN.

Philippines landslide

toll jumps to 54 dead

MANILA: The death toll from a massive Philippine land-

slide near a gold mine abruptly rose to 54 on Sunday, lo-

cal officials said. Nineteen bodies were recovered from

beneath the rubble in the southern mountain village of

Masara on Sunday, with 63 other miners and residents

burn farming and illegal logging. Rain has pounded parts of

the southern region on and off for weeks, triggering dozens

of landslides and floods that have forced tens of thousands of

people into emergency shelters.-DNA

rape BRUSSELS : The European

IslamabadPOST

Monday, February 12, 2024

Union's pressure on Hungary to join Brussels in its all-out support for Kiev has become a "political rape" of Budapest, says an adviser to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Balazs Orban, an unrelated adviser to Hungary's leader, revealed to media that several EU leaders had directly contacted the Hungarian PM, threatening him to crash the Budapest economy if he blocked a 50 billion (\$54 billion) economic aid package Brussels had allocated to Kiev. RT reported on Saturday. citing Austria's Express newspaper. According to an article run by the Financial Times, the EU leadership sketched out plans to cut funding for Hungary, thereby hampering its ability to subsidize direct foreign investment and eventually crashing the value of its local currency, the Hungarian Forint, which is issued and overseen by the Hungarian National Bank. "Leading politicians called my prime minister and explained this to him openly," the adviser told the newspaper on Sat-urday. "We rejected this approach. It contradicts the basic idea of the EU. This is de-facto political rape.' "We...made it clear that we are not afraid," he told the newspaper. "We think the Hungarian economy is strong enough." Hungary's leadership has repeatedly argued against Ukraine's continued war against Russia. Orban has argued that Kiev cannot hope to defeat Moscow on the battlefield, saying that Brussels' anti-Russia bans hurt the bloc more than they damage the Moscow economy. "-APP

France revokes birthright citizenship in Mayotte

MAMOUDZOU: French authorities said Sunday they planned to revoke birthright citizenship on the Ocean island of Mayotte, the country's poorest overseas territory, which has been struggling with social unrest and a crippling migration crisis. Mayotte is composed of two islands that voted to stay part of France in 1973, while the others in the surrounding Muslim-majority archipelago sought independence, becoming the Comoros Islands. Thousands of Comorans fleeing the poverty and corruption of their homeland make the trip across to Mayotte in search of higher living standards every year. The influx has caused major tensions, with many locals on Mayotte complaining about crime and poverty. For the past three weeks activists have been staging strikes and erecting roadblocks to protest against the lack of security and the migration crisis.-Agencies

Iran-Lebanon ties should reach 'desirable level': FM

WEB DESK

TEHRAN : Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has called for the expansion of Tehran-Beirut relations to a "desirable level", highlighting strong political, religious, cultural and social commonalities between the two nations. Amir-Abdollahian, who was on an official visit to the Lebanese capital, made the comment in a meeting with Iran's ambassador and members of the Iranian Embassy as well as representatives of some Iranian institutions in Lebanon late on





in Lebanon," he said.

The Iranian foreign min-

ister also stressed the im-

portance of Lebanon's sta-

bility and security for the

Islamic Republic and the

impact of the Arab coun-

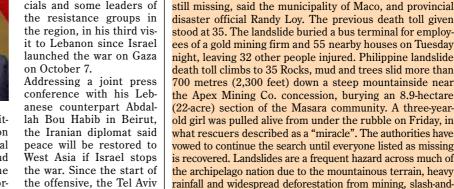
try's security on the en-tire region. He described

Iran's contribution to the

advancement of the political process in Lebanon and expansion of bilateral economic, commercial and political relations with the Arab country as the priorities of President Ebrahim Raeisi's administration. Amir-Abdollahian arrived in Beirut on Friday at the

head of a political delegation on the first leg of a regional tour to hold talks with senior Lebanese officials and some leaders of the resistance groups in the region, in his third visit to Lebanon since Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7. Addressing a joint press conference with his Leb-

the offensive, the Tel Aviv regime has killed at least 27.947 Palestinians and injured more than 67,459 others.



over 1.8 billion, the public broadcaster YLE noted. Finnish Defense Minister Antti Hakkanen said that the country is exploring long-term ways of supporting Ukraine. "There is a lot of know-how in the Finnish industrial sector and we are working to ensure that this know-how and capacity can be used more effectively to support Ukraine, as well,' he said. Hakkanen noted that one such area being explored is the country's domestic ammunition production. As in past aid packages, the country neither disclosed the contents and method of delivery nor the shipment schedule of the latest package .Finland is part of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, which consists of over 50 countries.-DNA

Saudi Arabia boosts digital economy with Nvidia

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's digital economy is poised for further growth following discussions between a top official and a multinational technology company aimed at strengthening their strategic partnership. The Kingdom's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Abdullah Al-Swaha's meeting with Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang aims to support and strengthen the region's digital economy, particularly in Saudi Arabia, recognized as the largest market for techni cal innovation in the Middle East and North Africa. The two also explored the potential role that generative artificial intelligence can play in supporting digital innovation and investment opportunities. During the reception, key topics of discussion included fostering innovation in deep technologies, optimizing the social and economic benefits of implementing generative artificial intelligence techniques, and seizing numerous opportunities in the digital sector. Last month, Al-Swaha emphasized the Kingdom's leadership in AI, highlighting the establishment of the region's inaugural GenAI Accelerator and The Garage, the largest deep technology business incubator in the region.-DNA

scandal

BUDAPEST : Hungarian President Katalin Novak resigned amid outrage about her pardoning a child sexual abuse convict.Novak faced pressure to resign because of her controversial decision last April to pardon Endre K., who was convicted of covering up crimes committed by a sexual predator at a children's home. Novak announced her resignation in a video message shared by Hungarian public broadcaster, M1. "I issued a pardon that caused bewilderment and unrest for many people ... I made a mistake," she said. "Protecting children is our common responsibility," added Hungary's first president.Several female officials resigned Endre K. was sentenced to more than three years in prison in 2018 for pressuring victims to retract their claims of sexual abuse in a staterun children's home. The director of the home was sentenced to eight years for abusing at least 10 children between 2004 and 2016. For-

Committee.Varga counter-

don last April.-APP



اللقاء الوزارب التشاورب السابع

7th MINISTERIAL CONSULTATION

DUBAI : Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to the UAE, representing Pakistan, in a group photo with other delegates during the 7th Ministerial Consultation of Abu Dhabi Dialogue on February 11, 2024. Pakistan is the current Chair of Abu Dhabi Dialogue.-DNA

Nigerian bank chief killed in US helicopter crash

It is in the home countries that so many migrants are so desperate to leave," he wrote, saying his university was an opportunity for him "to give back to society"

CALIFORNIA : The co-founder of Access Bank. one of the largest banks in Nigeria, was among six people killed in a helicopter crash in California. Herbert Wigwe, his wife, son, and a mer Justice Minister Judit former president of the Ni-Varga also resigned as an gerian stock exchange were MP and chairwoman of Parall killed in the crash. Presiliament's European Affairs dent Bola Tinubu described the death of Mr Wigwe as signed the presidential paran "overwhelming tragedy". Investigators are scouring

the site in southern Californian desert to determine the cause of the crash. The chartered helicopter was on its way from from Palm Springs to Boulder City in Nevada when it went down about 96km (60 miles) from Las Vegas. According to Nigerian media, the 57-year-old banker was on his way to Las Vegas to attend Sunday's Super Bowl. The San Bernardino county sheriff's department

said the crash site was near Nipton, on the edge of the Mojave Desert Preserve. The weather was poor, with reports of rain and snow showers in the area. Mr Wigwe founded Access Bank in 1989. It became the largest bank in Nigeria in 2018 after it acquired its main competitor, Diamond Bank. In recent years, Mr Wigwe had been working to expand across the continent, acquiring banks in

countries including Kenya, South Africa and Botswana. He was planning to open a new banking service in Asia in the first quarter of 2024. Tributes have been pouring in following the news of his death. President Tinubu said it was "shocking beyond comprehension". The president's office described his death as "a terrible blow" for Nigeria and Africa's banking industry. In a newspaper

Mr Wigwe said investing in higher education was key to controlling mass migration, which "is destabilising countries across the world" With that in mind, he was in the process of starting his own educational institute, Wigwe University. It was set to launch in September in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region, where he was from. "We need to take a holistic approach to address global migration, starting with our traditional framework for international development. The best place to limit migration is not in the middle of the Mediterranean or the English Channel or the Rio Grande. It is in the home countries that so many migrants are so desperate to leave.- Agencies

article in January this year,

Ukraine claims Russia used Starlink in battlefield

MOSCOW : Ukraine's military intelligence has claimed that it had confirmed Russian forces were using Elon Musk's satellite internet company Starlink's terminals on the battlefield, releasing what it said was an intercept of a conversation between two Russian soldiers as proof. It made the claim on the Telegram messaging app, where it posted a brief audio clip of the conversation. Zelenskyy promotes ex-deputy to lead Ukraine's ground forces Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has appointed Oleksandr Pavliuk, former first deputy defence minister, as the new commander of Ukraine's ground forces, according to a decree published on Sunday. Pavliuk, a lieutenant-general who served in the ministry role for a year, replaces Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi after he was tapped this week as commander of Ukraine's armed forces. On Saturday, Zelenskyy announced five other senior military appointments, filling out a rebooted team to bolster Ukraine's defence against Russia's nearly two-year-old invasion.-DNA

Israel-Hamas war 'devastating' Palestinian economy: IMF chief

The Israel-Hamas war has devastated the economies of both the embattled Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank

FOREIGN DESK

DUBAI: The Israel-Hamas war has devastated the economies of both the embattled Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, the International Monetary Fund's chief said Sunday, adding that only "durable peace" would improve the outlook. "The Palestinian economy's dire outlook is worsening as the conflict persists," managing director Kristalina Georgieva told the World Governments Summit in Dubai. "Only a durable peace and political solution will fundamentally change it". "Economically, the impact of the conflict has been devastating," Georgieva said. Palestinians brace for Rafah assault as Israel promises evacuation plan. In the war-ravaged coastal territory, economic activity dropped 80 percent from October through December compared with a year earlier, the IMF chief said. In the West Bank, the drop was 22 percent, she added. The larger Palestinian territory has been hit hard by Israel's withdrawal of 130,000 work permits, the proliferation of checkpoints



that has heavily disrupted transportation, the loss of tourism, being cut off from Gaza and Israel's withholding of tax revenues from the Palestinian Authority. The Gaza Strip has been under intense Israeli assault for over four months, in retaliation for the October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel. Hamas's unprecedented attack resulted in the deaths of about 1,160 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures. Israel vowed to

destroy the Palestinian group and launched air strikes and a ground offensive that have killed at least 28,176 people, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory. Georgieva spoke at the opening of the World Government Summit, an annual gathering of top business and political figures in the United Arab Emirates, which runs until Wednesday. Beyond the Palestinian territories, the Israel-Hamas war has also hit the tourism sectors of neighbouring countries such as Egypt and Lebanon, she said. Meanwhile, attacks on commercial shipping by Yemen's Houthi rebels, which the group says are in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, is leading to "rising freight costs and reduced Red Sea transit volumes (which are) down by nearly 50 percent this year in our PortWatch data," Georgieva said in her speech. For the Middle East and North Africa region as a whole, GDP growth is expected to improve from last year but will likely fall below earlier IMF projections, partially because of the Israel-Hamas war, the fund reported in its latest forecast last month. The IMF now sees the economies of the region expanding

2.9 percent this year, a decrease of half a percentage point from its October forecast. AI tsunami The IMF will publish on Monday a paper that shows phasing out energy subsidies could save \$336 billion in the Middle East, equivalent to the economies of Iraq and Libya combined, Georgieva said. Georgieva said that eliminating regressive energy subsidies also "discourages pollution, and helps improve social spending." In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, fossil fuel subsidies made up 19% of GDP in 2022, the IMF has said. It has recommended the gradual unwinding of energy subsidies for the region's economies, including oil exporters, and suggested targeted support as an alternative. Advanced technology, including artificial intelligence, is a key theme of focus at the World Governments Summit, with several top executives from major global tech firms due to speak, including Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI. Georgieva said globally, 40% of jobs are exposed to AI, and countries that lack the infrastructure and a skilled workforce to invest could fall behind.Regional economies such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE)







Briefs 'PTI in habit of not accepting its defeat

DNA

LAHORE: 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.

JUI-F alleges 'historic rigging' in Feb 8 polls

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: JUI-F Secretary General Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, in a

New President to be elected also **Indonesian nationals living in** Pak vote for general elections

This early voting was held for the upcoming general elections in Indonesia scheduled to be held on 14 February 2024



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Committee for the Indonesian General Elections with the support of the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad conducted an advance polling event at the premises of the Embassy. This early voting was held for the upcoming general elections in Indonesia scheduled to be held on 14 February 2024. The event provided an opportunity for the Indonesian nationals in Pakistan to participate in the electoral process as well as fostered a sense of community and camaraderie among the Indonesians and their families. The elections in democratic Indonesia will determine not only the new President and Vice President but also parliamentary and local representatives.

On this occasion, the Embassy made befit-



ting arrangements to facilitate more than 800 citizens along with their families from all provinces of Pakistan to participate in voting process including Islamabad Capital Territory. While another approximately 200 Indonesian nationals will exercise their democratic right to vote in the Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi on this Sunday. In addition to serving as a platform for

exercising political rights, the event transcended its primary purpose and evolved into a vibrant social gathering. Attendees, both old acquaintances and new friends, seized the opportunity to reconnect, share stories, and celebrate the joyous occasion together. The atmosphere was filled with laughter, music, and the taste of Indonesian cuisine as participants enjoyed the bazaar featuring food stalls, a musical event, health facilities, and a children's play area.



"This event is designed not only as a political event, but also as a moment of sharing happiness for Indonesians despite political differences," said Mr. Arrozi M. Munib, Head of Indonesian General Elections Committee in Islamabad. "The ballot process was done smoothly with no significant hurdles on the ground," added Mr. Zulfikar Alamsyah, Head of General Elections Supervisory Committee. Moreover, the Embassy extended invitations to Pakistani think tanks and journalists, highlighting the significance of the electoral process in fostering strong democratic ties between Indonesia and Pakistan and further amplified the message of cross-border cooperation and mutual respect.

One of the distinctive features of the event was the marking of voters' fingers with special purple ink, symbolizing their active participation in the electoral process.



This visible demonstration of civic duty underscored the commitment of voters to shaping the future of their homeland through democratic means. Expressing his views on the election arrangements, Ms. Solehatun from Haripur expressed her gratitude to those involved in the general election process particular the Embassy and all Committees for efficiently organizing the voting process ensuring a smooth and democratic experience for all. "It was no tense faces. All I saw were smiles and happiness," said Babar, a Pakistani national from Gujran wala, who accompanied his Indonesian wife during the event. The Embassy's meticulous attention to security ensured that voters felt safe and secure throughout the electoral process, contributing to the overall success of the event.

Indonesia set for presidential vote on Wednesday Ex-general and sitting

defense minister tipped to win

JAKARTA: Indonesians vote in a presidential election Wednesday with De-fence Minister Prabowo Subianto the clear favourite after a campaign mixing nationalist rhetoric and pledges to continue the era of popular outgo-ing leader Joko Widodo.

The former general lost to Widodo in 2014 and 2019 but is on course to finally lead the world's third-largest democracy after rehabilitating his image. Widodo is constitutionally barred from running for a third term but his popularitv hit all-time highs last year with polls showing he would have likely won another election.

Instead he is playing kingmaker for his defence chief and eldest son, who have joined forces on the same ticket. Polls project Subianto to win a majority from nearly 205 million Indonesians who will dip their finger in halal ink at more than 800,000 polling stations across the volcano-dotted archipelago. - APP

Rupee expected to trade in narrow range

It is widely expected to seek a bailout from IMF after new government takes charge

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The rupee is expected to trade in a narrow range in the coming weeks, as healthy dollar supplies from exporters offset the political uncertainty after a split election result, analysts and traders said on Saturday. The rupee gained slightly against the greenback in the interbank market this week, closing at 279.28 on Friday, compared with 279.42 on Tuesday. The market was closed on Monday for Kashmir Day and on Thursday for the general elections. The polls, which were marred by allegations of rigging and violence, produced a hung parliament, with no clear winner among the three main parties.

Israeli war crimes continue as death toll passes 28,000 Raisi calls for 'Ísrael's' **News Desk** expulsion from UN GAZA CITY: The Palestinian health ministry in Gaza said

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi has restated Tehran's steadfast backing for the Palestinian

Party but don't touch **Rio works to** make carnival safer for wome

The January poll of 1,500 people found that 50 percent of women surveyed said they had suffered some form of aggression in previous carnivals

statement on Saturday, said JUIF chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman would soon convene a meeting of the Central General Council to decide the future action plan. He said leaders of national mainstream parties were forcibly defeated while little-known candidates were helped to win their constituencies. Mobile phone service was shut down on the polling day to achieve the desired result.

Why the Election Commission of Pakistan was so helpless, he asked, adding that the commission set new traditions. This, he said, also happened in the 2013 and 2018 general elections. He questioned why the ECP was bent upon giving the country an unelected government containing people who would act as showpieces. Meanwhile, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has called a meeting of the central working committee and senior leaders in Islamabad on February 14. The meeting will discuss the situation arising out February 8 elections, the party spokesman in a statement said.

ECP bars ROs to issue final results of 26 seats

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has barred the Returning Officers (ROs) to issue the final results of several National Assembly and provincial assembly seats. A four-member bench headed by chief election commissioner held the hearing of alleged alteration in the election result of NA-48. "We were ahead with the lead of 50,000 votes as per the Form-45 but the Returning Officer issued the Form-47 and changed our victory into defeat," the counsel of PTI candidate Ali Bukhari argued. The ECP issued notice to the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party backed candidate Raja Khurram Nawaz and barred the RO to issue the final notification of NA-47 and NA-48. Meanwhile, ECP also barred the ROs to issue the final results of PK-73, PK-79, PK-80 and PK-82. PTI backed TaimoorJhagra and Kamran Bangash had challenged the results from PK-79 and PK-82 respectively.

a brief statement, the health ministry said that the death toll from the ongoing Israeli bombardments, which started on October 7, climbed to 28,176 martyrs and the number of the wounded surged to 67,784 people. Every day, the Israeli army escalates its air and ground attacks on the Gaza Strip, which has been under relentless bombardment since a cross-border operation was launched by Hamas's

on Tuesday that the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) com-

mitted 14 new horrific massacres in different areas of the

Gaza Strip, killing at least 112 civilians and injuring over

173 others, while a large number of victims are still un-

der the rubble of bombed buildings or lying on roads. In

armed wing, al-Qassam Brigades, on October 7. Besides the large number of casualties and the huge displacement of people, basic food, fuel, water and medical supplies have run out for the 2.3 million residents in Gaza due to the tight Israeli blockade and the massive destruction of infrastructure and facilities. Meanwhile, The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has warned of the consequences of any military operation or attack on the city of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, stating that there is no other place for people to go.

people, emphasizing that Palestine remains at the vanguard of causes in the Muslim world, echoing the famous words of the Islamic Republic's founder, Avatollah Ruhullah Khomeini. Speaking at a large gathering in Tehran on the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, Raisi called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and highlighted that Western powers exerted strained efforts to deter Iran from supporting Palestine, but their attempts ended in failure. "The Westerners tried so hard to make Iran stop defending Palestine and the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, whether through war or economic blockade and sanctions, and repeatedly sent messages saying 'stop defending Palestine," he said. "The Islamic Republic of Iran is flagbearer of the fight against terrorism. What is happening today in Gaza and Palestine is enough for everyone to know US and Zionist regime.

RIO DE JANEIRO: Avoid being alone in a crowd, opt for canned drinks over potentially drugged cocktails, scan a QR code to access emergency resources - as Rio enters carnival season, there has been a flood of advice on how women can stay safe. The "cidademaravilhosa," or wonderful city of Rio, on Friday officially inaugurated its emblematic festival, becoming the scene of countless street parties, the traditional "blocos" that can draw hundreds of thousands of people. But there is a dark underside to all the joyful dancing, partying and music: a surge in cases of sexual harassment and rape. A recent survey by the Locomotiva Research Institute found that 73 percent of women in Brazil fear being sexually harassed during the public celebrations. The January poll of 1,500 people found that 50 percent of women surveyed said they had suffered some form of aggression in previous carnivals. - Agencies

Explosion injures 7 in Karachi hospital Refrigerator's compressor exploded in store

room of emergency department, says BDS

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: According to the rescue officials, the incident occurred inside the emergency ward of Sindh Government Hospital in the city's Liaquatabad area.

"Soon after the blast, fire engulfed the entire ward [within no time]," the officials said. The hospital administrator also confirmed that at least seven people, including a twoyear-old child, were injured in the explosion.

After being informed, rescue teams rushed to the hospital and extinguished the fire. Dr Attique, the hospital's Medical Superintendent (MS), said that an emergency had

been imposed in the hospital, adding that the medical staff and the patients were being moved to another location. Meanwhile, Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori sought a detailed report from the MS about the explosion. He also prayed for the early recovery of the injured. Caretaker Sindh Health Minister Dr Khalid Niaz also sought a report about the incident and directed the concerned authorities to provide the best medical facilities to the injured. As per the bomb disposable squad, a refrigerator's compressor exploded due to a short circuit in the store room of the emergency department. The explosion injured "few people" and caused "minor damage", the report added

Trump 'encourages' Russia to attack non-paying Nato allies

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump has said he would "encourage" Russia to attack any Nato member that fails to pay its bills as part of the Western military alliance. At a rally on Saturday, he said he had once told a leader he would not protect a nation behind on its payments, and would "encourage" the aggressors to "do whatever the hell they want". Members of Nato commit to defend any nation in the bloc that gets attacked. The White House called the comments "appalling and unhinged". Addressing crowds during the rally in South Carolina, Mr Trump said he had made his comments about Russia during a meeting of leaders of Nato countries. He recalled that the leader of a "big country" had presented a hypothetical situation in which he was not meeting his financial obligations within Nato and had come under attack from Moscow.

Mr Trump said the leader had asked if the US would come to his country's aid in that scenario, which prompted him to issue a rebuke. "I said: 'You didn't pay? You're delinquent?'... 'No I would not protect you, in fact I would encourage them to do whatever they want. You gotta pay." A White House spokesman said the former president was "encouraging invasions of our closest allies by murderous regimes", and labelled the comments "appalling and unhinged". He added that the statement "endangers American national security, global stability and our economy at home". Mr Trump, the favourite to run again as the Republican candidate in this year's US presidential election, has long been critical of Nato and what he sees as an excessive financial burden on the United States to guarantee the defence of 30 other nations.

Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, after Mr Trump left office. He has since bemoaned the amount of US money sent to Ukraine, which is not a Nato member. The US has provided Ukraine with more financial support than any other country - totalling more than \$44bn (£34bn) since the 2022 invasion, according to White House figures from December. However, Republicans in Congress have since the turn of the year blocked all new funding - demanding tough measures to restrict migration into the US on its southern border, and then refusing the amended bill when it was presented earlier this week. Mr Trump celebrated that rejection during Saturday's rally, saying the proposals made by President Biden had been "disastrous". The two issues have now been successfully separated, meaning that senators are now able to debate the aid money separately. - Agencies



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