

Islamabad POST

Saturday, March 02, 2024

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Alvi for enhanced coop between Pak-Baku audit institutions

Detailed News On Page-08

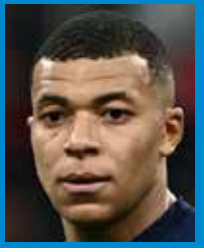
Galloway wins Rochdale by-election

Detailed News On Page-08



Mbappe set to play final time with PSG

Detailed News On Page-06



Big blow for coalition govt

Fazl says no to PML-N's offer

Both leaders hold hour-long one-on-one meeting at JUI-F chief's residence to discuss political situation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Friday rejected PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif's offers of 'important positions' and announced to sit in opposition "for now", a private news channel reported, citing sources. In a significant move preceding Sunday's premiership elections in the National Assembly, Nawaz Sharif, the Supreme Leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), paid a visit to the residence of Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F). The meeting underscored a dialogue between the two former coalition partners as they navigate the political landscape. During the meeting today Maulana Fazlur Rahman once again refused to be part of the coalition government. Sources quoting Fazl said he refused to make promises immediately and decided to consult the party members. Sources claimed that the PML-N offered JUI-F important positions in the Centre - which was rejected by Fazlur Rehman. "Who is answerable to the injustice done to us in the recently-held polls," he asked. Rejecting the offer, Fazlur Rehman said that they have decided to sit in opposition for now. Welcoming Nawaz Sharif along with other prominent members of the PML-N, including Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal, and Rana Sanaullah, Maulana Fazlur Rehman extended a warm reception. Representing the JUI-F were Ghulam Ali, Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, and Noor Alam Khan. Sources privy to the discussions revealed that Nawaz Sharif and Maulana Fazlur Rehman engaged in a one-on-one meeting lasting for about an hour. The deliberations primarily centred on political matters, concluding with both leaders departing in an amiable mood. Addressing the media post-meeting, Rana Sanaullah, a senior leader of the PML-N, expressed satisfaction with the outcome. "We have endured challenging times together and have consistently sought guidance from Maulana Fazlur Rehman," he stated. "Our association has weathered the storm during the PTI government, with Maulana's support."

Continued on Page 06

PML-N's Ayaz Sadiq elected NA speaker

Sadiq gets 199 votes; PPP's Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah gets elected as deputy speaker, bags 197 votes

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Sardar Ayaz Sadiq was elected as the National Assembly speaker on Friday, while Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah was elected as the deputy speaker. Sadiq became the 23rd speaker of the parliament's lower house after he bagged 199 votes, defeating Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) candidate Malik Aamir Dogar, who bagged 91 votes. Outgoing speaker Raja Parvez Ashraf administered the oath to Sadiq, while the newly-elected speaker administered the oath to Shah. After the oath-taking, the new speaker thanked the leaders of all major political parties for reposing trust in his leadership. In his address to the lawmakers, Sadiq assured the opposition members of running the affairs of the house with fairness. "I am thankful to Allah (SWT) for being elected for the third time in this position. I am thankful to PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif for nominating me," he said.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Nawaz Sharif, the Leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), pays a visit to the residence of Maulana Fazlur Rehman, chief of JUI-F along with other party leaders. - DNA

Establishment has no role in politics: Achakzai

Calls upon political parties to join hands for parliament supremacy

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pashatunkhwa Milli Awami Party chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai has urged all political stakeholders to pass a resolution to ensure supremacy of parliament, saying that some people want to make it 'animals market'. Speaking on the National Assembly (NA) floor, Achakzai said that Pakistan was passing through difficult times, underscoring the importance of ensuring supremacy of parliament. "Today is the first day of the National Assembly, you all [PPP, PML-N and PTI] should now pass four resolutions that parliament will be the source of

Continued on Page 06

Health card facility to resume New KP CM declares jihad against corruption

Newly elected chief minister Ali Amin Gandapur says PTI is not against institutions but everybody has to remain in its domain

SHAMIM SHAHID / DNA

PESHAWAR: ALI AMIN GANDAPUR has been elected as the Chief Minister of KP. He got 90 votes. JUI f did not take part in the election process. Gandapur in his speech called upon the relevant quarters to immediately set his leader Imran Khan free. He said Imran Khan was implicated in false cases. Ali Amin Gandapur declared jihad against corruption. He and all members vowed on oath that nobody from the members of the provincial members would involve in corruption. He also made it clear to government officers that those involved in corruption and bribe shall have to face serious consequences. He said we have to change this system. He said PTI is not against institutions but everybody has to remain in its domain. He thanked the voters who despite all odds voted for PTI.

Continued on Page 06

Bugti nominated 'unopposed' for Balochistan CM

Election for chief minister's post to be held today

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) candidate Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has been nominated unopposed for the Balochistan CM's post as no other candidate has filed nomination papers till the expiry of the deadline on Friday at 5pm, according to Balochistan Assembly secretary Tahir Shah Kakar. However, the assembly would hold polling for

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

PTI vows to hold protest across country

Again asks ECP to allocate reserve seats to PTI

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson termed the election of Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Prime Minister from the fake incomplete National Assembly without the allocation of the reserved seats for women and minorities as unconstitutional. Reacting over the election of the NA Speaker and Deputy Speaker sans allocation of the reserved seats, PTI Spokesperson stated that the speaker and deputy speaker elected with the help of the mandate thieves would not have any constitutional status.

Khaqan Abbasi Launches new political party

Public service to top party agenda

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader and former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, after parting ways with PML-N, announced to set up a new political party to promote public service agenda. Talking to media, ex-PM requested all political parties to refrain from labeling each other as corrupt. He lamented that during general elections not even a single political party spoke about public issues instead they followed the discourse of pleasing the non-political elements.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

British HC calls on CM

Maryam slaps total ban on postings, transfers

British HC praises Maryam Nawaz's commitment to modernize Punjab



ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has slapped a ban on any kind of postings and transfers in the province. According to a notification issued by Secretary to the CM on Friday, officers and staff performing their duties on all posts cannot be posted or transferred till further orders. If need arises permission sought from the chief minister through a summary,

elaborating reasons which necessitate the posting or transfer. The chief minister's order will come into force at once. Maryam Nawaz chaired a special meeting to review recommendations for the creation of Punjab's first authentic database hub and database authority. With the help of authentic and comprehensive data, government will be able to launch better social and economic policies.

Continued on Page 06

ECP announces schedule for presidential poll

Candidates can submit nomination papers by March 2 before 12pm

FAISAL SEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday issued the notice and schedule for the presidential election slated for March 9. "In pursuance of the provisions contained in paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Second Schedule of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 read with clauses (3) and (4) of Article 41 of the

Continued on Page 06

Pak condemns massacre of Palestinians by Israeli forces

Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Mao Ning said on Friday that Beijing was shocked by the incident and strongly condemned the killings

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has strongly condemned massacre by Israeli forces of unarmed Palestinians who were waiting for food delivery in Gaza. In her weekly media briefing in Islamabad, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said this massacre demonstrates a blatant disregard for international humanitarian law and Israel's deliberate and inhuman policy of mass starvation. She said Pakistan reiterates its call for immediate and urgent ceasefire, lifting of the inhuman siege and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. The Spokesperson said Israel must also face justice for its crime against humanity being perpetrated with impunity against the Palestinian people. On the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan denounces the decision by Indian authorities to ban the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir Bhat Faction and Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir Sumji Faction while extending the current ban on Jamaat-Islami Jammu and

Continued on Page 06

Gaza's health system 'on its knees': WHO

NEWS DESK

GENEVA: People in the Gaza Strip are risking their lives to find food, water and other supplies such as the level of hunger and despair amid the unrelenting Israeli assault, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Friday. "The system in Gaza is on its knees, it's more than on its knees," WHO spokesperson Christian Lindmeier told reporters in Geneva. "All the lifelines in Gaza have more or less been cut." Lindmeier said this had created a "desperate situation," as seen on Thursday, when more than 100 people seeking humanitarian aid in Gaza were killed. Gaza health authorities said Israeli forces shot dead the Palestinians as they waited for an aid delivery.

Continued on Page 06

Governor presented Punjab govt audit report

LAHORE: Deputy Auditor General (Central) Tariq Bashir Chatha called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman and presented the Accounts and Audit Report of the Punjab government for the year 2023-24 during a meeting at the Governor's House here on Friday. Governor Balighur Rehman said the Auditor General's Department had an important role in improving transparency and governance in the government departments. He said those departments that are not being audited for any reason should be made part of the audit system. The governor said the use of modern technology including management information system is indispensable for increasing the efficiency of the institution. DAG (Central) Tariq Bashir told the governor about the steps taken to improve the institution. —DNA

APNS annual general council meeting on Saturday

DNA

KARACHI: "The Annual General Council of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society will meet on Saturday, March 02, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. at APNS House, Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Karachi", stated a press release of the APNS. The Annual General Council will discuss the conditions prevailing in the newspaper industry and take decisions to address the problems faced by the member publications and will finalize its recommendations on the issues pertaining to the Govt. — Press relations, freedom of press and the future of the industry. The members will consider and adopt the report of the Executive Committee for the year 2023-2024, approve audit report for Annual Accounts for the year 2023 and elect members to the Executive Committee for the year 2024-2025. The new Executive Committee will elect its office bearers for the new term. The meetings of the General Councils will be attended by full members only. The Secretary General, APNS has requested publishers of full member publications to attend the above Council meeting positively."

Polio eradication campaign launched in Abbottabad district

ABBOTTABAD : The polio eradication campaign is set to take place from March 3 to 7, 2024, in Abbottabad district. The formal inauguration of the campaign was led by Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad, Khalid Iqbal on Friday, who administered polio drops and vitamin drops to children, marking the commencement of the initiative. Following the official launch, the DC also convened a meeting to discuss staffing, material provision and security arrangements for the campaign. —APP

ASP Sheherbano gets royal invitation to visit KSA

The top Saudi diplomat extended the invitation during a meeting with woman police officer at the Saudi embassy where a special ceremony was arranged in her honour

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Saudi Arabia Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki has invited ASP Syeda Shehrbano Naqvi and her family to a royal visit to the Kingdom in recognition of her heroic act to save a woman from a mob in Lahore. The top Saudi diplomat extended the invitation during a meeting with woman police officer at the Saudi embassy where a special ceremony was arranged in her honour. He also lauded her bravery and assured her that the Saudi government would cover the expenses for her and her family royal journey to Saudi Arabia. He praised ASP Syeda Shehrbano for her dedication to duty and her professionalism in handling the charged mob and saving the woman. Earlier, the daring woman officer called on Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, at General Headquarters, on Thursday. A statement shared by the Ar-

my's media wing said COAS Asim Munir hailed ASP Shehrbano for her selfless devotion to duty and professionalism in diffusing a vol-

atile situation. ASP Bano rescued a woman from a charged mob in the famous market located in the provincial capital in February 26,



2024. The top general acknowledged her role of Pakistani women, saying they have distinguished themselves at home and abroad, by virtue of their talent, tenacity and commitment. Gen Asim highlighted that the women are an invaluable part of Pakistan's society and their respect is enshrined in our religion as well as our social ethos. Army Chief also underscored the importance of social harmony and the need for nationwide consensus on curbing intolerance. He emphasized upon the rule of law and advised against taking the law in one's hands when legal avenues are available for addressing concerns and grievances. Noting that arbitrary actions on the basis of heresy undermine the outlook of the society, COAS underlined Islam's eternal message of kindness and benevolence. Gen Asim appreciated the sacrifices rendered by the law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety and security of the citizens of Pakistan.

WAGASHI, Ikebana exhibitions

ITO Takeshi lauds aesthetic exhibits, aims for cultural unity

Mr. ITO Takeshi hoped that through these exhibitions more and more Pakistani people can enjoy the Japanese culture which will lead to strengthen the bond of friendship between Japan and Pakistan

DNA

LAHORE: To experience and learn about the rich cultural diversity and aesthetic beauty of Japan, the Embassy of Japan in Pakistan in collaboration with the Pakistan-Japan Cultural Association (PJCA) Lahore and Lahore Sogetsu Study Group showcased the exhibitions of Wagashi (traditional Japanese sweets) and Ikebana flower arrangement, two of Japan's most cherished cultural traditions spanning over centuries of history. Wagashi exhibition titled "Wagashi Art of the 5 Senses" presented the pleasantly colored dainty pieces of confectionery called the art of the five senses as they are works of art designed to appeal all the senses with their appearance, flavor, aroma, feel and the sounds of their names. While reflecting the various aspects of nature and the changing seasons, Wagashi sweets are exquisitely shaped and crafted earning them the name of edible art which are traditionally served as an accompaniment to the Japanese tea ceremony. Mr. ITO Takeshi, Charge d' Affaires of the Embassy of Japan in Pakistan, inaugurated the two exhibitions which represented the essence of Japanese traditions and culture. Mr. YAMAZAKI Tetsuya, the Chef of the Embassy of Japan, on the occasion skillfully demonstrated the art of preparing a variety of beautiful and delicious wagashi sweets, using traditional ingredients and techniques. With his artistic skills and aesthetic sense, Mr. Yamazaki elaborately spoke



about the cultural significance of Japanese confectionery that are not only used at different celebrations and rituals in Japan but also represent the changing seasons. His presentation won great applause from the attendees. The Ikebana exhibition by the students and teachers of Lahore Sogetsu Study Group, exhibited their spring arrangements titled "Mughal Architecture through the eyes of Sogetsu Ikebana". The floral designs by the teachers and students displayed have

taken their inspiration from the numerous Floral Frescoes of the monuments of the Walled City, namely Lahore Fort, Sheesh Mahal, Badshahi Masjid, Wazir Khan Masjid, Shahi Hammam to name a few. Ms. Neveen Syed, Director Sogetsu Study Group, gave live Ikebana demonstration on the occasion which was inspired through her inspirational tour of the various historical monuments in Lahore. Explaining to the viewers, Ms. Neveen said that this kind of an exhibition where his-



tory is linked with flowers, is the first of its kind in Lahore, where floral artists of Ikebana have expressed their feelings through the meditative art of Sogetsu Ikebana, spreading peace and harmony and friendship through flowers. Mr. Ito, while speaking on the occasion, deeply appreciated the aesthetically pleasing exhibitions of wagashi and Ikebana arrangements, and hoped that through these exhibitions more and more Pakistani people can enjoy the Japanese culture which

will lead to strengthen the bond of friendship between Japan and Pakistan. He said that it is always a pleasure to visit the beautiful city of Lahore that is culturally so rich and vibrant yet has an aura of historical significance for its people. He commended the hard work of Japanese Ambassador's Chef Mr. Yamazaki Tetsuya, who has especially come from Islamabad to present before Pakistani audience a rare glimpse into Wagashi, the art of 5 senses. Mr. Ito expressed his special appre-

ciation for the Lahore Sogetsu Study Group who have dedicated and supported to organize these exhibitions successfully in Lahore and also for displaying beautiful Ikebana floral arrangements during His Majesty the Emperor's birthday celebration in Islamabad last week. He also thanked Mr. Amir Shirazi, Honorary Consul General of Japan at Lahore and Dr. Ghazal Irfan, President of PJCA Lahore, for their continued support and efforts for holding various cultural events in Lahore.

Pharma industry targets Africa, Central Asia, Afghanistan to increase exports

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr. Nadeem Jan has said that despite the short time, he made strenuous efforts to bring reforms in the health sector. Several steps were taken, including the digitization of DRAP, a new policy for the prices of medicines, and the search for new markets to promote exports. He said that Pakistan's pharma sector has the potential to expand the country's exports. The industry should focus on exports to countries in Central Asia, Africa, and Afghanistan. He expressed these views while talking

to President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and other members during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). The federal minister said that it was his mission to bring reforms in the health sector. He said that he worked day and night for the country's pride he took practical steps to increase pharma exports for the betterment of the economy and took the Pharma Park project forward. He said that this project is of key importance to the industry, this project will promote the pharma industry. He said that the business community should play its proper role in the health sector. The services of the business community for the poor and needy people in

hospitals should be exemplary. He said that philanthropists and investors in society should cooperate with the government in providing healthcare facilities to poor patients. On the occasion, ICCI President Ahsan Bakhtawari appreciated the performance of the caretaker government and stressed that the next government should continue these positive policies. He presented several proposals for cooperation between the ICCI and the Ministry of Health. The ICCI president praised the digitalization process of DRAP. He stressed the need for the construction of nursing colleges in big cities, including Islamabad, in collaboration with the ICCI. He said that Japan, Europe, and the US need millions of

trained nurses every year, while Pakistan is not even able to produce nurses to meet its own needs. He said that the government should pay special attention to this sector. Special institutes for the training of nurses should be set up in big cities, including Islamabad, in collaboration with the ICCI. He said that both the big hospitals in Islamabad are facing severe problems. He proposed that the business community should be given representation on the hospitals' boards. Transparency should be brought in funding, tendering, and financing. He agreed with the federal minister's proposals for the provision of medicines to patients in government hospitals and the provision of Iftar and Sehri during Ramadan.

ISSI hosts public talk on Science Diplomacy in South Asia

ISLAMABAD : The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a public talk, titled "Pakistan's Opportunity for Science Diplomacy in South Asia" on March 01, 2024. Dr. Saleem H. Ali, Chair, Department of Geography, University of Delaware, USA was the keynote speaker. The talk provided significant insights into the opportunities available for Pakistan to conduct successful and effective Science Diplomacy, including in the South Asian region. Featuring as Discussant, Additional Secretary (PP/ACDIS) Mr. Kamran Akhtar highlighted the progress made by Pakistan within the context of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Science Diplomacy initiative. Director CSP, Dr. Neelum Nigar, welcomed the participants to the discussion, underscoring the subject's significance for the region. In his welcome remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the importance of Science Diplomacy (SD) in today's interconnected world and lauded the Foreign Office's SD initiative which served as a key platform for facilitating the interface between the national science & technology stakeholders and international partners. He noted that this was helping to foster beneficial collaboration on key areas of focus with the relevant institutions, international organisations, and countries. Pakistan was also leveraging Science Diplomacy to implement SDGs. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood added that science diplomacy in South Asia offers the chance to address common environmental challenges and help enhance technological innovation and economic growth. Collaborative research and development projects can lead to the creation of new technologies, improved infrastructure, and increased scientific capacity in the region. Dr. Saleem H. Ali delivered a compelling presentation in which he outlined the pivotal role of science diplomacy, emphasizing how collaborative scientific efforts can transcend national boundaries to foster peace and sustainable development. He underscored Pakistan's unique position, given its rich scientific heritage and strategic geographical location, suggesting that the country can play a leading role in utilizing science for diplomatic endeavours on a global scale, not just within South Asia. —DNA

LESCO recovers Rs 2.59b from 86,871 defaulters

LAHORE : The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has recovered more than Rs 2.59 billion from 86,871 chronic defaulters in its five districts - Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara - during 165 days of its recovery campaign. LESCO spokesman told the media here Friday that during the 165 days, the LESCO, under the supervision of Director (Customer Services) Rai Muhammad Asghar, has recovered outstanding dues of Rs 370.79 million from 12,356 defaulters in Northern Circle; Rs 611.63 million from 11,068 defaulters in Eastern Circle; Rs 342.66 million from 9,810 defaulters in Central Circle; Rs 144.80 million from 5,119 defaulters in South Circle; Rs 210.80 million from 7,639 defaulters in Nankana Circle; Rs 388.93 million from 10,495 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle; Rs 165.09 million from 13,878 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 356.21 million from 16,506 defaulters in Kasur Circle. On the 165th consecutive day of recovery campaign, he mentioned, the LESCO has recovered more than Rs 9.7 million from 379 dead defaulters in its all circles of operation. He elaborated that SE (Superintending Engineer) Nisar Sarwar has recovered outstanding dues of Rs 1.39 million from 65 defaulters in Northern Circle; SE Umar Bilal recovered Rs 1.60 million from 44 defaulters in Eastern Circle; SE Shabbir recovered Rs 0.82 million from 42 defaulters in Central Circle; SE Zafarullah Sanghi collected Rs 0.50 million from 19 defaulters in South Circle; SE Muhammad Hussain recovered Rs 0.44 million from 39 defaulters in Nankana Circle; SE Najamul Hassan recovered Rs 1.30 million from 18 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle; SE Jamshed Zaman collected Rs 2.40 million from 59 defaulters in Okara Circle and SE Ahmed Shahzad Chughtai recovered Rs 1.33 million from 93 defaulters in Kasur Circle. —DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

- MARCH**
- March 01/Bosnia National Day
 - March 03/Bulgaria National Day
 - March 06/ Ghana Independence Day
 - March 12 /Mauritius National Day
 - March 17/Ireland St. Patricks Day
 - March 20/Tunisia Independence Day
 - March 21/Namibia National Day
 - March 25/Greece National Day
 - March 26/Bangladesh National Day
 - March 27/Myanmar Armed Forces Day

Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

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

Enquiry

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

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Contempt of court Islamabad DC, SSP operations slapped with prison sentences

IHC indicted DC in contempt case pertaining to PTI leaders Shehryar Afridi and Shandana Gulzar detention under MPO

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday sentenced federal capital's Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon, Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Jameel Zafar and Station House Officer (SHO) Naseer Manzoor of Kohsar Police Station for contempt of court. The officials were sentenced for issuing orders for detaining Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Shehryar Afridi and Shandana Gulzar under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) ordinance. The court sentenced Islamabad DC to six months in prison, SSP to four months in prison and SHO for two months. All three of them have also been fined for Rs100,000 each. Meanwhile, the court suspended the sentence for a month and gave time to the DC to file an appeal against the decision. On September 7, 2023, the IHC indicted DC Memon and three police officials including



SSP Zafar in a contempt case pertaining to PTI leaders' detention. On August 16, the IHC suspended the detention orders of the PTI leaders and ordered their immediate release. Both leaders were held by law enforcement for their alleged involvement in the May 9 riots, which were triggered after the arrest of PTI chief Imran Khan

earlier this year. DC Memon and SSP Zafar pleaded not guilty to the charges and also apologised unconditionally. However, the IHC turned down the plea for unconditional pardon and later ordered the authorities to place DC Memon's name on the no-fly list for skipping proceedings of the case. He was also issued a show-cause notice and was asked to reply for being absent from the proceedings. Afridi was first arrested from his Islamabad residence under Section 3 of the MPO Ordinance, 1960, on May 16. Despite a release order, he was immediately rearrested under the same section on May 30. The PTI leader was then granted bail by the Lahore High Court's Rawalpindi bench on August 3. But his freedom was short-lived as Rawalpindi police once again took him into custody following his release from Adiala jail. In response to his arrest, the former minister's lawyer had filed a plea in the IHC, requesting his release as well as the revocation of the MPO order.

ECP notified individuals members of NA: Speaker

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf, said on Friday that all the individuals, notified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) as Members of the National Assembly, are members of the House. In a ruling, the speaker emphasized "The National Assembly followed the notification issued by the ECP. All the members who have been notified by the Election Commission as members of the National Assembly are members of this House." Regarding the issue concerning the reserved seats of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), he said the matter was with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and it should wait for the Commission's decision. In response to the allegations of rigging by Umar Ayub Khan in the general elections, the Speaker said, "The National Assembly is not the right forum to raise this issue," urging him to approach the appropriate forum. "It is not possible for the National Assembly to check Form 45 and Form 47 of each member," he added.—APP

As PM, Sharif will find the country facing many threats

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that as Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, he will have to govern a country facing many serious problems. He said that bringing political and economic stability to a country divided by politics and facing an economic crunch would be a big challenge for him. Mian Zahid Hussain said that Shahbaz Sharif had saved the country from bankruptcy by signing a standby agreement with the IMF, and now he will try hard to get a positive response from the IMF in its last review and enter a new agreement to improve things. Talking to

the business community, the veteran business leader said that the old agreement with the IMF was to save the country from bankruptcy, due to which the foreign exchange reserves and the deficit remained more or less within the recommended limits of the IMF. The new long-term deal with the IMF will include addressing the issues that have pushed the country to the brink of bankruptcy. Addressing these problems in the economy will be a challenge for Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif because the country's sluggish economy and weak control of the government are in the interest of many influential groups. These groups have been squeezing the economy and the people for decades, and they will resist every move to streamline things, he added. The business leader said that in the event of another agreement with the IMF, the lender would not allow the deficit to exceed 1.5 percent of GDP, which means the government would not be able to undertake major infrastructure projects and go for heavy spending, which will cause frustration among the public and newly elected members of parliament. Mian Zahid Hussain said that in these circumstances it will be difficult to get help from China and Arab countries. Still, there are bright possibilities of huge investment in the country under SIFC, due to which people will get employment. Investments will make it possible to keep the value of the rupee stable and inflation under control, he said, adding that the business community is hopeful that the incoming government will privatise

the sick companies, the problems of electricity and gas will be solved, and the cost of doing business will be reduced. Moreover, efforts will be made to increase exports and boost the tax-to-GDP ratio to improve the overall situation. PPP and MQM will fully support the government in these measures, and the business community also hopes that the opposition will not take such irresponsible steps that make life miserable for the common man. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that at present, the people and business community across the country are protesting due to electricity and gas bills and oil prices, and the incoming government can do a lot in this regard by reducing electricity, gas theft, capacity charges, and line losses.—DNA

Senator annoyed over shortage of medicines

ISLAMABAD: Senator Danesh Kumar of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) on Friday expressed his deep concern over the shortage of medicine at National Institute of Rehabilitation and Medicine (NIRM). At his calling attention notice at the sixth meeting of the 355th Senate Session here, the Senator said it was the matter of poor masses but the bureaucracy in the the Ministry of National Health, Services, Regulations and Coordination turned its deaf ear to the issue that was pending for the past ten days. Senator Kumar said the poor people were unable to buy medicines in the prevailing skyrocketing inflation that had crushed the low-income groups of society. Interim Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi said there was no response received from the relevant Ministry whereas he respected the sentiments of the Senator, but the incoming Minister for Health after assuming his charge would be in the better position to furnish a proper answer on the motion. Senator Kamran Murtaza of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (JUIP) expressed his displeasure on the response and said the Caretaker Minister for Health could not absolve himself from the matter as he had allowed a massive increase in the prices of the drugs that have gone out of the reach of the poor masses which was not acceptable. The Deputy Chairman Senate deferred the calling attention notice to the next session.—APP

PDMA predicts snowfall, rain in Murree, Galiyat

ISLAMABAD: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has predicted heavy snowfall and rain in Murree and Galiyat over the next few days, said its Director General Imran Qureshi on Friday. Talking to a private news channel, Qureshi urged the local administration to ensure safety measures to mitigate any potential risks. DG PDMA further appealed to tourists to cooperate with the administration during this time. Tourists should carefully plan their journeys, taking into account the anticipated heavy snow in Murree and severe weather conditions, said Qureshi.—APP

COMSTECH, Huawei enhance strategic partnership

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH, and Dr. Syed Khurshid Hasnain, Advisor COMSTECH, met with the Cyber Security and Privacy Protection team of Huawei at the Mobile World Congress held in Barcelona, to chart out the future of the strategic collaboration. The collaboration between COMSTECH and Huawei aims to elevate the cybersecurity proficiency of OIC nations, focusing on areas like security management, security incident response, vulnerability management, and staying abreast of emerging security technologies and requirements. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary shared that by virtue of its mission, COMSTECH intends to use the strengths and opportunities of Huawei Technologies, a technological giant, for the benefit of the member states. Speaking on the

scale and scope of the partnership, Prof. Choudhary described the relationship as a very flexible cooperation as the leadership of Huawei Technologies was both forward-looking and willing. He expressed the intention of expanding the cooperation to have Huawei Technologies introduced, implemented and used in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture and cyber security. COMSTECH and Huawei Technologies Pakistan recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to bolster national cybersecurity awareness and fortify the capabilities of OIC member states in cybersecurity. Under the existing MoU, Huawei will collaborate with COMSTECH to host cybersecurity training based on its practices and experiences, contributing to enhanced cybersecurity awareness and capacity building for selected OIC governmental employees. Additionally, participation in influential regional cybersecurity events like GISEC and GITEX is on the agenda. Prof Choudhary added that the OIC world is very asymmetrical with many of the member states face a huge capacity deficit in not only technological competencies but also in the understanding of policies, regulations and strategies. To that end, the COMSTECH-Huawei partnership is broad-based, with COMSTECH wanting to leverage the Huawei expertise to develop better understanding of national strategies of member states so they can have their own digital transformation policies and legislations. Dr. Syed Khurshid Hasnain is working closely with the Huawei Pakistan team to develop a matrix of activities including workshops, national and international trainings, and implementation of some of the technologies.

SEZs under CPEC to bring PKR 31.492 billion investment

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Faisalabad SEZs under CPEC will bring PKR 31.492 billion investment in Punjab, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. The 24th Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Committee meeting of Allama Iqbal Industrial City (AIIC), the 8th SEZ Committee meeting of Value Addition City (VAC), and the 43rd SEZ Committee meeting of M3 Industrial City (M3IC) of SEZ, Faisalabad, Punjab, were held. Together, they approved the admission of 44 enterprises in the SEZ regime with a cumulative investment of PKR 31.492 Billion in Punjab. According to the BOI official notification, the investment accounts for PKR 4.310 Billion in Allama Iqbal Industrial City, PKR 359.05 Million in VAC, and PKR 26.823 Billion in M3IC, SEZ, Punjab, in various sectors.

NPO to organize webinar on 'root cause analysis'

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) is going to organize a webinar on "Root Cause Analysis" on March 06 (Wednesday). RCA task is to identify potential causes, determine which cause or causes are root causes and address those root causes to ensure the effect (problem) does not happen again, said NPO document shared here on Friday. The workshop will provide information about the root cause and its analysis, the principle of RCA, three basic causes of non-conformance, ISO requirements about RCA, and why RCA is important.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary (MoFEPT) Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry in a group photograph with participants during the launching ceremony of National Achievement Test 2023 Assessing the Learning Environment organized by Pakistan Institute of Education.—APP

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Briefs

Margalla College hosts competitions

ISLAMABAD: In a lively showcase of talent, Margalla College IMCG F-7/4 Islamabad, on Friday hosted an engaging event of Inter-Collegiate Competitions featuring One-Act Plays and Computer Graphics. The competition drew participation from 10 teams representing various IMCG colleges, making it a vibrant gathering of young minds, a public relations officer said. The esteemed Professor Farhat Mujtaba, a retired former Principal, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, adding a touch of honor to the event. The atmosphere was charged with excitement as students, faculty, and judges, including the Principal Ms. Ayesha Kiani, came together to witness the impressive displays of creativity. The highlight of the event was the announcement of winners, with IMCG (PG) F-7/4 clinching the first prize. However, in a display of camaraderie, they passed the trophy to IMCG F-7/2, the host college, creating a heartwarming moment of unity among the participating institutions. The certificates were distributed to all participants, acknowledging and appreciating their hard work and dedication and encouraging healthy activities. The Principal, Ms. Ayesha Kiani, presented bouquets to the Chief Guest and judges as tokens of gratitude, marking the successful culmination of a refreshing and inspiring event for both minds and souls.—APP

NDMA directed to expedite relief efforts in Gwadar

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate, Mirza Muhammad Afridi on Friday directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan to expedite relief and rehabilitation efforts in the flood-hit Gwadar with core focus on extending assistance to the deserving victims. National Party (NP)'s Senator Muhammad Tahir Bizinjo on a public attention notice raised the issue of calamity-hit Gwadar that has been recently ravaged by torrential rains causing flooding in the entire port city. Senator Tahir Bizinjo said that the coastal areas of the country particularly Balochistan have been badly impacted by the recent heavy rains and left Gwadar submerged under rainwater including houses, businesses, public property and infrastructure. He alleged that the relief and rehabilitation efforts were slow and accused the NDMA, PDMA Balochistan and district administration of Gwadar of poor performance and conduct in the disaster-hit area. He also raised his concerns pertaining to looting of relief money, resources and relief items to be sent for the flood victims of Gwadar and alleged that the relief assistance would not reach the genuine victims or impacted population. The Senator mentioned that as per his sources, there was already shortage of food items leading to epidemics break out in the impacted areas. He vehemently demanded the quarters concerned to ensure provision of relief items to the impacted population.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A girl on the way carrying her younger brother during rain that experienced the Federal Capital.—APP

Pakistan needs to tap into \$4.92 trillion D-8 Market

FPCCI Chief informed that General Assembly meeting of D-8 CCI discussed in detail roadmap and strategy for intra-alliance trade promotion; plan of activities for next three years; arbitration system; D-8 Preferential Trade Agreement (D-8 PTA); visa-related issues; transportation costs; value chain economic fruits; regional connectivity; currency swap agreement; barter trade and D-8 Halal Exposition in Indonesia

DNA

ISLAMABAD. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has represented Pakistan in the all-influential General Assembly meeting of the D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (D-8 CCI). He apprised that the meeting was also attended by Iran, Turkiye, Egypt, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Nigeria.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh expressed his vision that Paki-

stan must tap into the export market of D-8 countries with a combined GDP of \$4.92 billion; and, tapping into these markets has the potential to correct Pakistan's regional trade deficit for a number of reasons: (i) Pakistan has friendly ties with the D-8 members (ii) we have geographical contiguity or land-based access with some member countries (iii) land-based routes can be used for transshipment (iv) shipment to these countries takes lesser time and costs (v)

with intra D-8 trade at merely 5 percent, there are low-hanging fruits to be grabbed in a short-span of time. FPCCI Chief informed that General Assembly meeting of D-8 CCI discussed in detail roadmap and strategy for intra-alliance trade promotion; plan of activities for next three years; arbitration system; D-8 Preferential Trade Agreement (D-8 PTA); visa-related issues; transportation costs; value chain economic fruits; regional connectivity; currency swap

agreement; barter trade and D-8 Halal Exposition in Indonesia. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh noted that the D-8 bloc represents more than 5 percent of global GDP; which makes the alliance a significant one for the D-8 countries in particular and the entire region in general. He explained that only if we can capture the D-8 market in value-added textiles; IT & ITeS services; sports goods; rice, fruits & vegetables; surgical equipment; pharmaceuticals and construction mate-

rials, Pakistan can enhance its exports by \$5 – 10 billion within 2 – 3 years vis-à-vis D-8. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh stressed that D-8 countries have a cumulative population of more than 1.1 billion; and, Preferential Trade Agreement can usher a wave of economic prosperity; investments & JVs; industrial collaborations; tourism & hospitality boost; establishment of cost-controlled trade routes and a collective voice in economic affairs in other international forums.

Solangi bids adieu to Senate

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi on Friday bid farewell to the Upper House of the Parliament after receiving acclaim from the Deputy to Chairman Senate on behalf of the House for his cooperation. During the sixth meeting of the 355th session of the Senate, the Minister requested the Chair to defer the question hour session for the next meeting so that the upcoming Minister should take up the queries of the Senator after the new regime comes into power. Solangi said the Prime Minister's election was going to be held on Sunday and the new government would be formed consequently. Therefore, the House must take up its question hour in the next session so that the newly elected regime and minister shall better reply to the queries to the members of the House. Deputy Chairman Senate, Mirza Muhammad Afridi extended his gratitude to the interim Minister for his cooperation and time. "The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs used to give time to the House but the interim minister gave

his due time and attention to the Upper House. The House thank you for your efforts," he said. Earlier Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians on his supplementary query to his question pertaining to audit of Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) raised his concern over the reply provided by the Minister. Senator Tangi said he had sought the details of audit of WAPDA whereas some 557 observations were raised in the audit report but no details pertaining to the nature of objections made and any action made against it. He regretted at the reply submitted in the house was not satisfactory and he also expressed dissatisfaction over the record. The caretaker minister for Parliamentary Affairs said the Senator's queries demanded details of audit accounts of WAPDA in the last year and its second part shed light on irregularities surfaced in the said audit report. "A total of 557 audit paras have been made under the report observations, out of which 402 have been discussed in the Departmental Audit Committee (DAC), 175 DAC direc-

tives have been complied with and 39 observations' response was awaited, 179 replies to reaudit demands received, three DAC directives compliance was under process, compliance awaited from Water Resources Ministry on 5 observations and one para was settled and some 155 observations were yet to be discussed in the committee," Solangi told the House. Senator Tangi in another query sought details on the disparity in profits and expenditure of the Sui Northern Gas Limited. He said the Sui Northern was earning a profit of Rs 1 million whereas its expenditure was around Rs 13,654 million making a huge disbalance in the earning and the salaries and allowances drawn by its employees. He agreed with the Minister to defer the question hour as the latter furnished the response that no briefing was provided by the relevant ministry in this regard. Senator Saifullah Abro of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf said Caretaker Minister Murtaza Solangi attended every session of the Senate and it was his last day, so no more questions should be asked to him.

DG stresses civil-defense awareness

ISLAMABAD: Director General of Civil Defense Niaz Muhammad Khan Friday stressed media for creating more awareness among the people about Civil Defense and to prepare volunteers and students who can help in case of any natural calamities. In an exclusive interview with PTV news channel, on eve of world Defense day highlight the achievements of national disaster-prevention services and to raises awareness about importance of self-defense. Civil defense training is a must for every man and woman, he said, adding, in order to save their own lives and the lives of others. Civil Defense is the best organization for the service of the people, he said, adding, our volunteer training programs are free of cost where interested citizens specially youth can actively participate. He demanded of the provincial and center government for equipping the volunteers with the needed facilities so they could perform their tasks more efficiently. Civil Defense staff and volunteers can take part in firefighting and first aid programs, he mentioned. He said that the training of the Civil Defense was the need of the hour and it should be taken as common responsibility by all the citizens to make the country strong and stable. The day also focuses on making volunteers more active participants in the evacuation, response and rescue efforts resulting from any disaster, he added.—DNA

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ICP strengthens security measures

ISLAMABAD: In response to the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir, the security of the federal capital Islamabad has been strengthened in order to deal with any untoward situation and Section 144 has been imposed, prohibiting demonstrations and any gatherings within Islamabad. Moreover, no political activities are allowed in the Federal Capital, and only individuals with invitations were permitted to go towards Parliament House. The invitees were also directed to verify their invitations for the National Assembly session before arrival, as some invitations have been canceled, a public relations officer on Friday said. Additionally, SSP Operations need to be requested for any activity in the High-Security Zone. While strict monitoring of all matters is being carried out from the Safe City. He further said that legal action will be taken against those engaging in any unlawful activities.—APP

ANF recovers 776 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 776 kg drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that 994 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of a passenger going to Sharjah at Islamabad Airport. 20.5 kg Xanax tablets, 26 kg Rivotril, 49.8 kg William, 344 kg Tramadol tablets were recovered from Karachi and an accused was arrested. In third operation, 216 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of five accused arrested from Faisalabad Road, Okara. 63 kg hashish was recovered from Zakhkhal Khyber.—APP

'Pakistan's growing startup ecosystem driving innovation'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan in Czech Republic Ayesha Ali has said that Pakistan's growing startup ecosystem was driving innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in areas of e-commerce, fintech, and health technology. The ambassador, in her address at a webinar on "IT Landscape of Pakistan" said that Pakistan was known for its vibrant IT outsourcing industry, offering cost-effective solutions in software development, digital marketing, and customer support, said a press release received on Friday. The

webinar was organised by the Embassy of Pakistan in Prague in collaboration with Czech Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Code District, a Lahore-based private software house, and attended by more than 50 companies, both from Pakistan and Czech Republic. The ambassador said that Pakistan had become a preferred destination for IT outsourcing services. Ambassador Ayesha said that on the other hand, the Czech Republic was renowned for its advanced IT infrastructure, research and development capabilities, and expertise in areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence,

and data analytics. By leveraging their respective strengths, Pakistan and the Czech Republic can explore opportunities for collaboration in several key areas, the envoy emphasised. In behalf of software houses from Pakistan, a presentation highlighting product and service range being offered to outsiders was given by CEO Code District, Ashar Samdani. From the Czech side, presentations were delivered by Miroslav Hazer, Director External Relations, Czech Confederation of Industries, Eva Rybkova, Chairperson of Czech Pakistan Business Council at the Czech Chambers

of Commerce and Ahsan Aslam, Czech - Pakistan Chambers of Commerce. The dominant theme of these presentations was to introduce about economic opportunities in the Czech Republic. The overall aim of the webinar was to showcase Pakistan's IT potential to the central and Eastern European markets, in particular Czech Republic, while ensuring significant B2B engagement between interested companies. It also helped in educating Pakistani companies about the scope, potential bottlenecks and local regulations with regard to doing business in the Czech Republic.

Briefs

Relief efforts under way in Gwadar

DNA

GWADAR: Relief and rescue efforts were under way in Gwadar on Friday after it received more than 180 millimetres of rain in the past two days, authorities said. On Thursday, the Balochistan government had imposed an emergency in Gwadar and declared it calamity-hit after heavy rains wreaked havoc in the city. Normal life and traffic had remained suspended in Gwadar, Makran and northern and central parts of Balochistan as 30-hour-long showers triggered flash floods and submerged most of the areas. Officials had said that Gwadar had received around 180 millimetres of rainfall over the past two days. According to a rainfall report issued by the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) at 8am today, the city received 60mm in the past 24 hours. Jiwani received the highest amount of rainfall with 72mm while Kalat 53mm, Khuzdar 34mm, Sibbi 30mm, Dalbandin 21mm and Turbat 20mm. Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Director General Jahanzeb Khan said, "Really, the situation in Gwadar is a bit bad." In a video statement, Khan said the reason for the flood situation was that the port city had received "187mm of rainfall during the last two days". He said that the process of removing the accumulated rainwater was under way. The PDMA, Pakistan Army, the Navy and the district administration were taking part in the relief and rescue operations along with other institutions, Khan added.

Uzair Baloch acquitted in one more case

NAZIR SYAL

KARACHI: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Uzair Baloch and other suspects in a case pertaining to an attack on policemen to kill them during the Lyari operation. The ATC pronounced the verdict to acquit Uzair Baloch after the prosecution failed to establish the charges against him and three others. The other acquitted suspects included Muhammad Salam alias Mullah Nisar, Zakir alias Dada and Ghulam Muhammad. According to the prosecution, Uzair and the other accused were charged with attack and attempted murder on the police team during the Lyari operation in April 2012. The case was registered against the suspects at Kalri police station under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. Uzair Baloch, Muhammad Salam alias Mullah Nisar, and Zakir alias Dada were imprisoned in the case while Ghulam Muhammad obtained bail. The ATC ordered the jail authorities to release the accused persons if they are not arrested in any other case. It is pertinent to mention here that Uzair Baloch has been acquitted in the 35th case after the prosecution failed to establish the charges.

ATC takes up Imran's pre-arrest bail plea

DNA

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court in Lahore on Friday took up the petition filed by the PTI founder seeking interim bail in connection with a May 9 riots case. During the proceedings conducted by ATC judge Arshad Javed, special prosecutor Rana Shakeel presented his arguments and declared the PTI founder the main accused for the May 9 events. He maintained that the statements of witnesses were on record which, according to him, indicated that it was the PTI founder who had incited his party leaders to torch the sensitive installations. Later, the court adjourned the hearing. On Feb 24, the ATC had admitted for hearing the PTI founder's petition for pre-arrest bail in the May 9 riots case.

Pak-Baku aim for closer coop between audit institutions

The President lauded the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between AGP and CAA, saying that it would increase cooperation between two countries in the field of Public Sector Auditing

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for increasing cooperation between the supreme audit institutions of Pakistan and Azerbaijan for sharing best auditing practices to enhance transparency and financial accountability. He said that public sector accounting was a critical component of financial management within government organizations that helped ensure transparency and accountability in government spending. The President expressed these views while talking to the visiting Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr Vugar Gulmammadov, who along with his delegation, called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP), Mr Muhammad Ajmal Gondal, and officials of AGP also attended the meeting. Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan (CAA), Mr Vugar Gulmammadov, briefed the President about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Supreme Audit Institution of Azerbaijan, CAA, and the Supreme Audit Institution of Pakistan, AGP, for peer reviews of public accounts. He said that the MoU would help deepen friendly relations between the two countries. The President lauded the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between AGP and CAA, saying that it would increase



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan, Mr Vugar Gulmammadov, along with his delegation called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

cooperation between two countries in the field of Public Sector Auditing. He added that cooperation between CAA and AGP would be mutually beneficial for both the countries. He also appreciated AGP's role in carrying out peer reviews of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of Azerbaijan. Talking to the delegation, the President said that Pakistan accorded special im-

portance to its relations with Azerbaijan, which were based on common faith, shared history, and people-to-people contacts. He stated that promoting cultural exchanges and strengthening cooperation in the cultural and economic fields was vital for fostering understanding and mutually beneficial development between the two brotherly nations. He termed the cooperation be-

tween Pakistan and Azerbaijan "pivotal for promoting peace, stability, development in the region". The President also felicitated President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan on his re-election in the Presidential elections held on 7th February 2024 and hoped that the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan would be further strengthened during his tenure.

Hamas, other Palestinian groups stress 'unity'

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Palestinian factions including rivals Hamas and Fatah said on Friday they would pursue "unity of action" in confronting Israel after representatives met at Russia-hosted talks. The meeting in Moscow on Thursday brought together Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah and other Palestinian groups for talks on the war in Gaza and an eventual post-war period. It came on the heels of the resignation of the Palestinian Authority government, which is led by Fatah and based in the occupied West Bank. Outgoing prime minister Mohammad Shtayyeh called for intra-Palestinian consensus as he announced the resignation, and some analysts said the development could pave the way for a government of technocrats that could operate in the West Bank and Hamas-run Gaza after the war. Arab and Western leaders have been pushing for reforms to the Palestinian Authority as they discuss possible reconstruction efforts. A statement on Friday by the Palestinian factions represented in Moscow said there would be an "upcoming dialogue" to bring them under the banner of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Thursday's "constructive" talks saw agreement on points including the need for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the creation of a Palestinian state, the statement said. While Hamas and Islamic Jihad are considered "terrorist" entities by Western powers, the PLO is internationally recognized as representing Palestinians in the Palestinian territories and diaspora. Discussions in recent years about integrating Hamas into the PLO have ended in failure. In recent years, Moscow has strived to maintain good relations with all actors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including Fatah and Hamas. Russia's relations with Israel have become strained amid Moscow's criticism of Israeli actions in Gaza and rejection of a Palestinian state.

PTI vows not to let NA function Dogar demands return of mandate

MEHTAB PIRZADA

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Coming down hard on the ruling alliance, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) lawmaker Junaid Akbar Friday warned that they would not let the National Assembly function until provision of their due rights. The PTI leader made the remarks during his fiery speech at the second session of the newly elected lower house of parliament. Taking the floor, Akbar said: "We do not recognise this assembly. We will neither legislate nor allow it [in the House]. The PTI claimed that its mandate was stolen during the February 8 general elections. The Imran Khan-founded party termed the polls "rigged" and accused the caretaker government of denying a level playing field in the run-up to elections. Firing a fresh salvo at the PPP, the PTI leader said: "A bazaar [of horse-trading] was set up at the Sindh House and consciences [of lawmakers] were bought." "Some were threatened, some were shown their videos." Moving onto alleged discrimination with the PTI, the lawmaker said that his party was stripped of its electoral symbol 'bat' in the garb of May 9 mayhem.

The May 9 riots were triggered almost across the country after the deposed prime minister's arrest in the £190 million settlement case. Hundreds of PTI workers and senior leaders were put behind bars for their involvement in violence and attacks on military installations. During the protests, the miscreants targeted the civil and military installations including - Jinnah House and the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. The military termed May 9 "Black Day" and decided to try the miscreants under the Army Act. The PTI-backed independent candidates were given inappropriate election symbols by the ECP, he added. Slamming the establishment, he said two assassination attempts were made on the life of the PTI founder. Some 34 PTI supporters were killed on May 9 and FIRs were also lodged against the leadership of Khan-founded party, he added. "Sedition cases were registered against me and my friends."

the February 8 election a "silent revolution". "If the result was announced as per Form 45, my votes would have been 225," he said, adding that on February 8, the brave people of Pakistan stamped on PTI founder's ideology, struggle. Dogar said, addressing the speaker, that his party had won 180 seats in the assembly, but then "another election" happened on February 9 and "you and your leadership" knew that mandate was stolen through Form 47. He said if they had those 180 seats as well as the reserved ones, then the PTI would have been the single largest party in assembly.

Biden urged to ensure Pak election probe

Democrats lawmakers, in a joint letter expressed concern over reports of rigging

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: In a surprise move, several US lawmakers have urged President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken to refuse to recognise the upcoming government in Pakistan until the allegations of election rigging are probed in a transparent way. The Democrats lawmakers, in a joint letter to President Biden, expressed concern over reports of rigging

in Pakistan's election held on Feb 8. President Biden is also a Democrat and banks on the support of the 33 signatory lawmakers to secure the second term in office. According to the US lawmakers, the Feb 8 polls should be thoroughly investigated before recognising the new Pakistani government. The lawmakers also urged the State Department to collect the data of detained political activists and journalists in Pakistan while also advocating their release. In the recent Michigan primary, says a re-

port, Biden faced a formidable "uncommitted" campaign led by activists dissatisfied with his Gaza war stance, surpassing Trump's 2016 margin by over 10,000 votes. This is something causing concern for the Biden camp amid influential Muslim lawmakers' support for the PTI. The members who signed the letter included Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar and Andre Carson. Progressive Caucus chairperson Pramila Jayapal, who is known for Kashmir cause support, has also endorsed the letter. Ilhan Omar, who is the deputy chair of the Caucus, is among the signatories. The lawmakers said there was evidence of abuses and discrepancies in vote count and the situation demanded a fair probe.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors taking interest in a photo exhibition by Ferrante Ferranti and curated by Zaman Baloch, held at the premises of the French embassy. Detailed coverage shall be published on Monday. Charge d Affaires of the French Embassy Guillaume DABOUTS spoke on the occasion and introduced the artist to the audience. - DNA

This is for Gaza': Galloway wins Rochdale by-election

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: George Galloway, leader of the left-wing Workers' party in Britain, has become the new lawmaker for the English town of Rochdale with 12,335 votes, compared to independent candidate David Tully, who came in second with 6,638 votes. Galloway won over many of Rochdale's Muslim community by attacking both Labour and Britain's governing Conservatives for supporting Israel's invasion of Gaza, making a foreign conflict the major issue - an unusual thing to do in a by-election where local concerns usually dominate. In his victory speech, Galloway said: "Keir Starmer, this is for Gaza. You have paid, and you will pay, a high price for the role that you have played in enabling, encouraging, and covering for the catastrophe presently going on in occupied Palestine in the Gaza Strip." His victory underlines the divisions in Britain over the Israel-Hamas conflict, which is in its fifth month and has brought protesters onto British streets in support of both sides. British lawmakers have faced threats to do more to bring an end to the fighting in Gaza, and with the national election later this year, Galloway's return to parliament will be short-lived but explosive. He has vowed to speak out on Gaza in parliament, challenging Labour, which initially gave full backing to Israel following the October 7 attack. The party has since shifted its position to call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

Navalny buried in Moscow

MOSCOW: Thousands of Russians chanted Alexei Navalny's name and said they would not forgive the authorities for his death as the opposition leader was laid to rest in Moscow on Friday. At a cemetery not far from where Navalny once lived, his mother Lyudmila and father Anatoly stood over his open coffin to kiss him for the last time as a small group of musicians played. Crossing themselves, mourners stepped forward to caress his face before a priest gently placed a white shroud over him and the coffin was closed. Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critic inside Russia, died at the age of 47 in an Arctic penal colony on Feb. 16, sparking accusations from his supporters that he had been murdered. The Kremlin has denied any state involvement in his death. The authorities have outlawed his movement as extremist and cast his supporters as U.S.-backed troublemakers out to foment revolution. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said he had nothing to say to Navalny's family. Many thousands of people turned out to pay their respects at the cemetery and earlier outside the Soothe My Sorrows church in south-east Moscow where the funeral took place. Among the large crowd, many people clutched bunches of flowers and some joined in a series of chants - "Russia will be free", "No to war", "Russia without Putin", "We won't forgive" and "Putin is a murderer". Police were present in large numbers but for the most part did not intervene. A rights group, OVD-Info, reported six people had been detained in Moscow and at least 39 in other parts of Russia. - Agencies

ATC grants bail to Dr Yasmin Rashid

LAHORE: The anti-terrorism court Lahore finally accepted the bail application of former health minister and politician Dr Yasmin Rashid in the Gulberg arson case on May 9. The court approved Dr Yasmin's bail for Rs 500,000. Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Arshad Javed gave the decision on Dr Yasmin Rashid's bail. Gulberg police station had registered a case against Dr Yasmin Rashid after 9/5. - DNA