



Despite challenges such as the aftermath of the 2022 floods, Pakistan significantly reduced polio cases to just six in 2023

United Nations Ambassador
Munir Akram

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56 terrorist incidents take place across country on election day: Gohar Ejaz

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Interior Dr. Gohar Ejaz said on Friday that a total of 56 terrorist incidents were taken place on February 8 Election Day to sabotage the electoral process. Briefing media persons about the overall security situation and challenges specifically regarding election day, he said that the biggest challenge of the caretaker government was to provide security to the people of the country on election day. Sharing details of the casualties, the minister informed that 3 military jawans, 2 levies jawans, 7 police officials, 4 civilians including 2 minors lost their lives in the incidents. The government had made a difficult decision to shut down the mobile service across the country in a high-level meeting on February 7 after the two deadliest terrorist incidents in which 28 innocent lives were lost, he added. The minister said that the government had received intelligence reports that the terrorist would carry out activities in different places through detonated devices. He congratulated the deployment of hundreds of thousands of regular and civil armed forces, other law enforcement agencies and civilian officials across the country for successful conduct of the general elections. Dr. Gohar said that 61 incidents of violence were also reported across the country during elections adding, all the incidents were being investigated in details and the action would be taken against culprits. He said that deaths of 28 people and serious injuries to 64 others in terrorist incidents just one day prior to the elections forced the state to take several measures for ensuring safety of the citizens. This also included the difficult decision of suspending the mobile phone services across the country to disallow terrorists the means to communicate, coordinate and conduct terrorist operations, he added. The minister said mobile devices were also instrumental in initiating the trigger mechanisms for modern explosive devices for mass casualties. The government was fully aware that suspension of mobile services would impact the transmission of election results across the country and delay the process, however, the choice between this delay and safety of the citizens was quite straightforward and the decision was taken, he said. Physical transportation of election results from widely spread polling stations and especially in distant places in Balochistan, KP and even in rural areas of Punjab and Sindh, with such elaborate security measures was also a laborious and time consuming exercise, he maintained. The minister said even with such stringent security measures in place, the election day saw 61 incidents of violence including terrorist attacks employing sophisticated weapons and explosive devices which consumed the lives of 16 citizens and caused injuries to 54 others. He said that all institutions involved in this historic exercise, especially the Election Commission of Pakistan which had little control of the security situation, deserved acknowledgement and gratitude rather than criticism and denigration. APP



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a review meeting regarding progress on Pakistan's investment agreements with friendly countries.

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

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) that instead of using valuable agricultural land in the allotment of plots to the employees, special focus should be made on the construction of vertical buildings so that more people could be provided with houses. He also directed to formulate a policy in this regard as soon as possible. The prime minister was chairing the meeting of the Federal Cabinet here. The policy of allotment of plots to the CDA employees was presented to the federal cabinet in the light of the decision of the Islamabad High Court. According to the decision of the Islamabad High Court, the CDA had to determine the difference in the income of the CDA by giving employees at concessional rates. The Cabinet deferred the decision on the proposed allotment policy. On the recommendation of the Interior Ministry, the cabinet also approved the open bidding for the procurement of services of a category A audit firm issued by the State Bank of Pakistan for the audit of National Database Registration Authority (NADRA). This decision modified the decision taken by the Fed-

All the category A firms registered in the SBP have been provided equal opportunities for the audit of NADRA

eral Cabinet in 2019, according to which only four large and reputed audit firms could be hired for the audit of NADRA. However in this decision, all the category A firms registered in the SBP have been provided equal opportunities for the audit of NADRA. The meeting was apprised that in order to make the audit of NADRA, more effective, transparent and in line with the international standard, it was important to provide equal opportunities to all the category A firms registered with the SBP for audit of NADRA. Meanwhile, the cabinet, on the recommendation of ministry of information technology and telecommunication, approved nomination of the project of "Cyber Security for Digital Pakistan" as "National Computer Emergency Response Team (NCERT)". The meeting was informed that the project of Cyber Security for Digital Pakistan was part of the national development budget and work on it had already been initiated. On the recommendation of ministry of Kash-

mir & Gilgit Baltistan Affairs, the cabinet approved the amendment of Section 5(2) of the Adaption Act. According to the amendment, in this section, instead of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council, the words Azad Government of State of Jammu and Kashmir shall be used to transfer the license fee and renewal fee of mobile phone network spectrum from Pakistan Telecommunication Authority to Azad Government of State of Jammu and Kashmir. The cabinet, on the recommendation of ministry of defence production also approved the appointment of Air Commodore Muhammad Atif Hashim as member technical Pakistan Aeronautic Complex Board. The decision of the appointment would be applicable from July 19, 2023. The federal cabinet postponed the approval of the decisions made in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Privatization Commission on February 7, 2024. The meeting approved the decisions taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation held on January 31 and February 7, 2024.

Despite challenges such as the aftermath of the 2022 floods, Pakistan significantly reduced polio cases to just six in 2023: Munir Akram

NEW YORK: Pakistan has reaffirmed its dedication to eliminating polio entirely from the country by 2026. The resolve was expressed by Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations Ambassador Munir Akram while addressing the Special Focus Session on Polio Eradication at the UN headquarters in New York. He said currently the country is executing the largest polio eradication initiative globally, engaging 340,000 polio workers, with the majority being women. He highlighted that despite encountering numerous obstacles, substantial advancements have been achieved through the implementation of the National Emergency Action Plan (2020) for Polio Eradication. The Ambassador said that despite challenges such as the aftermath of the 2022 floods, Pakistan significantly reduced polio cases to just six in 2023. With a target to immunize 45 million children this year, Pakistan launched the National Immunization Days (NID) campaign. Acknowledging the progress achieved in polio eradication, Ambassador Munir Akram underscored the importance of continued collaboration and financial support from global partners. He said Pakistan requires \$205 million for its polio program this year, with a shortfall of \$95 million. He urged donors and partners to contribute generously to ensure the success of polio eradication efforts and prevent any child from being deprived of immunization due to funding constraints. Emphasizing the urgency of the situation, Ambassador Munir Akram urged member states, WHO, UNICEF, and all relevant partners to take bold and decisive actions to eradicate polio by 2026. He highlighted the opportunity to make history by making polio the second disease to be eradicated after smallpox. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of realizing the 2030 targets of the Immunization Agenda through collective efforts. SABAH

Sadiq Sanjrani stays victorious in PB-32 elections

QUETTA: Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) leader and Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani stood victorious in PB-32 Chaghi elections. According to unofficial result issued by the Returning Officer/ECP, Sadiq Sanjrani won the seat by securing 18,802 votes. The runner-up Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) candidate Mir Amanullah Notazai managed to get 17,009 votes. INP

UK & Pakistan enjoy a close & long-standing relationship, underpinned by strong links between our people: Lord Cameron

Says election of a civilian govt with the mandate to deliver crucial reforms is essential for Pakistan to flourish

LONDON: British Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron has said that United Kingdom and Pakistan enjoy a close and long-standing relationship, underpinned by strong links between our people. In a statement issued on Friday, British Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron said that following Thursday's elections, we commend all those who voted. "We recognise, however, serious concerns raised about the fairness and lack of inclusivity of the elections. We regret that not all parties were formally permitted to contest the elections and that legal processes were used to prevent some political leaders from participation, and to prevent the use of recognisable party symbols" he said. British Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron said that we also note the restrictions imposed on internet access on polling day, significant

delays to the reporting of results and claims of irregularities in the counting process. He said that the UK urges authorities in Pakistan to uphold fundamental human rights including free access to information, and the rule of law. This includes the right to a fair trial, through adherence to due process and an independent and transparent judicial system, free from interference, he said. Lord Cameron said that the election of a civilian government with the mandate to deliver crucial reforms is essential for Pakistan to flourish. He said that the new government must be accountable to the people it serves, and work to represent the interests of all Pakistan's citizens and communities with equity and justice. We look forward to working with Pakistan's next government to achieve this, and across the range of our shared interests, he said. SABAH

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

VOM Report

KARACHI: The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 13,097.6 million in the week ended on February 2, 2024, while foreign reserves held by State Bank reached \$ 8,044 million. The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Friday, informed that foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank decreased by \$173 million to US\$ 8,044 million due to debt repayments during the week under review. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$ 5,053.6 million. Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on January 26, 2024, were \$ 13,262.5 million. Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$ 8,216.5 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were \$ 5,046 million.

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

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's export of goods and services to Afghanistan witnessed an increase of 3.63 per cent during the first six months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$260.716 million during July-December (2023-24) against exports of US \$251.580 million during July-December (2022-23), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Afghanistan decreased by 26.83 per cent from \$38.297 million in December 2022, against the exports of \$28.019 million in December 2023. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Afghanistan also witnessed a decline of 46.02 per cent during December 2023 as compared to the exports of \$51.911 million in November 2023, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries

witnessed an increase of 4.99 per cent in the first six months, from US \$14.222 billion to US \$15.288 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from Afghanistan into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$4.425 million against US \$13.253 million last year, showing a decline of 66.61 per cent in July-December (2023-24). On a year-on-year basis, the imports for Afghanistan decreased by 28.39 per cent from US \$1.729 million in December 2022, against the imports of US \$1.238 million in December 2023. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from Afghanistan into the country witnessed a nominal decrease of 3.95 per cent during December 2023, as compared to the imports of US \$1.289 million during November 2023, according to the data. The overall imports into the country witnessed a decrease of 14.69 per cent, from \$29.588 billion to US \$25.241 billion, according to the data. APP

Caretaker Govt fulfilled pledge to hold peaceful, orderly polls: Solangi

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Friday, felicitating nation over the peaceful and orderly conduct of general elections, said the caretaker government had fulfilled the solemn pledge of holding elections in line with time-frame, given by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Addressing a press conference along with Caretaker Interior Minister Dr Gohar Ijaz, he said despite speculations and multiple challenges, "we have consistently stood by our stand regarding the conduct of elections". Replying to a question, he said there was no shutdown of Internet on election day and added the fixed broadband was functioning and social media platforms were fully used by



He pointed out Internet suspension was not specific to Pakistan since many countries opted for the shut-

down of Internet service, simply due to security reasons. Sharing data, he said that in 2022, the Internet was shut down 187 times in 35 countries of the world and a neigh-

sons were martyred in two incidents of terrorism. Solangi said since January 15 this year, there were 47 incidents of terrorism including seven improvised explosive

Caretaker Interior Minister Dr Gohar Ijaz, he said despite speculations and multiple challenges, we have consistently stood by our stand regarding the conduct of elections"

bouring country, with purported democratic credentials, closed Internet service for 84 times. He said Pakistan had been fighting the longest war against the scourge of terrorism with over hundred thousand martyrdoms. He said on election day, 16 persons lost their lives in 61 incidents of violence and on the previous day, 28 per-

son were martyred in two incidents of terrorism. Solangi said since January 15 this year, there were 47 incidents of terrorism including seven improvised explosive

elections were conducted around the world.

The minister said that ECP SMS service 8300 had been functional since January 29 and most of the voters must have got the required information in advance.

He acknowledged that people had faced some difficulties, but protecting citizens' lives was the main task and obligation of the security agencies and the Ministry of Interior.

"It was more important for us to save people's lives and mobile phone service shut-down was done due to security threats," Murtaza Solangi remarked.

To a question, he said a large number of independent candidates were elected which was the indication of the fairness of the electoral process. Principal Information Officer Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan was also present on the occasion.

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Historical equilibriums keeping region in a broken loop

KHALED ABOU ZAHR

There have been reports that US envoy Amos Hochstein is expected to visit Lebanon soon and put forward a proposal to prevent any further escalations between Hezbollah and Israel, inspired by the April Understanding of 1996 that ended the Grapes of Wrath war. The reality is that this understanding is still alive and is exactly what is keeping the conflict in south Lebanon contained. In fact, one could even say, if it is not broken, why fix it?

Lebanon as a country is broken and even torn apart, just like the current situation. But the April Understanding and the rules of engagement of 1996 between Hezbollah and Israel, initiated during Rafik Hariri's first tenure as prime minister, are still in effect. Today, this understanding also influences the way the skirmishes are taking place on Syrian territories. So, one might ask, is there a risk of this war moving toward a regional one, exploding from the Lebanon-Israel border to a full-blown conflict like the 2006 war, for example?

In short, the answer is that what is happening at the border will not be the cause of this escalation. The only way this could happen is if the rules that have been put in place are broken, which Hezbollah will only do if it is ordered to by Tehran. As a reminder, in 2006, Hassan Nasrallah did not adhere to the arrangements and Lebanon as a whole paid a heavy price. His recent speeches, which may be deceptive, seem to indicate complete adherence to the rules this time.

And so, if we look back at the April Understanding, which aimed to establish a framework to prevent the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon by creating rules of engagement, we can easily notice that it is still in place. It included provisions for a cessation of hostilities, measures to enhance the security situation along the Israel-Lebanon border and an agreement on the deployment of international observers from the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. Needless to say, this empowered Hezbollah and increased its grasp on the border, as well as on Lebanese politics.

And so, any new proposal in the same spirit is what one might call a Band-Aid on a bullet wound and a waste of diplomatic time, resources and effort. Any decision to escalate will not be taken at the border. It will be taken in Tehran. However, it is undeniable that the ongoing clashes at the Lebanese-Israeli border since the Hamas-Israel war started have led to casualties, displacements and tensions. But the real solution for peace and stability in the region is elsewhere — and everyone knows it very well.

It is a whole different topic and not on the global diplomatic table today, but what would actually fix Lebanon and bring long-term stability to the border is one of the scenarios that would lead to an all-out war. Indeed, while the 1996 understanding still stands, UN Security Council Resolution 1701 was never implemented. This resolution, which ended the 2006 war, calls for the UN secretary-general to develop proposals to implement the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, as well as UNSC Resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006). In short, it calls for the disarmament of all armed militias in Lebanon, including Hezbollah.

And one clearly understands the unfortunate situation of Lebanon, as this resolution's implementation is exactly what could cause the border skirmishes to become a full-blown conflict. So, foreign diplomats are wasting their time on modifying the existing and working rules of engagement, while condemning Lebanon to misery and remaining broken under the control of Hezbollah.

While we notice other areas of conflict intensifying between the US and Iran across the Middle East, they are all, for now, operating in separate silos. In other words, each zone or point of conflict is abiding by and obeying its own rules of engagement, whether involving sea, land or air. However, there is a scenario whereby escalating tensions in one of these areas might prompt Tehran to respond through Hezbollah.

This is currently unexpected but it cannot be ruled out, especially when we know and understand that this is the main and sole purpose of Hezbollah: being both Iran's first and last lines of defense. It is also clear that, because we are in an election year in the US, there is a red line that no one will cross simply because everyone believes that this election might bring better results than a full-blown conflict. Nevertheless, mistakes — sometimes voluntary — happen and can cause the situation to escalate.

And so, we clearly understand that the least plausible cause for the conflict escalating into a regional war is actually the place where the conflict is taking place. This underlines once again how Lebanon has become entrenched and entangled in the broken system that maintains stability, or a semblance of it at least. It is these historical equilibriums that have stripped the country of its own decision-making capability and kept the region in a broken loop. Yet, there is a twist in the proposed new arrangements that reveals that foreign diplomats, while playing for time, have determined that the regime in Syria is no longer a main actor in this border game with Israel. Their actions and proposals for bringing an end to the conflict indicate this clearly. Yet, thinking they can strip Damascus of its hand in the Lebanese poker game is a big gamble. The regime is weakened and no longer has the same power it did in 1996 or 2006, yet it will not give up all its cards easily. Not being ready for it could be the final reason for a conflict explosion.

Khaled Abou Zahra is the founder of SpaceQuest Ventures, a space-focused investment platform. He is chief executive of EurabiaMedia and editor of Al-Watan Al-Arabi.



Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani

Hope for the future

The unique feature of yesterday's election was the contesting parties' heavy reliance on digital platforms. Be it instant messaging apps or social networking forums, it seems that the real battle between supporters of various political parties was fought in the digital arena.

The Election Commission of Pakistan deserves appreciation for fulfilling its constitutional responsibility in a brilliant manner. Returning officers (ROs) as well as police officials and LEAs played a pivotal role in conducting the voting process smoothly.

A social media message I received on WhatsApp reminded me of my columns published in The News some years ago. According to the message, God Almighty has blessed the tribal region of Pakistan, especially Waziristan, with hidden treasures of diamonds, gold, copper and other valuable minerals. Reportedly, the diamond mines in Waziristan were discovered during the Soviet invasion in

the 1980s, but they are not fully functional yet due to a lack of technical expertise.

The message says: "Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto signed a pact with an international company in 1994 to give technical support for diamond mining in Waziristan," hinting that the discovery of oil reserves in the Middle East resulted in changing the destiny of the entire region (once the world's most backward area) as well as uplifting the socio-economic conditions of millions of locals and immigrants.

Geographically, the semi-autonomous tribal area adjacent to the Pak-Afghan border, erstwhile Fata, consists of seven tribal agencies and six frontier regions. Although it was merged with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018 through the 25th Amendment, people from the area are still facing numerous issues.

Fata has a rich heritage of waging freedom struggles against foreign invaders. Even at the peak of their power, the British faced tough resistance in controlling the tribal areas. However, the tribal people supported the Pakistan Movement wholeheartedly to end British rule. A leader of freedom fighters, Maulana Fazal Elahi Wazirabadi, attended the historic March 23,

1940 jalsa in Lahore to represent the tribal population and endorse the Pakistan Resolution. Five years later, a large number of people came out on the streets of Landi Kotal to welcome Quaid-e-Azam as they preferred to associate their future unconditionally with an independent and sovereign Pakistan.

Quaid-e-Azam announced the withdrawal of armed forces from the area, calling the patriotic tribal people a frontline force in protecting the western borders. Regrettably, after his death, this marginalized and vulnerable region remained neglected for decades.

It is quite hurtful that successive governments decided to continue governing the area through the FCR law inherited from the British. During the Soviet invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan and later the 9-11 tragedy, tribal areas faced numerous challenges.

The unanimously passed 1973 constitution is a remarkable achievement by Pakistan's first elected prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Although Fata was declared a part of Pakistan under the constitution, Articles 247 and 248 restrict the jurisdiction of parliament, the Supreme Court and high courts in the neglected tribal areas. Understanding the genuine con-

cerns of tribal people, Bhutto formed a committee to devise a framework for merging Fata with KP (then North-West Frontier Province) for general elections. A few years ago, after my visit to North Waziristan, I warned in a column that if the government did not pay due attention, the region would once again become a haven of extremism. Although tribal areas have been merged into the province, people are still suffering from severe hardships.

With general elections and with a people empowered to use their power of vote to elect their political representatives in parliament, the tribal people are once again looking forward to a bright future. During my recent interaction with several tribal personalities, they believe that their destiny is truly associated with the state of Pakistan but in a dignified manner. "Our only hope now is Bilawal Bhutto Zardari who we believe will do something good to fulfil the incomplete agenda of his legendary grandfather and great mother to serve the tribal people."

The writer is a former member of the National Assembly and patron-in-chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council. He tweets/posts @RVankwani

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

History of Pakistan



Three years after his Allahabad Address, a group of Muslim students at Cambridge, headed by Chaudhry Rehmat Ali, issued a pamphlet, Now or Never, in which drawing letters from the names of the Muslim majority regions, they gave the nomenclature of "Pakistan" to the proposed State. Very few even among the Muslims welcomed the idea at the time. It was to take a decade for the Muslims to embrace the demand for a separate Muslim state.

QUAID-I-AZAM MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH

Meanwhile, three Round Table Conferences were convened in London during 1930-32, to resolve the Indian constitutional problem. The Hindu and Muslim leaders, who were invited to these conferences, could not draw up an agreed formula and the British Government had to announce a 'Communal Award' which was incorporated in the Government of India Act of 1935. Before the elections under this Act, the All-India Muslim League, which had remained dormant for some time, was reorganized by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who had returned to India in 1934, after an absence of nearly five years in England. The Muslim League could not win a majority of Muslim seats since

it had not yet been effectively reorganized. However, it had the satisfaction that the performance of the Indian National Congress in the Muslim constituencies was bad. After the elections, the attitude of the Congress leadership was arrogant and domineering. The classic example was its refusal to form a coalition government with the Muslim League in the United Provinces. Instead, it asked the League leaders to dissolve their parliamentary party in the Provincial Assembly and join the Congress. Another important Congress move after the 1937 elections was its Muslim mass contact movement to persuade the Muslims to join the Congress and not the Muslim League. One of its leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru, even declared that there were only two forces in India, the British and the Congress. All this did not go unchallenged.

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah countered that there was a third force in South-Asia constituting the Muslims. The All-India Muslim League, under his gifted leadership, gradually and skillfully started organising the Muslims on one platform.

TOWARDS A SEPARATE MUSLIM HOMELAND

The 1930s witnessed awareness

among the Muslims of their separate identity and their anxiety to preserve it within separate territorial boundaries. An important element that brought this simmering Muslim nationalism in the open was the character of the Congress rule in the Muslim minority provinces during 1937-39. The Congress policies in these provinces hurt Muslim susceptibilities. There were calculated aims to obliterate the Muslims as a separate cultural unit. The Muslims now stopped thinking in terms of seeking safeguards and began to consider seriously the demand for a separate Muslim state. During 1937-39, several Muslim leaders and thinkers, inspired by Allama Iqbal's ideas, presented elaborate schemes for partitioning the subcontinent according to two-nation theory.

PAKISTAN RESOLUTION

The All-India Muslim League soon took these schemes into consideration and finally, on March 23, 1940, the All-India Muslim League, in a resolution, at its historic Lahore Session, demanded a separate homeland for the Muslims in the Muslim majority regions of the subcontinent. The resolution was commonly referred to as the Pakistan Resolution. The Pakistan demand had a great appeal for the

Muslims of every persuasion. It revived memories of their past greatness and promised future glory. They, therefore, responded to this demand immediately.

CRIPPS MISSION

The British Government recognized the genuineness of the Pakistan demand indirectly in the proposals for the transfer of power after the Second World War which Sir Stafford Cripps brought to India in 1942. Both the Congress and the All-India Muslim League rejected these proposals for different reasons. The principles of secession of Muslim India as a separate Dominion was however, conceded in these proposals. After this failure, a prominent Congress leader, C. Rajagopalachari, suggested a formula for a separate Muslim state in the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, which was rejected at the time, but later on, in 1944, formed the basis of the Jinnah-Gandhi talks.

PAKISTAN MOVEMENT

The Pakistan demand became popular during the Second World War every section of the Muslim community.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Kathryn Newton shares valuable advice she received from TWO industry mentors

Ant-Man star Kathryn Newton names two celebs from entertainment industry with whom she also worked with

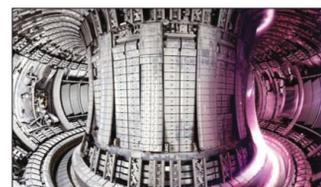
Kathryn Newton has recently shared valuable advice she received from Ant-Man star Paul Rudd and Reese Witherspoon during her career. Speaking to PEOPLE, Newton revealed, "Paul Rudd told me not to hold back when I started Ant-Man," when she joined the Marvel Cinematic Universe in 2023's Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania. "I think that's just good advice for anybody with whatever you do in life, whatever your job might be," remarked the 26-year-old. Newton suggested, "Put your best foot forward every day and don't hold back." Kathryn Newton shares valuable advice she received from TWO



industry mentors Witherspoon, who played her mother on the two seasons of HBO's Big Little Lies, also gave her incredible guidance. "You just have to watch her and you're reacting," disclosed Newton. She stated, "I think the dynamic with Reese and Jean-Marc Vallée really helped me be grounded." Newton also mentioned movie-maker Vallée, who died in 2021, but was a good mentor to her. The movie-maker taught Newton "what it meant to be a real actor". "I never knew where the camera was. Jean-Marc shoots 360 [degrees], so I was always just in it with Reese, and you never felt like you were on camera," said the actress.

Tech

UK's nuclear fusion lab sets world energy-making record — so long carbon footprint



Nuclear fusion has produced more energy than it has ever produced, taking the world one step closer to its goal of clean, limitless electricity in a new experiment. The JET laboratory in the United Kingdom has established a new world record by achieving this feat, according to BBC. Stars are powered by a process called nuclear fusion. It might provide enormous amounts of energy without warming our environment, according to scientists. European scientists working at the site said: "We have achieved things we've never done before". In addition to other stars, the Sun is

also powered by nuclear fusion. It produces useful energy by heating and compressing small particles into a larger one.

It has the potential to generate unlimited amounts of renewable energy devoid of carbon emissions if it is properly scaled up to commercial levels. Most importantly, unlike solar and wind energy, it would not be dependent on the weather.

However, this is not simple, as Dr Aneeqa Khan, Research Fellow in Nuclear Fusion, University of Manchester, clarified.

"In order for the atoms to fuse together on Earth, we need temperatures ten times hotter than the Sun - around 100 million Celsius, and we need a high enough density of the atoms and for a long enough time," she explained. Over five seconds, the trials generated 69 megajoules of energy, which is not much energy and only enough for four or five hot baths. It is evident that nuclear fusion power plants are still a long way off, yet every experiment moves us closer to the goal.

UK children mental health crisis rises to drastic 53% in 4 years

The number of youngsters in England experiencing a mental health crisis has increased by 53% in just four years as per the official data indication. The number of under-18s referred to mental health services for emergency care increased to 32,521 in 2022-2023 from 21,242 in 2019-2020, according to the Sun. Many of these under-18s have seen their mental health deteriorate while waiting for treatment on NHS waiting lists. Dr Elaine Lockhart, chair of the college's child and adolescent faculty, said: "It's unacceptable that so many children and young people are

reaching crisis point before they are able to access care." "Severe mental illness is not just an adult problem. The need for specialist mental health services for children and young people is growing all the time," she said. "The evidence shows us that children who receive support quickly are less likely to develop long-term conditions, that negatively affect their education, social development and health in later life," she added. Around 50% of mental health disorders start before the age of 14 and 75% before the age of 24. Data reveals that under-18s who are waiting for

follow-up following a general practitioner referral for mental health issues have already had wait times ranging from, at worst, over two years, to an average of five months. The government's announcement last year of an additional £5 million to enhance access to already-existing early support hubs was welcomed, according to the Royal College of Psychiatrists. However, it stated that it projects that a further \$125 to \$205 million will be necessary to set up centres in each local authority, with annual operating expenses of at least \$114 million.

Health



NA-207: Asif Zardari secures victory in Shaheed Benazir Abad



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Co-Chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari secured victory in NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad in general elections 2024.

According to unofficial results, PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari bagged 146,989 in NA-

207 Shaheed Benazirabad followed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independent candidate Sardar Sher Rind. Earlier, PPP's Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah won from the NA-201 seat in Sukkur-II with 120,219 votes, according to the unofficial results.

Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari clinched victory in NA-154 and bagged 131217 votes.

A daylong polling process concluded on Thursday for the General Election 2024 overall in a peaceful manner, with active participation from all age group voters who came out in droves to elect candidates of their choice. The polling started simultaneously across the country at 8 am and continued till 5 pm without any break to provide maximum time to citizens to exercise their right to vote enshrined in the constitution.

The voters present in the premises of the polling stations at the poll-ending time were allowed to cast their votes, said a spokesperson for the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

According to the ECP, over 128 million registered voters were scheduled to exercise their democratic right by casting votes for candidates participating in elections for the national and provincial legislatures.

The polling was held for 265 seats of the National Assembly and 590 seats of provincial assemblies. The voting took place on 51 seats of the Balochistan Assembly, 128 out of 130 seats of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, 296 out of 297 seats of the Punjab Assembly and 130 seats of the Sindh Assembly. The polling was held in 855 constituencies out of 859 however due to the death of the candidate, voting will not be held in NA 8, PP 266, PK 22 and PK 91. INP



ISLAMABAD: Frontier Constabulary (FC) personnel stand alert in front of the Election Commission office in the Federal Capital. ONLINE

ICCI and FPCCI to work closely to address key issues of the business community



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

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

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

ness in the country and improve the economy. He said that ICCI is doing good work for the business community and he would always cooperate with it in efforts to promote a business-friendly environment and facilitate the better growth of trade and industry.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the economy of Pakistan is facing multiple challenges and the President FPCCI should cooperate with the newly elected government to steer the country out of economic crisis and put it on the path of sustainable economic development. He said that Pakistan has good potential to boost exports of IT, pharmaceutical, textiles, and other sectors and FPCCI should work with the government to address the issues of the export sector and create a conducive environment for export promotion.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the FPCCI should start working on budget proposals in consultation with all chambers of commerce and trade associations to present a comprehensive document of proposals based on the input of the business community for the forthcoming budget to the government. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with FPCCI in promoting the business and economic activities in the country. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI hoped that Atif Ikram Sheikh would act as a bridge between the government and the private sector and play a role to create a conducive business environment in the country. PR

Pakistan Embassy in Beijing decorated on Chinese New Year, Spring Festival

BEIJING: Pakistan Embassy in Beijing was decorated with lights and traditional lanterns to show solidarity with the people of China ahead of the Chinese New Year and Spring Festival starting from February 10.

Pakistan Ambassador to China Khalid Hashmi felicitated the people of China and shared his good wishes and greetings on the auspicious occasion of Chinese New Year and spring festival. Chinese New Year is the festival that celebrates the beginning of a new year on the tradi-

tional Chinese calendar. The first day of the Chinese New Year begins on the new moon that appears between January 21 and February 20.

The 'Year of the Dragon' officially begins on February 10, 2024 and ends on January 28, 2025.

As the fifth animal in the Chinese zodiac, the dragon is believed to represent strength, health, luck, and Yang - the masculine energy of the universe in Taoist tradition. APP



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

Pakistan pushes for self-determination of Palestinians, Kashmiris at IPU hearing

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has warned that human security was not possible without allowing the people to exercise their fundamental right to self-determination, like those struggling for freedom in Palestine and Indian illegally occupied Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, Senator Mohsin Aziz, the Pakistani representative, told the Annual Parliamentary Hearing, a joint initiative between the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), that the human security cannot be guaranteed when people over the world are denied their fundamental right to self-determination.

The UNGA President Dennis Francis and IPU President Tulia Ackson are hosting some 300 participants, including parliamentarians, Speakers of Parliament, advisers and experts, from more than 70 countries at the UN Headquarters in New York. Organizers said the theme of this joint IPU-UN hearing will align with the IPU's primary focus in 2024 on peace and international security, which is also one of the priorities of the current presidency of the UN General Assembly.

In his remarks at the Hearing, Senator Aziz said the past four months have illustrated

“How much more blood, starvation, brutality and misery the world has to witness before we can come to a ceasefire and a reduction in the suffering of Palestinians in general,”

the consequences of the suppression of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people - over 27,000 civilians killed by the Israeli onslaught in Gaza, mostly women and children.

“The deliberate obstructions of humanitarian aid have further exacerbated the suffering of 2 million displaced Palestinians,” the Pakistan representative said. In this regard, he reaffirmed Pakistan's full support and solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and sisters in these tragic times. “How much more blood, starvation, brutality and misery the world has to witness before we can come to a ceasefire and a reduction in the suffering of Palestinians in general,” he asked.

Senator Aziz also drew the attention of the gathering to the denial of the right to self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir where over 100,000 people have

been martyred in their freedom struggle. The Kashmir tragedy, he said, has intensified after the unilateral measures taken by India on the 5th of August 2019. More than 900,000 occupation troops have unleashed a brutal crackdown, committing extrajudicial killings, and abducting 15,000 Kashmiri youth.

“Simultaneously, a concerted effort is underway to change the demographic structure and composition of the occupied territory, a direct violation of the resolutions of the Security Council,” the Pakistani representative added.

In conclusion, Senator Aziz reiterated that “achieving human security will not be possible without ensuring peace, security, and stability, and without allowing people to exercise their fundamental right to self-determination.” INP

Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan wins 11 provincial assembly seats

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan has won 11 seats of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan assemblies. Those who have won include Emir JI Karachi Engineer Hafiz Naemur Rehman, Secretary General JI Balochistan Maulana Hidayatur Rehman Baloch, Engineer Abdul Majeed Badini, Emir JI Lower Dir Aizazul Mulk Afkari, Muhammad Farooq and others.

According to Deputy Secretary General Jamaat-e-Islami Azhar Iqbal Hassan, JI candidates have won from Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Emir JI Karachi Engineer Hafiz Naemur Rehman has won from PS-129 Karachi while securing 26,296 votes, JI candidate from PS-91 Karachi Muhammad Farooq 23499 votes, Arshad Hussain Korangi-5 Karachi, Muhammad Ahmed PS-124 Central Karachi-5, Junaid Makati Karachi, Aizazul Mulk Afkari from PK-17 Lower Dir, Sardar Khan from PK- 21 Bajaur, Waheed Gull from PK-20 Bajaur, Malik Ayaz from Bajaur, Secretary General JI Balochistan Maulana Hidayatur Rehman from PB- 24 Gwadar and Engineer Abdul Majeed Badini from Naseerabad. SABAH

AJK PM pays tributes to martyred Dr Afzal Guru



MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Ul Haq, while paying tributes to Shaheed Kashmir freedom movement activist Dr Afzal Guru,

said that he was a true hero of Kashmiris who played a significant role in the liberation movement.

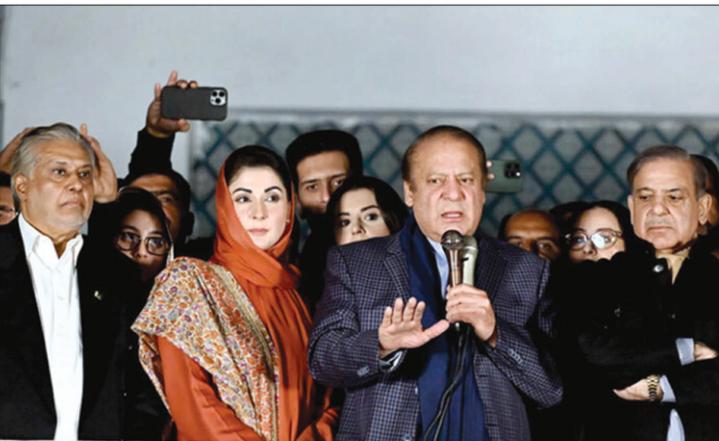
Terminating the execution of a death sentence by India against Guru as the murder of justice, the PM said, “The Indian Supreme Court awarded a death sentence to him to satisfy the collective conscience of Indian society”.

Prime Minister Haq, while paying rich tributes to the martyred Kashmir freedom movement activist on his 11th martyrdom anniversary observed on Friday, expressed that charges levelled against Afzal Guru were never proven in the court of law, but despite that, Afzal Guru was awarded capital punishment.

He further expressed that it was unfortunate that he was buried on the premises of the notorious jail soon after his execution. “The Indian authorities didn't hand over the mortal remains of Afzal Guru to his heirs,” he said, adding that Afzal Guru's supreme sacrifices would be remembered for a long time in the annals of Kashmiri history.

The prime minister expressed optimism that the day would not be far away when the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir will achieve their cherished goal of freedom. APP

Nawaz Sharif hints at forming coalition govt in first speech after elections



LAHORE: Calling his party 'biggest' in the elections 2024, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif has invited all the political parties to sit together and form a government to pull Pakistan out of the difficulties.

“We can't hold elections again and again; every one should together play a positive role in bringing

Pakistan out of this crisis,” the former prime minister said in a pre-mature victory speech as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is yet to release all the results of the Feb 8 elections.

“I can see the light and sparkle in your eyes today,” Nawaz Sharif said, congratulating the party workers because he claimed in these elections PML-N

has emerged as the largest party in the country. The PML-N supremo said his party respects the mandate of all parties, including the independents. “We are inviting everyone today to rebuild this wounded Pakistan and sit with us,” he said.

“Our [PML-N] agenda is only a happy Pakistan and you know what we have done before,” he said, highlighting the party's past performance. He stressed that there was a need for all the political parties to sit together and form a government to pull Pakistan out of the difficulties. “This is everyone's Pakistan. Everyone should sit in harmony and bring Pakistan out of the difficulties,” he added.

Furthermore, the former premier said the PML-N did not want to fight because Pakistan could not afford it. “Given the situation right now, Pakistan needs at least 10 years of stability,” he emphasised. Nawaz Sharif further said that he has told his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif to reach out to the PPP's Asif Ali Zardari, JUI-F's Fazlur Rehman and MQM-P's Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui for the formation of a coalition government. “Shehbaz Sharif and Ishaq Dar will hold meetings today,” he added. The PML-N supremo noted that not only at the Centre, his party had also taken a majority vote in Punjab as well. “We will serve at the Centre as well as in Punjab,” he added.

Nawaz Sharif added that his government would want good relations with the entire world, in particular Pakistan's immediate neighbours. INP

Pakistan's envoy to hold khuli katchehri in Belgium

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium Anna Baloch will hold a virtual khuli katchehri for the Pakistani community residing in Belgium and Luxembourg on February 16.

Meanwhile, according to her post on X, the ambassador met with European Union Deputy Director General Sante Claire Bury and discussed issues related to food safety, regulatory standards and avenues for deepening cooperation in plant and animal health. APP

Newly elected govt at the Centre would present its first budget for fiscal year 2024-25 in first week of the June 2024

ISLAMABAD: Newly elected government at the Centre would present its first budget for fiscal year 2024-25 in first week of the June 2024.

According to the Budget Call Circular 2024-25 released here on Friday, Ministry of Finance said that newly elected federal cabinet in center would approve the federal budget in the morning and elected finance minister of the would present the budget in the evening in the national assembly the same day.

According to the budget preparation schedule issued by the ministry, National Economic Council headed by newly elected Prime Minister and elected four provincial chief ministers to approve the National Development Outlay 2024-25 including Macro-Economic Framework work, Federal Public Sector Development Program, All Four Provincial Government Annual Development Plan in third week of the May. Annual Plan Coordination Committee (APCC) headed by Planning and Development Minister to approve the recommendations of the Macro-Economic Framework work, Federal Public Sector Development Program, All Four Provincial Government Annual Development Plan in first week of the 2024.

Important Budget Strategy Paper (BSP) to be approved by the Finance Division on April 2024 and would be prepared on the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund. Preparation of Medium-Term National Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework to be completed in 3rd week of the March 2024. The elected government to start the budget making exercise from March 11, 2024. SABAH