



*"It is the beauty of a vibrant democracy, and in Pakistan, it is a transformational democracy, also a brave democracy, considering the security challenges"*

Caretaker Prime Minister  
**Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar**

### COAS congratulates entire nation, interim govt, ECP & winning candidates on successful conduct of polls



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Sunday congratulated the entire Pakistani Nation, Caretaker Government, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Political Parties and all winning candidates on successful conduct of General Elections 2024. The Army Chief in a statement issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that the free and unhindered participation by Pakistani people to exercise their right of vote demonstrated their commitment to democracy and the rule of law as enshrined in Constitution of Pakistan.

The COAS said, "Leadership and personnel of law-enforcement agencies deserve our highest appreciation for creating a safe and secure environment for the electoral process, despite overwhelming odds. The constructive role played by national media, civil society, members of civil administration and judiciary enabled the successful conduct of the largest electoral exercise in national history." "Pakistan's diverse polity and pluralism will be well-represented by a unified government of all democratic forces imbued with national purpose," he added. "Elections and democracy are means to serve people of Pakistan and not ends in themselves. The nation needs stable hands and a healing touch to move on from the politics of anarchy and polarisation which does not suit a progressive country of 250 Million people. Elections are not a zero-sum competition of winning and losing but an exercise to determine the mandate of the people. Political leadership and their workers should rise above self-interests and synergise efforts in governing and serving the people which is perhaps the only way to make democracy functional and purposeful," the Army Chief said. As the people of Pakistan have reposed their combined trust in the Constitution of Pakistan, it is now incumbent upon all political parties to reciprocate the same with political maturity and unity. As we move forward from this national milestone we must reflect on where the country stands today and where our rightful place should be in the comity of nations, he added. The COAS wished that these elections bring in political and economic stability and prove to be the harbinger of peace and prosperity for our beloved Pakistan. PR

## Voters exercised their constitutional right without any hindrance: PM Kakar



**VOM Report**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that the voters in the currently held general elections exercised their constitutional rights, and by and large, they voted for their favorite candidates despite security challenges.

"It is the beauty of a vibrant democracy, and in Pakistan, it is a transformational democracy, also a brave democracy, considering the security challenges," he opined during an interview with the Turkish broadcaster TRT. To a question, he said that the next parliament would decide to hand over the power to that party who would meet the required magical number to form the new government.

The prime minister said that their responsibility as a caretaker government was to ensure security, and ahead of the elections, two terrorist incidents in Balochistan province occurred, which reminded the people of the real-time threat.

The government always had more responsibility when it came to security, he added.

Responding to a question about the suspension of the mobile services, he said that to face the security challenge, they had to block the communication channels; otherwise, they did not have any political motive whatsoever.

Elaborating his viewpoint, he said that considering that the terrorists would confine themselves to these two provinces would be a fallacy, there might be other potential attacks in other provinces.

He said they did their best to secure them. It was only mobile services that were suspended while the internet service was available. He did not think that this suspension had hindered the huge democratic exercise. The results showed that it was, by and large, a free and fair exercise. The caretaker prime minister said that even though people went out and peacefully exercised their right to vote, for the time being, he didn't have figures as to how many people had voted.

Probably it would have been a record, which meant that everyone was allowed and their votes were counted. So else was democracy, he added. Two provinces were badly hit by terrorist attacks, and if it was kept in mind, people came out and bravely voted for their candidates, which was not usual but rather quite unusual, he opined.

He said, "The people of Pakistan are quite brave; they came out and voted."

To a query regarding change in previous governments, he said there were perceptions and realities, and in the last two decades, the

change in governments, like in post-2002, happened on the floor of the parliament.

The vote of no confidence against the previous PTI's government was passed on the floor of the house with 179 votes, he added.

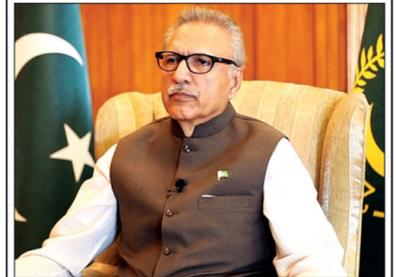
"So how can anyone call it an undemocratic exercise and intervention from outside forces?" he said, adding that even when Imran Khan was elected, people called it a product of a so-called selection process.

But the reality was that he (Imran Khan) was elected with the support of 179 members of parliament, he added.

The prime minister said that the people were unfair in their criticism of Pakistan's political system. "Political parties and the parliament are the biggest stakeholders in this whole exercise of statecraft arrangements," he asserted. About the issue of PTI's election symbol, he said it was subjected to a judicial process and related more to the structure of a political party.

Prime Minister Kakar said that it was about the democratic exercise and how political parties were governed by the laws of the land. And in the largest interest of democracy, he saw it in a quite sanguine way, which had set a precedent for all the political parties to go through that process, and in the future, people would be appreciative of this judicial decision, he added.

### President stresses upon need of multipolar world, providing development opportunities to all



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has underlined the need of a multipolar world, based upon 'an emancipation of people' and allowing people to progress and to continue with trade. In an interview with the Chinese media, the president said that the world was in flux and many areas were still troubled by conflicts that had deterred the growth of emerging economies.

The president felicitated that the peace and cooperation demonstrated by the iron-clad bilateral relations between Pakistan and China had provided a stabilizing force in the changing world. "The two countries always support each other's efforts to safeguard their respective core interests, and their deepening bond serves as a good example for the world," Xinhua quoted the president on Saturday as saying. The president said that both Pakistan and China loved peace and also highlighted the initiatives put forward by China, such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), that focused on people's development. "This (BRI) has shown the world a way of cooperating and a way of mutual development whereby movements of goods and people are made easier," he said, adding the initiative benefited international trade and sustainable development. With regard to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), President Alvi said that the infrastructure, human resources, energy, and industry sectors in Pakistan were being improved with its help. He also expressed appreciation that the loans from China did not come with strings. As the construction of the CPEC entered a new phase of high-quality development, the president envisioned enhanced cooperation with China in the sectors of information technology (IT), agriculture, vehicle manufacturing, etc. He opined that China's agricultural output per unit was much higher than in many parts of the world, and Pakistan boasted abundant agricultural resources, so their agriculture cooperation would yield tremendous results. The president further said that China was the frontrunner in areas including artificial intelligence (AI) and supercomputers, and Pakistan wanted to be a part of that. The president, on behalf of the Pakistani people and the government, extended greetings and best wishes to the Chinese people for the upcoming Chinese New Year. APP

### Pakistan held the elections as part of its commitment to building a stable and democratic society: Mumtaz Zahra Baloch

Expresses strong exception to negative tone adopted by certain countries & organizations regarding the recently held general elections



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has expressed strong exception to the negative tone adopted by certain countries and organizations regarding the recently held general elections in the country. In a statement on Saturday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said we are surprised by the negative tone of some of these statements, which neither take into account the complexity of the electoral process, nor acknowledge the free and enthusiastic exercise of the right to vote by tens of millions of Pakistanis.

She said these statements ignore the undeniable fact that Pakistan has held general elections, peacefully and successfully, while dealing

with serious security threats resulting primarily from foreign sponsored terrorism. Some statements are not even factual. She clarified there was no nationwide internet shutdown. Only mobile services were suspended for the day to avoid terrorist incidents on the polling day. The elections exercise has demonstrated that the concerns of many commentators were misplaced.

The spokesperson said Pakistan held the elections as part of its commitment to building a stable and democratic society. While we value constructive advice from our friends, making negative commentary even before the completion of electoral process is neither constructive nor objective. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan will continue to work towards building a vibrant democratic polity. Every election and peaceful transition of power brings us closer to that goal. SABAH

### Sadiq Sanjrani extends heartfelt congratulations to China on the Chinese New Year

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has extended warm congratulations to the people, government, and President of China on the occasion of the Chinese New Year.

Embracing the festivities of the Year of the Dragon, Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani expressed sincere wishes for prosperity, happiness, and continued success for the Chinese Nation. The message highlighted the admiration for the courage and intellect of the Chinese people, recognizing their resilience and innovative spirit as a global inspiration.

Acknowledging the robust bilateral relations between Pakistan and China, the Chairman commended the enduring friendship and collaboration that has strengthened ties between the two nations over the years. SABAH

### ECP orders re-polling in three constituencies after polling material theft

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has directed a re-polling of 53 polling stations in three of the National and provincial assembly's constituencies on February 15 due to the theft, snatching, and burning of polling material in those constituencies.

According to an ECP spokesman, the commission has withheld the results in NA-88 Khushab, PS-18 Ghotki-I, and PK-90 Kohat-I constituencies due to the wastage of polling materials. The results of these constituencies will be announced after February 15.

According to the spokesperson, the Commission has ordered re-polling in 26 polling stations of NA-88, following the burning of polling material by a crowd at the Returning Officer's office. The commission has mandated the re-polling of 2 polling stations in Ghotki due to the

snatching and destruction by unknown miscreants, and 25 polling stations in PK-90 Kohat.

Meanwhile, on receiving a complaint of vandalism at a polling station in NA-242 Karachi, the Commission has directed the Regional Election Commissioner to investigate the incident and submit an investigation report to the Commission within three days.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has summoned the leader of the Istehkam Pakistan Party, Firdous Ashiq Awan, for allegedly snatching a police officer on election duty. The hearing is scheduled for Monday.

According to the spokesperson of the Election Commission, the details of the incident were placed before the commission, after which the commission decided to summon both of them for hearing. APP

## Ambassador Tirmizi represents Pakistan at Abu Dhabi Dialogue



KARACHI: The Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif speaking during Town Hall programme of Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@sha) at a local hotel. APP

ABU DHABI: Pakistan's envoy to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi represented Pakistan at the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) here on Saturday. Pakistan is the current Chair of the ADD.

Junaid Murtaza, Community Welfare Attache (CWA), Pakistan Consulate General, Dubai delivered the statement on behalf of Pakistan.

In his remarks, he said that the forum provided an important opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion and dialogue regarding the safe, orderly, and regular labour movement in one of the largest temporary labour migration corridors.

He further said that Pakistan was of the view that the Abu Dhabi Dialogue served as a platform for multilateral and multi-dimensional collaboration, bringing together leaders, policymakers, experts and stakeholders. It provided a mechanism to foster interconnectivity, enhance collaborations, and promote the exchange of ideas for lasting solutions



related to temporary labour migration, he added. The CWA said that Pakistan considered that the deliberations held at the ADD would help in addressing the challenges and exploring opportunities to ensure the protection of migrant workers

and enabling countries of origin and destination to get maximum benefits from the temporary labour migration.

He informed that the Chair and Secretariat had prepared a series of reports with the help of experts that would be presented to the Ministers at the Seventh Ministerial Consultation on Sunday. Pakistan suggested to devise a comprehensive Social Security paradigm within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)'s labour migration corridor and also provide an enabling environment for migrant workers in their respective home countries for their dignified return and reintegration.

Pakistan thanked the government of UAE for its resolve to act as the Permanent Secretariat of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and appreciated the role of the Advisory Committee, experts and researchers in their assistance in formulating policy directions for governmental representatives of ADD member states. APP

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## We need a holistic transformation

DR MURTAZA KHUHQRO

In 2024, Pakistan is grappling with severe economic and social challenges, including a staggering inflation rate of 39.18 per cent, a depreciating currency, and a high government debt-to-GDP ratio of 89 per cent. The country's GDP growth is projected at a modest 2.5 per cent, and the trade deficit remains a concern despite a reduction in imports. Socially, Pakistan faces widespread illiteracy with 25 million children out of school and a completely obsolete education system, rampant unemployment with 85 per cent of the population affected, inadequate health infrastructure, prevalent child labour, gender discrimination, and escalating food insecurity.

All of these problems serve as clear indicators of more profound underlying issues. The central structural problem lies in the uneven distribution of power between the remnants of colonial-era state structures, which still exert a significant influence over the power dynamics and decision-making processes, and the so-called political forces, along with a society marked by backwardness and various distortions.

The core issue stems from the fact that Pakistan lacked a clear vision for its future as a nation before its creation. Furthermore, it failed to establish a robust political party deeply rooted in the grassroots and equipped with well-defined organizational institutions and a clear hierarchy. Additionally, Pakistan did not manage to draft its constitution within the first two or three years of its inception. As a result of these shortcomings, the country fell into the clutches of the colonial institutions that had been established by the colonial masters to govern the people of India. Unfortunately, these historical oversights have had lasting consequences. What is truly unfortunate and deeply concerning is that over the past 76 years, Pakistan has made little progress in addressing these weaknesses, distortions, and fundamental structural problems. This stagnation has hindered the nation's ability to fully realize its potential and overcome the historical legacies that continue to shape its governance and society. The oligarchic rule of the civil bureaucracy from 1947 to 1951, followed by the continued dominance of the military bureaucracy in the power structures, with the judiciary as their B teams and politicians as their C teams, has been the primary cause of the severe economic, social, and political hardships endured by the people of Pakistan both historically and to this day. There is a pervasive misconception among amateur adventurers and ill-informed policymakers that a country can progress by implementing isolated grand ideas in various aspects of its economy and governance. These amateur adventurers often emerge from the ranks of serving and retired civil and military bureaucrats, whose minds become filled with ideas they encounter during workshops and training programmes, particularly in the developed countries of the West. They may also be exposed to successful projects from around the world. However, what they fail to grasp is that disconnected and disparate ideas do not lead to the composite and comprehensive development of a nation.

In essence, the perpetuation of bureaucratic dominance in Pakistan's power structures, coupled with the misguided belief in isolated grand ideas, has hindered the nation's ability to achieve holistic development and has contributed to the ongoing challenges faced by its people in economic, social, and political spheres.

These amateur adventurers often point to the era of dictator Ayub Khan, who completely derailed the country from the semblance of civilian rule to military rule. However, they seem to forget a crucial aspect – that a country is fundamentally about its people, not just its geography, GDP, growth rate, or the enrichment of specific classes or sections within it. To illustrate this, let's look at the backdrop of the first national census in 1951, which painted a grim picture with an overall literacy rate of a mere 14 per cent. Disparities were evident, with urban areas outperforming rural regions. Furthermore, male literacy stood at 21 per cent, while female literacy lagged significantly at 7.0 per cent. It's worth noting that literacy at the time primarily meant the ability to read, write, or sign one's name instead of using a thumb impression. By 1961, the 'literacy rate' had inched up to 24 per cent, and by 1965, it reached 26.7 per cent. While gender gaps began to narrow, with male 'literacy' at 34 per cent and female 'literacy' at 15 per cent, the larger question looms: what could have been achieved if people-centric leaders had been in charge? Such leaders would likely have envisioned the transformation of the backward society by prioritizing the education of the nearly 95 per cent illiterate population. This ambitious goal wouldn't have solely benefited society but also triggered advancements in agriculture, industry, and the services sector of the economy. Unfortunately, the civil and military bureaucrats had different priorities, often seeking favour with the Western bloc, led by the neo-colonial power, the USA. Their pursuit of being the 'blue-eyed boys' of these Western powers, symbolized by the warm welcomes they received in Washington, reflected their loyalty as mercenaries.

In the 1960s, Pakistan's power structure was complex, with military rulers, bureaucrats, feudal landlords, and emerging capitalists playing key roles. The military held significant political influence, while civil bureaucrats and the judiciary aligned with them. Feudal landlords controlled rural areas, causing social inequalities despite 'land reforms'. Emerging capitalists amassed wealth through industry, worsening disparities.

The writer is an advocate of the high court and a former civil servant.



Wajid Islam

# Economic threat

The election drama will be over soon, but the economic theatre is going to haunt the country in the coming days. While this real threat is still here, it is not getting enough attention.

Managing the economy will not be an easy task, and the incoming government is likely to face several changes when dealing with fiscal mismanagement.

The government has failed to bring down the double-digit inflation of 29.7 per cent, and many believe that this unbridled inflation will make the lives of middle-class and poor people even harder. The government's contractionary monetary policy is not producing any fruitful results either.

The State Bank of Pakistan has maintained the policy rate at 22 per cent, but is it worth it? Is it not further choking businesses in the country? The high prices of fuel and raw materials have pushed inflation to a new level, which has adversely impacted the purchasing power of consumers.

The country is exposed to financial

vulnerabilities; it is heavily relying on debts. Pakistan's external debt and liabilities stand at \$128 billion, and the government has to pay \$77.5 billion by August 2026. The country's debt servicing obligation exceeds its overall tax return for this year. The government expenditure is Rs14.46 trillion, less than half of this will be covered by tax revenues while the remaining will be financed from different types of debts from external,

need populist agendas; it needs some stringent reforms, or else everyone in the country, across all classes, will feel the heat in the coming days.

Dependence on international lenders and friendly countries will not help the country. If it were the solution, Pakistan would have not signed 23 IMF loan programmes so far. Despite this massive borrowing, the economy is in the doldrums. The

measures and abstain from taking further loans. The country's debt has turned unsustainable as more loans are borrowed to repay the old ones and thus the vicious cycle of borrowing goes on.

Every government relies on short-term remedies to relieve the symptoms but no one is diagnosing the real problems by adopting long-run and effective measures. Even Bangladesh and India were facing the same issues but they have made some painful reforms and are now on the right track to economic growth.

In these hard times of stagflation, unemployment and low growth, indirect and regressive taxation will not help the 40 per cent poor population of the country.

The only way out is to focus on the young population by encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation. The reliance on loans will not save the country from the looming economic disaster, only reforms and prudent economic management with faster and sustainable growth can help.

But this cannot be achieved through some magical means. Only painful fiscal choices can relieve the pain and put the country on the trajectory of progression.

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## The government's contractionary monetary policy is not producing any fruitful results either

banking and non-banking sectors. This further borrowing will push the economy to the point of no return.

The new government will face extreme difficulties as it has to repay huge sums and has no blueprint to accumulate dollars and reduce economic distress. It is the bad luck of the country of 250 million people – with the largest share of young people – that it has no way forward for good governance, rule of law, and economic management.

The high unemployment rate will prove to be a time bomb if the youth is not utilized properly and remains marginalized. The country does not

country needs to mobilize its resources for sustainable economic growth and rethink its unwise consumption patterns. It is the dilemma of the country that its bureaucracy is roaming in luxury vehicles, bought on borrowed money, having no output in the form of good governance. The addiction to borrowing and the lavishness of spending will crumble the weak Pakistani economy.

With meagre revenue and a high deficit, how can the country be stabilized financially? Despite repeated warnings, the country's policymakers are reluctant to take corrective

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

### Pakistan

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. Rajagopalacharia, 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.

#### MEN, WOMEN, STUDENT, ULEMA AND BUSINESSMEN

Organized under the banner of the All-India Muslim League. Branches of the party were opened even in the remote corners of the subcontinent. Literature in the form of pamphlets, books, magazines and newspapers was produced to explain the Pakistan demand and distributed widely. The support gained by the All-India Muslim League and its demand for Pakistan was tested after the failure of the Simla Conference, convened by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in 1945. Elections were called to determine the respective strength of the political parties. The All-India Muslim League election campaign was based on the Pakistan demand. The Muslim community responded to this call in an unprecedented way. Numerous Muslim parties were formed making united parliamentary board at the behest of the Congress to oppose the Muslim League. But the All-India Muslim League swept all the thirty seats in the Central Legislature and in the provincial elections also, its victory was outstanding.

To be continued...

## Showbiz

### Bradley Cooper talks playing beloved Rocket Raccoon in MCU: 'Cried a lot'

Bradley Cooper played Rocket Raccoon in MCU for a decade since 2014's 'Guardians of the Galaxy'



Bradley Cooper loved playing the beloved Rocket Raccoon in multiple Marvel Cinematic Universe films since it first began with Guardians of the Galaxy back in 2014. Cooper, who holds a special place for the animated raccoon, reflected on the character's story line in a Q&A at the Santa Barbara Film Festival, where he was awarded outstanding performer of the year for his work in Maestro, via People Magazine. "I love Rocket Raccoon so much," he told the crowd. "And I love doing that third one [Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3] because [that's] when James [Gunn] told me what was going to be the origin story. I just got so excited that I cried a lot." The

actor, 49, praised Gunn for the experience he had making the film. "It's the greatest, and James is wonderful, and we would do it like a play, actually." He continued, "And we were trying to figure out how best to do it because I do the voice after the movie's already been shot, and first they would show scenes, and then eventually James would just read all the other parts, and we would do it like a play, and it was actually really fun." Talking about his character in the third and final movie of the MCU franchise, he said, "It just kept on giving. Couldn't believe it. We made the first one. We'd never in a million years think I would play it for over a decade. It's crazy."

## Tech

### 380 million years old fish fossil discovered in Australia shocking scientists

An extinct lobe-finned fish, a sleek species with large canines and bony scales from the Middle-Late Devonian period, which lasted for about 380 million years has been discovered in Australia. In the past, when rivers poured over the now-dry land, this predatory aquatic animal flourished in what is now Australia, according to Interesting Engineering. Flinders University palaeontologists have named the recently found fish species Harajacactes zhumini. The fossilised remains were found over 200 kilometres west of Alice Springs at the Harajica Sandstone Member, a distant fossil location in Australia's Northern Territory. The scientists estimate that adults of this species reached a maximum size of 40 cm based on the fossilised bones. The recently discovered species is a member of the ancient Tetrapodomorph lineage and

has distinctive biological characteristics. Large holes were found in the upper part of the specimen's skull during examination. "These spiracular structures are thought to facilitate surface air-breathing, with modern-day African bichir fish having similar structures for taking in air at the water's surface," said Brian Choo, who led the fossil examination. "This feature appears in multiple Tetrapodomorph lineages at about the same time during the Middle-Late Devonian," added Choo. The authors point out that several other extinct lobe-finned fish species, such as the Gogonanus from Western Australia, have been found to possess the remarkable biological trait of a huge spiracle. Pickeringius, an unrelated ray-finned fish species from Western Australia that was discovered in 2018, is another example of this feature.

## Health

### How much hair loss is normal?

Everyone experiences hair loss at different rate, but certain factors determine its normalcy

While some of us ball up the stray hair in our hands and let it wash down the drain which eventually clogs the pipes, others place it on the shower wall to be removed at the end signifying that we're all a little worried about losing hair.

Fortunately, there's good news, as board-certified dermatologist Julia Schwartz, MD, FAAD, who serves as Ro's dermatology advisor, says that it's unlikely that you're losing as much hair as you believe you are, and that it's common for a woman to lose up to 100 strands of hair every day, according to Health.

However, some conditions such as alopecia areata,

cancer therapy, or vitamin deficiencies can result in increased concerns that can lead to more hair loss than is expected.

Aging naturally also causes hair loss. As people age, almost everyone has some degree of hair loss because certain hair follicles stop creating new hair and hair development slows down. This condition is known as androgenetic alopecia, or baldness with both a male and female pattern. In men, the loss of hair typically occurs around the temples or crown of the head; in women, the hair becomes less thick, exposing more of the scalp. Everyone experiences hair loss at a different rate, so deter-

mining what is "normal" for you will depend on how you normally lose hair. For example, if you appear to be losing a lot of hair but aren't showing much more of your scalp, you're most likely just going through your regular cycle of hair growth and shedding. Unfortunately, hair loss cannot be totally prevented. Furthermore, no one is aware of any mystical tactics that will assist you in maintaining your gorgeous locks atop your head. Since every person is different and hair loss can be caused by a range of uncontrollable variables such as aging, hereditary, and medical disorders, we frequently have to accept the hand we're dealt.





## A govt should be formed with national unity to bring political stability, says Bilawal Bhutto

Says no govt could be formed in Centre, Punjab & Balochistan without inclusion of his party



ISLAMABAD: As the compilation of 2024 election outcomes still underway for more than 48 hours and each party's position is continuously changing every minute, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday stressed that no government could be formed in Centre, Punjab and Balochistan without inclusion of his party.

"A government should be formed with national unity to bring political stability," Bilawal said while speaking to a private TV channel, adding: "I want to end the politics of hate and division."

After the recent polls, the politico said that the PPP is the only party with representation in all four provinces. "Complete results have not been released yet [...] However, without the PPP, no government can be formed in Centre, Punjab and Balochistan." He thanked the nationals for casting their vote in large numbers. The former foreign minister also congratulated PPP supporters and voters for exhibiting confidence in the party's leadership and candidates on the poll day.

"I cannot indulge in the old style of politics [...] We want to bring political stability in our country." The PPP chief said that the decision for the next government will be taken by the party's central executive committee (CEC) after the announcement of the final election results.

"It is in the country's interest to build political unity as it would be difficult to resolve public issues without addressing the core national issue of political instability."

"I am not in a position to make any announcement. The nation is also looking towards the decision of the independent candidates," said the politico as the independent candidates backed by the former ruling party were dominating the election results so far. Commenting on the credibility of the nationwide electoral event, Bilawal Bhutto said that he was not disappointed with the recent elections.

He, however, criticised that they were winning in Lahore with a big margin on February 8 at midnight but the situation was entirely changed in the morning.

To another question, the PPP chairman urged parties for joint efforts to form the next set-up in Balochistan province. SABAH



KARACHI: The Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed talking to media persons. APP

### General Polls 2024:

## Independent candidates dominate mainstream political parties

ISLAMABAD: The general elections 2024 witnessed a rare happening in democratic history of the country as independent candidates achieved a significant dominance over the mainstream political parties especially in the National and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assemblies, as per the results issued by the Election commission of Pakistan by Friday midnight. According to the available results (Form-47) of 231 National Assembly constituencies, independent candidates managed to secure 94 seats, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) 63, Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) 50, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) two, Istehqam-e-Pakistan Party (IPPP) two, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan 14, Grand Democratic Alliance one, Pakistan Muslim League-Zia one, Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen Pakistan (MWMMP) one and PML three seats.

Out of 294 Punjab Assembly-seat results, independent candidates bagged 135 seats, PML-N 1329, PPPP 10, Tehreek e Labbaik Pakistan one, IPP one, Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) seven and PML-Z one.

For the Sindh Assembly, PPPP secured 83 seats, independent candidates 14, MQM-P 26, GDA two, and Jamaat-e-Islami two, out of the total 127 constituencies' results announced by the time of filing of this update.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, independent candidates so far clinched 89 provincial assembly seats, PML-N 5, PPPP three, JUI seven, JI three, Awami National Party (ANP) and PTIP



one each, out of 105 seats.

In Balochistan, PML-N secured nine seats, PPPP 12, JUI eight, Independent candidates five, JI one, Awami National Party two and Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) four; and one each by Balochistan National Party-Awami and National Party (NP), as per the results announced for 43 seats so far.

Polling for the General Election 2024 concluded overall in a peaceful manner on Thursday at 5 pm after commencing simultaneously across the country at 8 am. The nine-hour polling continued without any break to provide maximum time to citizens to exercise their right to vote enshrined in the constitution. 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 overall 859; however, due to the death of the candidate, voting was not held in NA 8, PP 266, PK 22, and PK 91.

It was the 5th consecutive general poll for the transfer of power by one democratic set-up to another since the dawn of the 21st century (2002-2024), reflecting the nation's solid commitment to democracy, democratic values, and norms. The polls were held overall in a smooth and peaceful manner as no major untoward incident was reported throughout the country on election day with active participation of the citizens who came out in droves to exercise their right to vote for electing candidates of their choice. APP

## UN must actively seek resolution of Kashmir, Palestine disputes: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has called on the United Nations to actively seek to resolve festering disputes, such as Kashmir and Palestine, with several modalities for conflict resolution being available under the UN Charter.

Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Munir Akram said, "The current threats to peace and security emanate mainly from violations of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, especially non-use of force, foreign occupation, demand of self-determination, great power rivalries, and a new arms race."

"We must prevent a major conflict, especially in a 'nuclearized environment'," the Pakistani envoy stressed, pointing out that it is essential to address the root causes of terrorism and new and emerging forms, as also "state terrorism" and "state-sponsored" terrorism; and ensure the protection of human rights while combating terrorism.

Munir Akram also called for a Security Council that is more representative, more democratic, more transparent, more effective and more accountable. "This goal can only be attained through a comprehensive reform that caters to the interests of all Member States - small, medium, and large," he said.

The model of the Uniting For the Italy/Pakistan-led Consensus (UfC) group, which seeks more elected seats but no additional permanent members in an enlarged Council, was the most likely to secure the "widest possible" support, the Pakistani envoy said. The Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) process offers the best platform to reach an agreed and negotiated outcome to restructure the Security Council, he said.

Quoting the Secretary-General that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are "on life-support", he noted that over 100 developing countries confront food, fuel and financial insecurity, and over 60 developing countries are trapped by unsustainable debt. In that light, Munir Akram said that there was a need for a binding international convention on the right to development.

## PPP to form Government in centre: Shazia Marri

HYDERABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party leader Shazia Atta Marri has expressed hope that the PPP would form a Government in the centre and is already in a position to form a Government in Sindh.

Talking to media here on Saturday She said that speculation about an alliance with any Party was baseless as election results are not yet completed and no decision has been taken about the future of Independent candidates.

She said that the Pakistan Peoples Party's central executive Committee meeting is to be held this week in which we consult on the Party's forum and the decision to be made in this regard would be communicated to the Media.

She refuted the impression that the Pakistan People's Party has held an official meeting with PML-N regarding the formation of the Government. INP

## Two NA independent candidates join PML-N

ISLAMABAD: Two independent candidates, who secured victory in general elections 2024, have announced to join Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), strengthening the party's position in National Assembly (NA). Independent candidates came up from behind and stole the show, with so far securing 102 seats in National Assembly (NA). Besides PTI, the successful candidates also include some who had only been awarded a ticket following the rejection of their party's more preferred nominees.

The results of 257 out of the total 265 National Assembly constituencies where elections were held had been announced, which showed the independents in the lead with 102 seats overall. The PML-N and PPP had won 73 and 54 seats, respectively, and were set to bag most of the 70 reserved seats for women and non-Muslims in the house.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement had bagged 17 seats, while the PML-Q had three. The JUI-F and Istehqam-i-Pakistan Party (IPP) had secured three and two seats, respectively. MWM and BNP had clinched one seat each. Meanwhile, two independent candidates - one from Islamabad and another from Rawalpindi - throw their weights behind Nawaz Sharif-led PML-N. Barrister Aqeel Malik, who secured Rawalpindi's NA-54 seat, said that the victory belongs to Nawaz Sharif. On the other hand, Raja Khurram - who took win in Islamabad's NA-48 - was the joint candidate for IPP and PML-N.

Earlier in the day, it was reported that PML-N began contacting 'disgruntled' candidates, who contested the general elections 2024 independently and came out victorious, in efforts to strengthen the party's position in National Assembly (NA). INP

## SECP takes action against 1,849 violations, imposes fines Rs 962 million

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has taken robust action against corporate misconduct, adjudicating a total of 1,849 cases for violations of regulatory standards in the first half of the current financial year. With fines totaling approximately Rs 962 million, the SECP's crackdown aims to uphold compliance and transparency within the corporate sector. Notably, during the same period from July to December, the SECP issued judgments in 11 cases concerning illegal collection of public deposits, resulting in penalties amounting to around Rs. 58 crore and disqualification of directors for five years. Furthermore, regulatory orders were issued against listed companies, resulting in fines totaling Rs 17.5 million for improper investments. The digital landscape also faced scrutiny, with fines amounting to Rs 1.3 crore imposed on seven companies within the sector. The SECP's vigilance extended to insurance companies and Takaful operators, initiating adjudication proceedings in eight cases related to various infractions such as inadequate account maintenance, breaches of credit and guarantee, and insufficient security provisions. INP

## PPP, PML-N exchange reservations over criticism before elections

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), who are potentially set to form coalition governments in the Centre, exchange reservations over the criticism from both sides before the conduct of general elections 2024.

In a speech on Friday evening, PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif announced that he had tasked his brother, former PM Shehbaz Sharif, to reach out to major parties such as PPP, MQM-P and others, to form an alliance.

In this vein, Shehbaz Sharif met with PPP leader Asif Ali Zardari and his son, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, at the residence of Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

During the meeting, Shehbaz Sharif told Asif

Zardari that PPP leadership - prominently Bilawal Bhutto - unnecessarily criticised PML-N in the election campaign.

Responding to the reservation, Asif Zardari said it was part of the election campaign and must be ended. "Mian Sahab [Shehbaz Sharif], you too had been criticising PPP", Zardari told the PML-N president.

The PPP co-chairman stressed that now the matters should be resolved for the peaceful formation of the government. "A joint formula must be established to stable the democracy", he added.

Meanwhile, the two parties sought time for consultation before a formal agreement, sources added. INP

## Indonesian Embassy facilitates nationals at early voting event

ISLAMABAD: The Committee for the Indonesian General Elections with the support of the Indonesian Embassy in the federal capital conducted an advance polling event on Saturday at the premises of the Embassy. This early voting was held for the upcoming general elections in Indonesia scheduled to be held on 14 February 2024, said a news release.

The event provided an opportunity for the Indonesian nationals in Pakistan to participate in the electoral process as well as fostered a sense of community and camaraderie among the Indonesians and their families. The elections in democratic Indonesia will determine not only the new President and Vice President but also parliamentary and local representatives. On this occasion, the Embassy made comprehensive arrangements to facilitate more than 800 citizens along with their families from all over Pakistan to participate in the voting process including Islamabad Capital Territory. While another approximately 200 Indonesian nationals will exercise their democratic right to vote in the Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi on Sunday. In addition to serving as a platform for exercising political rights, the event transcended its primary purpose and evolved into a vibrant social gathering. Attendees, both old acquaintances and new friends, seized the opportunity to reconnect, share stories, and celebrate the joyous occasion together. The atmosphere was filled with laughter, music, and the taste of Indonesian cuisine as participants enjoyed the bazaar featuring food stalls,



a musical event, health facilities, and a children's play area. "This event is designed not only as a political event but also as a moment of sharing happiness for Indonesians despite political differences," said Arrozi Munib, Head of the Indonesian General Elections Committee in Islamabad. "The ballot process was done smoothly with no significant hurdles on the ground," added Zulfikar Alamsyah, Head of General Elections Supervisory Committee. Moreover, the Embassy extended invitations to Pakistani think tanks and journalists, highlighting the significance of the electoral process in fostering strong democratic ties between Indonesia and Pakistan and further amplifying the message of cross-border cooperation and mutual respect. One of the distinctive features of the event was the marking of voters' fingers with special purple ink, symbolizing their active participation in the electoral process. This visible demonstration of civic duty underscored the commitment of voters to shaping the future of their homeland through democratic means. APP

## Sirajul Haq rejects the election results as massively rigged

Calls for the resignation of CEC & formation of an independent commission to probe into the entire poll process

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Emir Sirajul Haq has rejected the election results as massively rigged, calling for the resignation of the chief election commissioner and the formation of an independent commission to probe into the entire poll process.

Speaking at a press conference in Mansoorah on Saturday, Sirajul Haq highlighted the theft of the people's mandate in Karachi in favor of the MQM, despite independent surveys indicating a close competition between JI and PTI-backed candidates.

Warning the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to rectify the results or face protests, he also urged independents to join JI's demonstrations. He said the JI could extend the protest to the ECP head-office in Islamabad if its demands were not met. Expressing concern over rigging in

Punjab in favor of the PML-N, Sirajul Haq contended that the election outcome was manipulated, questioning the legitimacy of the government formed through such means. He criticized the ECP for failing in its constitutional duty to ensure free and fair elections. The general



elections should have been held in 2023 but the ECP desperately failed to meet the deadline period for general elections as per the constitution.

Sirajul Haq also raised issues surrounding the closure of internet and mobile services on the Election

Day, the much-delayed announcement of official results, and the lack of a level playing field for all contestants. He asserted that the flawed 2024 elections mirrored historical patterns, warning of increased polarization.

He vowed the JI would continue its struggle for the right of the people and towards establishment the rule of law and justice. He appreciated the JI candidates and workers for their efforts during the election campaign. He thanked the voters on posing confidence in the JI. He announced plans to visit Karachi to engage with the city's residents and party members, formulating a strategy for future protests.

Ji leaders, including vice-emirs Liaqat Baloch, Rashid Naseem, Dr. Farid Paracha, JI Secretary General Ameerul Azim and JI Spokesperson Qasim Sharif were also present. SABAH