



This year's Hajj is set to be optimal for Pakistani pilgrims, offering unprecedented facilities

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony  
**Aneeq Ahmed**

[/asian\\_telegraph](#)

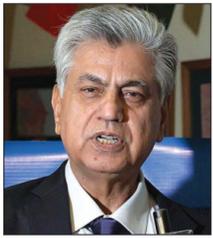
[/theasiantelegraph](#)

[/company/theasiantelegraph](#)

[theasiantelegraph.net](#)

Price Rs 8 | Pages 4

## NA session may be summoned between Feb 22-29: Solangi



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said that the first session of the new National Assembly might be called on any date between February 22 and February 29.

As per the Constitution, the president could convene the National Assembly's session within 21 days of the polling date, the minister said while explaining the post-elections procedure in a talk show of the Pakistan Television (PTV).

To a query, he said a simple majority was required to form a government and the president did not have any power to invite a person or a party for the formation of government.

After the 18th Constitutional Amendment, he said, the office of the president represented the Federation.

He said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was bound to issue official results within 14 days of the holding of the elections and the winning candidates were ought to submit the required documents to the electoral watchdog in attested form.

If the details were not submitted, the winning candidate would not be declared an official member of the National Assembly, he added.

He said that the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs took up the matter of convening the session as soon as the National Assembly Secretariat received the official results from the ECP.

Immediately after the election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker, he said the Leader of the House would be elected.

To another query, he said secret balloting was followed in election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the NA while for the election of the Leader of the House, the process was otherwise. Maulana Fazlur Rehman was a seasoned politician and announced to be part of the Parliament, he responded to another question.

The minister said most of the political parties had expressed consensus on Shehbaz Sharif as prime minister for the second time. It would be the prerogative of next government to decide about the size of the Federal Cabinet, he noted.

Highlighting the measures taken against dollars smuggling by the caretaker government, he said the dollar was being sold for Rs 350 to 400 in the open market. Economic stability was directly linked to political stability, he said while expressing the hope that the next government would continue the reforms process. APP



The signing ceremony of MoU between the Stakeholders on Consortium Formation for Machike-Thallian-Tarujabba White Oil Pipeline Project has been held on February 14, 2024 at SIFC Secretariat, PM Office.

## Institution of FTO needed to be further strengthened: Alvi

Says FTO had effectively contributed to promoting good governance in the country

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) has addressed the grievances of the taxpayers by processing 8,963 cases with an implementation status of 94.07% during 2023 as compared to 73.29% last year. Furthermore, requests for refund claims were also decided to the tune of Rs. 17,742.16 million in 2023 and the due amount was paid to the aggrieved taxpayers by the FBR. This was highlighted by the Federal Tax Ombudsman, Asif Mahmood Jah, who called on President Dr. Arif Alvi and presented FTO's Annual Report 2023, at Aiwan-e-Sadron Wednesday. The Federal Tax Ombudsman briefed the President about FTO's overall performance and its key initiatives to facilitate taxpayers and expeditiously address their grievances against maladministration of tax officials. He stated that concerted efforts were undertaken to enhance FTO's outreach by launching awareness campaigns and opening up regional offices in the country. He informed that Honorary Advisors had also



been appointed abroad to facilitate overseas Pakistanis in the USA, Canada, Sweden, UAE, Hong Kong and the Philippines. He added that FTO had appointed leading businessmen as Honorary Advisors from various Chambers of Commerce and Industries to facilitate the business community. "To ensure prompt response against the maladministration

of tax authorities, a mobile App has been developed enabling aggrieved complainants to lodge complaints and check their status using mobile/smart devices", he stated. He apprised that highly informative training sessions had also been conducted to enhance the professional skills and expertise of Ombudsman institutions in the country.

While appreciating the performance of FTO, President Dr. Arif Alvi said that FTO had done an excellent job by processing a record number of cases and providing refunds worth Rs Rs17,742.16 million to taxpayers. He remarked that the institution of FTO needed to be further strengthened as it was providing free-of-cost and prompt justice to aggrieved taxpayers. He called for using the latest technology for seamless service delivery and timely disposal of taxpayers' complaints to improve the country's tax regime.

President Dr. Arif Alvi said that FTO had effectively contributed to promoting good governance in the country. It is worth stating that the FTO is a quasi-judicial forum, mandated to diagnose, investigate, redress and rectify any injustice or maladministration done to a person by the functionaries administering federal tax laws. It aims at enhancing the overall satisfaction of the taxpayers and strengthening their trust in the system. SABAH

## MoU signed for Machike-Thallian-Tarujabba White Oil Pipeline

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark achievement, the signing ceremony of the MoU between the Stakeholders on Consortium Formation (SCF) for the Machike-Thallian-Tarujabba White Oil Pipeline Project was held here on Wednesday.

The ceremony was witnessed by Minister for Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali, Secretary (Petroleum Division) Momin Agha, and Secretary SIFC Jameel Qureshi, said a news release.

The heads of consortium entities i.e. MD Pakistan State Oil (PSO) Syed Muhammad Taha, DG Frontier Works Organization (FWO) Major General Abdul Sami, MD Interstate Gas Systems Pvt. Ltd (ISGS) Nadeem Bajwa signed the historical document. The pipeline project is a testament to the commitment of the Petroleum Division and the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The Machike-Thallian-Taru Jabba White Oil Pipeline (MTT-WOP) aims to complement the oil pipeline backbone from Karachi to Peshawar apart from achieving the energy-efficient movement of petroleum products as well as preventing adulteration and providing increased safety. It will connect Punjab from Machike, near Lahore, to Tarujabba, near Peshawar. The pipeline consists of three segments: Machike-Chakpirana, Chakpirana to Rawat, and Rawat to Tarujabba. It completes the infrastructure supply chain from Karachi to Peshawar. This may be called a flagship project spearheaded by FWO and jointly supported by PSO and ISGS. The 427 km long pipeline, aims at ensuring a smooth supply chain of petroleum products from Karachi to Peshawar with an initial carrying capacity of 6 MTPA. The pipeline shall contribute significantly towards the reduction of traffic congestion, environmental pollution, and transportation costs.

## Envoy discusses upcoming JMC meeting with Iraqi Housing Minister



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador to Iraq Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed had a meeting with Iraqi Minister for Housing and Construction Bankeem Rikani and discussed matters related to bilateral interests. During the meeting, they deliberated on the upcoming meeting of the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) and employment of Pakistani labour in the reconstruction projects of Iraq, Pakistan's Embassy in Iraq posted on X. APP

## Keel Laying Ceremony of second HANGOR Class Submarine held at Karachi Shipyard



RAWALPINDI: Achieving another milestone in indigenous submarine development project at Pakistan, the Keel Laying Ceremony of second HANGOR Class Submarine was held at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KS&EW) where Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as Chief Guest on Wednesday.

As per the defence agreement between Pakistan and China for development of eight HANGOR Class Submarines, four submarines are under construction at Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry in China whereas remaining four are being built at KS&EW under Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. Speaking on the occasion, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf said, "It is a matter of great pride to witness the Keel Laying of HANGOR Class Submarine at Karachi Shipyard in collaboration with China Shipbuilding & Off-shore International Co. Ltd (CSOC)." He lauded the joint efforts and performance of Ministry of Defence Production, Pakistan Navy, Karachi Shipyard (KS&EW) and CSOC for construction of these Submarines. The Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted that

indigenization was a top priority of Naval Headquarters policy which is being manifested by construction of these state of the art Submarines at KS&EW.

Earlier during his welcome address, the Managing Director KS&EW, Rear Admiral Salman Ilyas highlighted that Karachi Shipyard was fully cognizant and completely aligned with the goals set forth by Government and Pakistan Navy in pursuing self-reliance in submarine construction. These submarines are a testimony of our commitment to this national cause.

He also thanked Ministry of Defence Production and Pakistan Navy for their continued support and cooperation in realizing various projects at hand. This is the 2nd Submarine to undergo Keel Laying at KS&EW. Earlier, in Dec 2022, Keel Laying of first Submarine was successfully undertaken and currently it is at advanced stage of construction.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of Embassy of China, CSOC (China), WSIG (China) and other high-ranking government officials including distinguished guests from Ministry of Defence Production (MoDP) and armed forces of Pakistan. PR

## JUI-F chief invites PML-N supremo to sit in opposition with him

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Tuesday invited Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif to join hands with him and sit in opposition. Addressing a press conference in the Federal Capital, Rehman said his party would sit in the opposition and will continue to play its role in parliament for the betterment of the country. I also invite Nawaz Sharif to join hands with me in opposition, he said. He said JUI-F was an ideological party and also ruled out the possibility of any alliance with political parties saying we are not going to have any alliance with any party. The JUI-F Central Executive Committee (CEC), which lasted two days, had rejected poll results, he said. To a question he said, we were not subordinate to the PML-N and PPP. Speaking about JUI-F's meeting with its capital and provincial bodies, he said the meeting of JUI-F was scheduled for February 22 in Islamabad, followed by in Balochistan on February 25. Rehman said the JUI-F would hold its meeting in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on February 27. The party will also hold its meeting in Sindh on March 3, while on March 5 in Lahore, he said. APP

## Provision of quality healthcare facilities top priority of govt: Nadeem Jan

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Dr. Nadeem Jan Wednesday said that the provision of quality medical facilities to the public was a top priority of the government. Talking to a Private news channel, the minister said that the government was introducing health reforms to cover essential primary healthcare services and secondary-level hospital care. He said all possible resources were being utilized for lessening the economic burden and raising the living standard of deprived segments of society.

He underlined that the remarkable initiative of the government will tangibly reduce the burden on hospitals and thus will improve the quality of service delivery across the health system.

He said that the government also promoted a

culture of research in the healthcare sector, adding that Pakistan needs more efforts towards providing high-quality, cost-effective healthcare.

The government is committed to transforming the country's entire healthcare landscape, he said, adding that ultimate goal of the government was to use digital technology for harmonization and integration of health-related to improve the health status and well-being of our people. Replying to a question, he said that the public was the asset of a country and considering that the caretaker government was investing in human capital. He said that the government was implementing a devised road map under a coordinated mechanism that would ensure better health facilities for all citizens, irrespective of their classes.

The government was also ensuring the capacity building of the nursing and doctors staff through training of international standards, he added.

## Minister directs HEC, FDE to accelerate policy formulation process

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi Wednesday directed the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) to accelerate formulation of policy and execution of ongoing projects. He made these directions while chairing a meeting held here which was also attended by DG FDE and senior representatives from HEC in addition with senior officials from the ministry. The minister was briefed by HEC representatives about the consideration of the Private Members Bill "The Smart Institute of Science and Technology (Amendment) Bill 2023". HEC had been deliberating on developing a service structure and promotion policy for the university's teachers, they added. The minister was told about imparting training to the teachers of FDE. Similarly, Madad Ali was briefed about the number of students studying in "A" and "O" levels under the Cambridge system in Islamabad. APP



Editor-in-Chief: Amna Munawwar Awan  
 Editor: Muhammad Hasam  
 Office # 408, 4th Floor, Evacuee Trust,  
 Agha Khan Road, F-5/1 Islamabad  
 Phone: + 92 51 8354964

## Decoding the 2024 election

KHALID BHATTI

Pakistani voters have given their verdict in the February 8 general elections, which were held in a peaceful and orderly manner. The results have led to a split mandate, and no party has been able to win a simple majority in the National Assembly. PTI-backed independents have emerged as the largest group with 92 seats. The PML-N and the PPP have come second and third with 77 and 54 seats respectively. The MQM has won 17 seats and independents managed to grab 12 seats; the JUI-F and the PML-Q have won four and three seats respectively, while the remaining ones have gone to smaller parties. Since the PDM parties and the PPP have more seats than PTI-backed independents, a coalition government led by the PML-N will likely be formed in Islamabad.

PTI-backed independents have had a landslide victory in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and are in a comfortable position to form the provincial government with 83 seats. The PTI has also won 39 out of the 45 National Assembly seats from KP and has practically swept away all the other parties in KP. Voters in KP have given an overwhelming mandate to the PTI, clearly rejecting anti-Imran Khan propaganda and supporting the party-backed candidates overwhelmingly. While the PTI's victory is not unexpected, the margin of victory is surprising. As expected, the PPP has swept the elections in rural Sindh and won more seats (84) than a simple majority required in the Sindh Assembly to form a provincial government. Most of the National Assembly seats won by the PPP are from rural Sindh; it managed to win seven seats from Karachi. The anti-PPP political alliance, the GDA, failed to win a single National Assembly seat from Sindh. In Karachi, the MQM made a strong comeback with 15 seats; the PTI failed to win a single seat from Sindh. In Punjab, the PML-N has emerged as the largest party by winning 71 National Assembly seats out of 141. The PTI has won 55 seats from Punjab. In the Punjab Assembly, the PML-N has bagged 137 seats, and the PTI has won around 111 seats. The PML-N needs 12 more seats to form the government in Punjab. Nearly 26 independents have also won from Punjab, and most of them are likely to join the PML-N. So the PML-N will be in a position to form the government in Punjab with the help of independents. The PPP has won 10 seats and the PML-Q eight seats.

PTI-backed independents performed better than expected. The PML-N was expecting to win 90 to 94 National Assembly seats from Punjab. My assessment went wrong in this regard. I predicted that the PML-N would be able to win 94 seats. However, the PML-N performed better than expected in northern Punjab and won 11 out of the 13 National Assembly seats. Although it performed well in southern Punjab but lost at least five seats it expected to win. It has won only 17 seats out of the 46 seats from southern Punjab. The PTI has won 15 seats from the region, performing better than analysts' expectations. The PPP has won seven seats and other independents have managed to win four seats.

The PML-N lost at least 11 more seats to the PTI from central Punjab and suffered shocking defeats in Sargodha, Faisalabad and Gujranwala divisions. In Faisalabad Division, the PTI has won 15 out of the 18 seats, and the PML-N has only managed to win three. In District Faisalabad alone, the PML-N lost nine out of 10 seats against the PTI, including the defeat of former interior minister Rana Sanaullah Khan. In Sargodha division, the PML-N has won only two out of 11 seats. In Gujranwala division, it has won seven out of 13 seats. In 2018, the PML-N had lost only two seats from the region.

The PML-N has won only 37 out of the 82 seats from central Punjab. In 2013 it won all the 88 seats. And in 2018, it won 48 seats despite facing all the odds and problems at that time. The PML-N also lost seats in Sheikhupura, Sahiwal, Pakpattan and other districts where it had a landslide victory in 2018. It is a big political setback for the PML-N in its stronghold. The PTI has made big inroads into central Punjab.

Four factors have largely contributed to the PML-N's defeat and the PTI's victory in three divisions of central Punjab. A big factor in this debacle is the abstention of a sizeable section of PML-N voters. The party failed to mobilize its support base to outnumber PTI voters. It also failed to sell its narrative to many of its supporters. The PML-N's narrative was not convincing for independent voters and its fringe supporters.

The second factor is the overconfidence of the PML-N. The party was so certain it would win that it started its campaign quite late. The PML-N also made many mistakes in its campaign and did not prepare well enough to mobilize their voters on the polling day. It took its voters for granted and paid the ultimate price.

The third factor is independent voters who punished the PML-N for the inflation its policies caused during its 16-month-long coalition government. Many people still blame the PML-N for the economic mess they find themselves in.

The fourth factor is young voters. The PML-N failed to convince young voters aged 18 to 25. While it tried to attract them with slogans of laptops and cheap loans, these slogans were not enough to attract a big section of young voters. Many PML-N voters falling in the age group of 36 to 65 years also preferred to stay at home instead of coming out and supporting PML-N candidates. The party needs to learn hard lessons from this big setback and will have to work hard to recover the lost ground.

The PTI used modern communication tools to reach out to its voters and supporters. After the initial crackdown against the party, the PTI built its structures on digital media. It used social media platforms to convey its message and mobilize its voters. It outmanoeuvred its traditional opponents with non-traditional methods of campaigning. It ran an effective campaign through social media, and the election results show that it was successful in doing so.

The writer is a freelance journalist.



DR. MOHAMED EL SHAHAT EL GENDI

## Developing the concept of the role of religious leaders in bringing humanity together in one secure world

What he whispered to his oneself. And Allah Almighty says: "And oneself, and they created it, then inspired it to its immorality and its piety." Al-Shams; It is what directs his behavior and shapes his actions that start from within him and translate it into a reality that affects people's lives. When adhering to its principles of guidance and reform the result leads to the creation of true peace, as translated by the behavior of the individual and the state in all transactions, so that the psychological meaning is integrated within it social, economic and political; it is not limited to one side or another; which guides and limits the impact of unjust practices and fanatical behaviors biased toward peace, moderation, and justice that pervade human life at the individual, local, and international levels.

It is the message of Islam and the heavenly religions. As stated in the Sunnah: A Muslim is one from whom Muslims are safe; in another narration: "Safe People from His Tongue and His Hand." It is a concept of dealing that achieves the comprehensive and integrated meaning of human value that highlights the meaning of healthy humanity. It can also be a nucleus for the possibility of the existence of a global state of peace, in the basic meaning of Islam and the Abrahamic religions, and it is one of the most important and urgent needs of humans, peoples and countries in the world in age of the Global organization according to the will of the major powers that maintain their dominance with the weapon of nuclear terror.

4. Achieving security and self-security for every individual on the local and regional levels of each country, as well as international security for the world from the farthest north and west to the farthest south and east; it is through him that the concept of complete peace is achieved at all levels, without separation of one from the other, but rather through communication and interconnection between them. Through which all parties move to practical security achieved on the ground and not security on paper or security based on mere claims, appeals, recommendations or non-binding decisions. These methods are not sufficient to achieve the required safety. Real security is more indicative of the existence of security in its psychological and moral aspects,

extending to the material, economic, social and political aspects, as is the practical meaning in the Almighty's saying: "So let them worship the Lord of this house, who has fed them from hunger and secured them from fear" Quraysh, as subsistence security and material security are contained within the realm of spiritual peace and security. In which the individual enjoys tranquility, safety, stability, and peaceful and amicable coexistence, which is the ultimate blessing, the greatest justice, and the most comprehensive in achieving the truth of the correct concept of humanity, because of the meanings of security it includes in all aspects of life, by providing inner tranquility and fulfilling the basic needs of every individual, and in living that guarantees a life safe from aggression. As an individual, a group, or a state, complete and undiminished security prevails at all levels, at the personal level, at the collective level, and at the global level, which is the security that is lacking for modern-day human beings, despite all the claims of the developed world about the rights of the individual and citizen and global security.

This is the goal that must be achieved. Religious leaders take the initiative to alert them and demand positive intervention and partnership in achieving them, as well as raising awareness about them and participating in their implementation with decision-makers at the internal level. And with the concerned authorities through various activities in seminars, workshops, conferences and international organizations; and to insist that religious leaders be a party to it; with serious and organized cooperation based on knowledge of its path and developments; to strive to achieve it on the ground in an appropriate period; this is what Islamic security achieved, which transformed from imperative texts to practical applications. He moved from ideology to an international legal system. Thus, man moved from the world of chaos to the world of safety and stability in all fields of life. Until the Qur'an said: Have they not seen that Islam has made a secure sanctuary to which the fruits of all things are brought? The verse includes multiple dimensions, after the concept of security in its comprehensive meaning, material and subsistence, due to their necessity in the life of the individual and society, not partial security, which is what resulted in achieving the realistic transformation from the theoretical concept to the practical living application. Under the leadership of Muhammad the Prophet, may God's prayers be upon him, with the realization of the value of man and the univer-

sality of humanity, with its humanitarian foundation and slogan, humanity secured through a system and state based on Sharia law that triumphed for human dignity and secured its existence by providing all the reasons for a good life based on peace, security, happiness, and justice. This happened before the establishment of the international system and the drafting of the Global Charter. Launching the favorite slogan: The United Nations, signed by all countries, but this necessary achievement has been emptied of its content in the current global system due to the position of the emperors of the super powers in controlling and unfairly exploiting the sources of wealth and the destinies of peoples and countries. It remained in the theoretical realm in international constitutions and conventions and was not transferred to practical.

There is little practical implementation for the sake of interests and leadership, which is what must be achieved by the contribution of religious leaders, the provision of serious cooperation formulas, and the availability of determination and will between religious leaders and political leaders. It is a very real development required for peace, security and development for humanity which religions put it at the heart of their texts. Heaven's messages and religious laws are concerned with it. It would be better for the Conference of Religious Leaders to adopt it with a specific work program in its time, stages and type, with a correct understanding of comprehensive protection of the life of the human race in the modern era as a requirement for achieving global peace and security. With phased plans in which the responsibilities of both the religious and political leadership are determined for oversight and follow-up of implementation; Which the countries of the Global North should adhere to in their relations with the nations and peoples of the Global South on the basis of security that is beneficial to all. In accordance with the requirements of justice in all its local, regional and international dimensions; As long as this is found, complete safety is achieved.

The outcome of the idea of developing the concept of religious leaders' contribution on: the ideology and successful model of the correct concept of interreligious relations and activating the role of religious leaders in human development, rationalizing his thoughts, and correcting his behaviors; as well as contributing to maintaining international peace and security; it is based on building and developing the individual as a human being who enjoys his human rights in the

fullest sense. This is due to the comprehensive concept of the elements and components inherent in the entire human self, not the specific concept that falls short of absorbing the whole and leaving out the rest of the elements that include all the components of the human being. Likewise, by adopting the comprehensive concept, not the partial one, in addressing the necessary requirements for rational dealing in affairs of human relationships and transactions based on acquaintance and understanding between man and his fellow man according to the one origin that unites human beings; and on the basis of the constant bond of human brotherhood that is inherent in human existence at all stages. Moreover, the concept of one humanity is based on complete, undiminished foundations and values that guarantee; by building a complete human edifice that must get rid of the thoughts and practices of extremism and terrorism and follow the paths of moderation and centrism; on the basis of investigation into understanding and applying the foundations of correct human society based on equality in humanity and building relationships on mutual respect, cooperation, performance of religious and life rights, forgiveness and tolerance, especially when one has mastery and victory; hence, the bias is truly towards peace and security for the individual and the national community, and the preservation of global peace and security.

Therefore, it is necessary to establish meaningful and constructive dialogues based on equality and seriousness as a basis for communication and conflict resolution using religious and humanitarian concepts to build a safe world. In light of what is happening in political geography within the framework of the globalization ideology that dominates the management of the world; and the formation of its system according to its dominant vision, with which some identities are exposed to challenges through weakness or dissolution. And also to dismantle nations and societies and corrupt their systems. In addition to the potential threat to international peace and security; if it is not comply and adherence to peaceful behavior and by implementing established religious principles aimed at correction and reform of life.

DR. MOHAMED EL SHAHAT EL GENDI  
 Rector of The Egyptian university of Islamic Culture,  
 Representative of The Egyptian Ministry of Endowments

To be concluded

## Showbiz

### Real reason behind Katy Perry's shocking departure from 'American Idol'

Katy Perry announced that she is pulling the plug on her gig in American Idol after seven years

Katy Perry surprised her fans with her shock career announcement in a recent interview. During an appearance on the latest episode of Jimmy Kimmel Live! the 39-year-old singer revealed that she will quit her judging gig on American Idol after the upcoming season to focus on her new music. A source close to ABC, which airs the singing competition series, revealed to The Mirror it came down to the singer's conflict with the network over their refusal to increase her pay rate. Her concern stemmed from her desire to expand her family with



fiancé Orlando Bloom, with whom Katy currently shares daughter Daisy. The Teenage Dream artist is also in demand following a successful Las Vegas residency on the heels of her studio album Smile, which concluded last year. Hence, there are quite a few avenues the pop star is eager to make space for by giving up her position as a judge on the reality series after seven years. Explaining her reason to quit the show to Kimmel, Perry simply said that she feels like "I need to go out and feel that pulse to my own beat".

## Tech

### Hong Kong school robotics team beat Pakistan's Zain Ahmad creating world's smallest humanoid robot

Four members of the Diocesan Boys' School robotics team in Hong Kong have accomplished a remarkable achievement in engineering as they have successfully broken the record set by Pakistani scientist Zain Ahmad Qureshi in 2022 for the smallest humanoid robot in history. This robot is 11.3 mm (0.44 in) shorter than a typical ballpoint pen, standing at a meagre 141 mm (5.55 in). Students Aaron Ho Yat Fung, Isaac Zachary To, Justin Wang Tou Duong, and Ngo Hei Leung comprise the creative team behind this creation, according to Interesting Engineering. The team's humanoid robot received formal recognition from Guinness World Records, and it was highlighted in an episode of their YouTube series Records Weekly. To make the record-breaking humanoid robot smaller than ever before, the pupils at Diocesan Boys' School had to make sure

their creation had an impressive range of articulation. This meant teaching the robot to walk on two feet and articulating its elbows, knees, hips, and shoulders. The expedition began with the kids using computer-aided design (CAD) to carefully draft the blueprint for their small miracle. After deciding on the technical specs and required parts, they hired a factory to use their experience to create servo motors that met their needs. These servos, or servo motors, are essential to the operation of the robot. They provide accurate rotation and movement, enabling the robot to deftly use its limbs. In order to coordinate these intricate parts, the group purchased a 16-channel servo control board. In addition, they acquired a variety of hardware necessities, such as wiring, batteries, and nuts in addition to screws, according to Guinness.

## Health

### Six lifestyle habits that could heighten dementia risk, unveiled by psychiatrist

Dementia, a condition affecting memory, language, and cognitive abilities, particularly in those aged 65 and older, raises concerns about additional care needs. According to Buzzfeed, while factors like age, genetics, and health history contribute to dementia risk, lifestyle habits play a significant role. Blair Steel, a psychologist at Carrara Treatment, Wellness & Spa, breaks down common behaviours that may unwittingly increase the risk of dementia as individuals age.

#### 1. Sedentary lifestyle

Insufficient physical activity and prolonged sitting can contribute to cognitive impairment. Regular aerobic exercise proves beneficial, positively impacting brain health and overall well-being.

#### 2. Limited social interaction

Social health is crucial in dementia prevention, with an active and socially integrated lifestyle acting as a protective factor. Socialising in person is emphasised over online interactions, as it stimulates the brain's connection experience.

#### 3. Inadequate sleep

Sleep disturbances and dementia are interconnected, and poor sleep patterns may contribute to increased dementia risk. Prioritising good sleep hygiene, including avoiding screens before bedtime, can mitigate this risk.

#### 4. Chronic stress

Chronic stress, linked to elevated cortisol levels, can lead to cognitive decline. Managing stress through healthy habits like exercise, creative activities, and flexibility in reactions can mitigate the negative impact.

#### 5. Excessive alcohol consumption

Alcohol-related brain damage (ARBD) is a specific type of dementia associated with prolonged and excessive alcohol consumption. Issues with memory, problem-solving, and daily tasks may arise in individuals with ARBD.

#### 6. Unbalanced diet

Research indicates that a diet high in ultra-processed foods increases dementia risk. Emphasising a balanced diet with leafy greens, berries, whole grains, and healthy fats while limiting red meat and processed foods supports brain health.

Blair Steel recommends altering these habits to lower dementia risk but emphasises seeking medical advice if signs of dementia arise. A comprehensive assessment by a doctor can guide individuals toward appropriate measures and potential specialist referrals.





## Short-term Hajj facility introduced for intended pilgrims: Minister

LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed has announced that this year's Hajj is set to be optimal for Pakistani pilgrims, offering unprecedented facilities. He introduced a short-term Hajj facility for the first time, marking a notable milestone in the nation's history.

Addressing the start of the training session for pilgrims at Darul Hajj Camp on Wednesday, he announced that during Hajj, all women would receive Abayas, adorned with the Pakistani flag. Selected through a transparent system, the minister said fortunate pilgrims were chosen via a draw, and their training began on February 12.

He said that Hajj pilgrims were the guests of Allah and a true ambassador of Pakistan, which would be facilitated with advance facilities. He said that when he took charge of the ministry, it was made clear that in 2024, Pakistani pilgrims would be provided with the best facilities. This year's Hajj would be exemplary for Pakistani pilgrims, offering facilities that were not available in the past.

The minister highlighted the comprehensive efforts made by the ministry regarding Hajj arrangements, collaborating with Saudi Arabia during a visit to assess the facilities, provided to pilgrims. He mentioned that accommodations, meals, and transportation, along with all basic necessities, had been standardised. While discussing transportation facilities for Pakistani pilgrims in Saudi Arabia, he said that this year, there would be provision of trains along with buses for pilgrims. Responding to a question, the minister said that for the first time in the country's history, a short-term Hajj facility is being provided in Pakistan. Every pilgrim would be given a green suit-case containing a QR code to prevent any loss of belongings.

## Six more independent candidates come into PML-N's fold

LAHORE: Six more independents who emerged victorious on Punjab Assembly seats in the General Elections 2024 have announced to join the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

The MPAs-elect announced their decision of joining the PML-N in a meeting with the party's Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz in Lahore.

Independent candidate who joined the PML-N included Sultan Bajwa from PP-132 Nankana, Shazia Tareen from PP-225 Lodhran, Mahmood Qadir Laghari from PP-289 Dera Ghazi Khan, Hanif Pitafi from PP-288 Dera Ghazi Khan, Taimoor Ali from PP-94 Chiniot and Ali Asghar from PP-283 Layyah.

The newly elected members of the Punjab Assembly expressed full confidence in Nawaz Sharif.

Welcoming the victorious independents in the PML-N fold, Maryam Nawaz said that their joining will contribute to achieve the party's goal of prosperity of the people of Punjab. "We will give relief to the people from the destruction of the past and ensure a happy future," Maryam Nawaz. INP



LAHORE: Federal Minister for IT and Communication Dr. Umar Saif witnesses an MoU of Treatment And Prevention Of Heart Attack between NHATI (National Heart Attack and Treatment Initiative), Pakistan Society of Interventional Cardiology (PSIC) and National Information Technology Board (NITB). PSIC President Prof. Zubair Akram, Vice President Prof. Dr. Nauman Naseer (Focal Person of the Institute) and NITB Chairman Dr. Babar Majeed Bhatti also participate the signing ceremony.

## Ashrafi commends institutions for ensuring law, order during elections

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Affairs and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Muslim Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Wednesday commended the significant role of all institutions, including the Pakistan Army, security agencies, and police for their efforts in ensuring law and order, especially during the recent general elections held on February 8, across the country.

Addressing a joint press conference along with other prominent religious scholars and leaders, he acknowledged that despite attempts by adversaries to disrupt the peaceful conduct of elections, their efforts had been thwarted, leading to the successful completion of the electoral process.

Ashrafi who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council said in light of the current political and religious landscape, there was a pressing call for unity among Pakistan's political and religious factions to strengthen the nation.

Acknowledging election results, he emphasized on utilizing legal channels such as the Election Commission of Pakistan and courts to address grievances and ensure fairness. Ashrafi called on major political parties to unite and foster an environment conducive to reconciliation and dialogue.

Emphasising the importance of maintaining peace and stability within the country, he



announced that a high-level delegation from the Pakistan Ulema Council would engage with all major political parties to foster understanding and cooperation.

Ashrafi also urged the leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, to prioritize national stability and engage in dialogue for the betterment of the country. He reiterated that negotiations were key to resolving all issues encouraging political parties to engage in constructive dialogue. "A strong government with a robust opposition is deemed essential for Pakistan's progress and prosperity," he added.

He opined that there was a pressing need

for political parties to forge a national pact for the betterment and stability of Pakistan. He urged all parties to set aside personal interests and prioritize the nation's well-being. He, raising concerns regarding external commentary on Pakistan's elections, emphasized on the importance of respecting national sovereignty and democratic processes.

Ashrafi said Pakistan Ulema Council would observe a day of condemnation against Israeli aggression on Friday, along with a call to boycott both Israeli and Indian products to express solidarity with Palestinian people in the Muslim world. INP

## CJP Qazi Faez Isa suggests holding plebiscite in Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: Expressing surprise that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) still had no idea about their constitutional status, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Wednesday suggested holding a referendum or a plebiscite in GB and Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

A three-member bench of the Supreme Court (SC), headed by the CJP, heard the petition filed against the appointment of judges to the top court of GB.

The additional attorney general (AAG) said that it was the job of the United Nations to hold a plebiscite in these territories.

The CJP replied that he had no information about that. "All I am asking you whether this is possible."

The AAG told the apex court that the government wanted to make GB part of the federation, but some international conventions were stumbling blocks in its way. The chief justice said that India had devoured the state of Jammu and Kashmir by abolishing its special status.

He then asked whether the federal government had been formed after the elections. "Who has been elected as the prime minister?"

Saad Hashmi, counsel for the GB government, told the CJP that the government was yet to be formed. "However, there are reports that the newly elected National Assembly would meet on February 29th."

Informing the court that the country's prime minister was the GB Council chairman, the AAG said it would be better if the court waited for the formation of the new government at the Centre.

Advocate Muhammad Ibrahim said that the verdict given by a seven-member bench of the SC on GB in 2019 was related to the case being heard today.

The bench then referred the matter to the committee of judges for the formation of a larger bench on the case. It also issued notices to the Gilgit-Baltistan Bar Council and the Supreme Appellate Bar Association for assistance.

The court then adjourned the hearing for an indefinite time period. INP

## Shujaat Hussain meets Ijaz ul Haq

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League, Q, Chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain on Tuesday met with Muslim League Zia President, Ijaz-ul-Haq. Chaudhry Wajahat Hussain, Chaudhry Shafi Hussain, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Mustafa Malik, Munteha Ashraf also attended the meeting. During the meeting, the overall situation of the country was discussed, while the process of government formation and future political strategy was also reviewed.



ISLAMABAD: President of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman addresses a media talk at G-6/4.

## Senate Body on education seeks plan for teachers training, moral values

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training Senator Irfan Siddiqui on Wednesday instructed the education ministry to devise plans for teacher training encompassing dress code, moral values, and teaching acumen.

The session of the Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training took place at Parliament House, presided over by Senator Irfan Siddiqui. Before delving into the agenda, the chair conveyed to committee members that this marks the final meeting of the standing committee before its dissolution.

Expressing gratitude, the chair acknowledged the unwavering support of both committee members and officials from the education ministry and HEC over the past three years.

Committee members commended the chair for ensuring the smooth functioning of the standing committee proceedings.

The committee addressed the agenda item related to a starred question posed by Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi during the Senate Session on 5th January 2024.

The question inquired about government-established institutes for teacher training. The Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training informed the committee about two such institutions in Islam-

abad. Senator Tangi urged international training for teachers to expose them to modern educational practices.

A point of public importance concerning the absence of a service structure for university teachers was discussed. The HEC Chairman reported on the special committee's progress, and the chair directed the HEC to submit an interim report by Friday.

The committee also discussed a starred question from Senator Mushtaq Ahmed regarding the number of students studying "A" and "O" levels under the Cambridge system in Pakistan.

Senator Mushtaq Ahmed expressed concerns about the lack of information, citing a message received from the UK embassy in which the sought information was being termed as "Business Secret."

The chair emphasized the need for control and directed ministry officials to coordinate with the foreign ministry to obtain this vital information.

The committee meeting was attended by Senators Prof. Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani, Fawzia Arshad, Engr Rukhsana Zuberi, Mushtaq Ahmed Khan, Falak Naz, Naseebullah Bazai, and Bahramand Khan Tangi, along with the caretaker Ministry for Federal Education and Professional Training, Special Secretary Education, and Chairman HEC. INP

## PPP committee holds first meeting with PML-N

ISLAMABAD: The Contact and Coordination Committee of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had a contact with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

A consultative meeting was held between the committees of the PPP and the PML-N. Proposals were discussed regarding inflation, unemployment and relief from poverty in the country.

It was agreed that there is a need for a stable democratic government to deal with the challenges of economy, politics, law and order and terrorism.

There is another meeting scheduled for tomorrow (Thursday) of both the committees in which the representatives of PML-N from other provinces will also participate. The matters will also be put before other like-minded political parties after which they will be finalised.

PPP committee members include Syed Murad Ali Shah, Nawab Sanaullah Khan Zehri, Qamar Zaman Kaira, Saeed Ghani, Senator Nisar Ahmed Khuro; meanwhile PML-N members include Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Senator Chaudhry Azam Nazir Tarar Advocate and Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan. SABAH

## Shehbaz Sharif meets Nawaz Sharif, consider names for federal cabinet

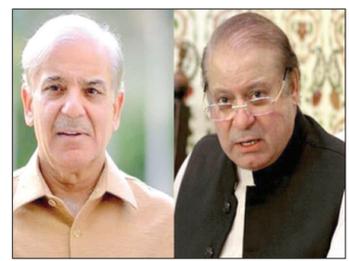
LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President and former prime minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held meeting with PML-N Quaid and former prime ministers Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday. Shehbaz Sharif briefed Nawaz Sharif about the meetings with the coalition partners. During the meeting they also discussed the names for the federal cabinet.

According to sources, after formation of the government, a 25-member federal cabinet is likely to be formed. It is likely that the MQM-Pakistan will get three to five ministries.

Meanwhile, the MQM-Pakistan is considering the names of Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Dr. Farooq Sattar, Syed Mustafa Kamal, Syed Aminul Haque and Khawaja Izharul Hasan for ministries.

Sources said the names of 15 senior leaders were being considered for the federal cabinet by the PML-N. They include Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhry, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar Advocate and Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

The names of Chaudhry Riazul Haq Judge, Bilal Azhar Kayani, Sardar Owais Ahmad Khan



Leghari, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Engineer Raja Qamarul Islam and Rana Tanveer Hussain are also being considered for the federal cabinet.

It may be recalled that the PML-N on Tuesday nominated Shehbaz as its candidate for the prime minister slot and Maryam Nawaz for the office of Punjab chief minister.

The final announcement regarding the prime ministerial candidate will be coordinated with allied parties. Party chief Nawaz Sharif has endorsed both Shehbaz and Maryam for the coveted slots. SABAH

## Global LNG demand to grow beyond 2040

ISLAMABAD: Global demand for liquefied natural gas (LNG) is estimated to rise by more than 50% by 2040, as industrial coal-to-gas switching gathers pace in China and South Asian and Southeast Asian countries use more LNG to support their economic growth.

According to Shell's LNG Outlook 2024, Global trade in LNG reached 404 million tonnes in 2023, up from 397 million tonnes in 2022, with tight supplies of LNG constraining growth while maintaining prices and price volatility above historic averages.

Demand for natural gas has already peaked in some regions but continues to rise globally, with LNG demand expected to reach around 625-685 million tonnes a year in 2040, according to the latest industry estimates.

"China is likely to dominate LNG demand growth this decade as its industry seeks to cut carbon emissions by switching from coal to gas," said Steve Hill, Executive Vice President for Shell Energy.

"With China's coal-based steel sector accounting for more emissions



than the total emissions of the UK, Germany, and Turkey combined, gas has an essential role to play in tackling one of the world's biggest sources of carbon emissions and local air pollution."

Over the following decade, declining domestic gas production in parts of South Asia and Southeast Asia could drive a surge in demand for

LNG as these economies increasingly need fuel for gas-fired power plants or industry. However, countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia would need significant investments in gas import infrastructure. The Shell LNG Outlook 2024 shows that gas complements wind and solar power in countries with high levels of renewables in their power

generation mix, providing short-term flexibility and long-term security of supply.

LNG continued to play a vital role in European energy security in 2023, following a slump in Russian pipeline exports to Europe in 2022, with new regasification facilities helping to improve the security of energy supplies.

European LNG imports remained at similar levels in 2022, despite an overall decline in European gas demand in 2023.

Relatively mild winter temperatures in countries that rely on gas for heating, combined with high gas storage levels, stronger nuclear power generation, and a modest economic recovery in China, all helped balance the global gas market in 2023.

This helped bring down and stabilize gas prices in the key importing regions of Europe and East Asia compared to the record highs and unprecedented volatility seen from late 2021 through 2022. However, gas prices and volatility remained significantly higher in 2023 than in the 2017-2020 period. APP