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Caretaker Federal Minister for Health
Dr Nadeem Jan

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People of Pakistan have spoken with a clear voice on Feb 8 and have given a split mandate: PM Kakar

Says State of Pakistan shall defend the civil servants in discharging their constitutional duties



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that the people of Pakistan have spoken with a clear voice on February 8 and have given a split mandate. In a statement issued on Monday, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that some elements with proven track record of violent behaviour and vigilantism are now using different tricks including weaponisation of social media in blackmailing and pressuring civil servants to switch their loyalties from the State of Pakistan to the violent gang. This action is clear violation of the Article 5 and other articles of the Constitution and the laws of the land, he said.

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that the State of Pakistan shall defend the civil servants in discharging their constitutional duties, act against these violent trolls and ensure exemplary punishment to them. There should be no doubt about our commitment to these noble civil servants serving the State and the people of Pakistan, he said. SABAH

Pakistan, Malaysia discuss bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador in Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee on Monday met with Malaysia's newly appointed Ambassador to Baku Ahmad Kamrizaril and discussed with him bilateral relations and the regional situation.

During the meeting, they happily recalled common friends from the respective diplomatic fraternities, Pakistan's embassy in Azerbaijan posted on X. Meanwhile, Pakistan's High Commissioner in Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri met with Chief Executive Officer of Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) Michael Bailey and Trade Adviser Sally Chandler.

The two sides agreed to enhance bilateral trade cooperation. DNA



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the recipients of Biz Net 3.0 shields in recognition of their contributions for enhancing financial inclusion through technological and digital transformation in Pakistan, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

High-level investigation committee constituted to look into the allegations leveled by ex-Rawalpindi Commissioner: Solangi

Says the people should have trust in institutions & the judicial process

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi stated on Monday that a high-level investigation committee had been constituted to look into the allegations leveled by former Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatta regarding rigging in the general election.

Speaking to the media after attending the meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi urged patience as the legal process was currently underway. "The people should have trust in institutions and the judicial process," he added.

He remarked that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was currently investigating the allegations of rigging, stressing the significance of waiting for the results of the ongoing legal proceedings.

The caretaker government, he said, had fulfilled its responsibility for conducting elections in a free, fair, and peaceful manner. Responding to a query, he explained that once the ECP released the final list of successful candidates, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs would forward a summary to the concerned for convening the new session of the National Assembly. Subsequently, a request would be made to President Dr. Arif Alvi to summon the session of the National Assembly, he added.



Earlier, during a briefing to the Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting, chaired by Senator Fauzia Arshad, the minister stressed the importance of boosting PTV's presence on social media platforms to enhance viewership. He noted that PTV had started sharing its top-quality programmes on social media, recognising the significant audience engagement on these platforms. Murtaza Solangi underscored the necessity of improving the marketing of PTV products on social media. The minister explained that the responsibility for appointing heads of certain institutions rested with the elected government.

Due to the lengthy selection process, it was impractical to accomplish this task during the tenure of a caretaker government, he said, adding that therefore, it was preferable for the new parliament and government, upon assuming office, to exercise their authority in making

these appointments.

Secretary Information and Broadcasting, Shaha Shahid highlighted the financial challenges of PTV, noting the organization's efforts to address them.

She informed that the actual strength of PTV is 4100 and the organization has more than 3000 pensioners, adding that pensioners are paid through Contributory Funds.

She further informed that eight to nine billion rupees per year are collected through 35 rupees levied in the electricity bills while four to four to six billion rupees per year earned through programming.

The Ministry underlined that 15 rupees is proposed to be added to the Electricity Bill apart from 35 Rupees while DG PBC informed that the Federal Government has also been requested to charge every vehicle having a 5 Rupee for Radio on entry and exit points on motorways.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui emphasized the need for motivation and willpower within PTV's talented staff to maximize the organization's potential.

A reform proposal for all attached departments under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was also tabled during the meeting.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks, appreciating the committee's efforts and the commitment of all involved parties to address critical issues in the realm of information and broadcasting.

Rs 35.6 bln program being launched to eradicate fatal diseases, says Health Minister

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr Nadeem Jan on Monday said that a mega project worth Rs35.6 billion was being launched to eradicate fatal diseases including sugar, HIV AIDs and hepatitis in the country. He said that a Rs six billion program has been prepared for the control of sugar disease besides projects were being launched for the eradication of AIDs HIV. He was addressing a function after inaugurating a modern labour room at the Basic Health Unit (BHU) Kotkay in Charsadda district. The minister said that providing the best healthcare facilities to patients at their doorsteps was the top priority of the government. He said that basic health units are being strengthened in terms of medical staff, equipment and medicines. The minister said the promise of rehabilitation of the flood-affected BHU has been fulfilled and termed the cooperation of the World Health Organization for rehabilitation of the BHU as highly praiseworthy.

Nadeem Jan said that people of the area would now get quality treatment and medicine facilities at their doorsteps. The minister said responsibilities rest on the shoulders of officials of the health department to ensure the best use of the BHU for the betterment of the people. He said that timely availability of the staff and provision of better healthcare facilities was the prime responsibility of the health department.

"If the performance of BHUs is good then there will be minimum load on big hospitals and precious lives would be saved" he said.

He said that a mega project worth Rs35.6 billion was being launched in Pakistan to eradicate fatal diseases including sugar, HIV AIDs and hepatitis besides help its patients. Nadeem Jan said that a Rs six billion program has been prepared for the control of sugar disease besides projects were being launched for the eradication of AIDs HIV and the patients of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would also be benefited.

Later, the minister visited the basic health unit Akhun Dheri Charsadda and TB Hospital Baghdada in Mandan where he also inaugurated a training centre. The minister was briefed about these projects.

Ambassador meets participants at European Diplomatic Academy

BRUSSELS: Pakistan's ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union Anna Baloch on Monday met a group of participants of the European Diplomatic Academy and delivered a speech. During her talk, the ambassador highlighted the existing contours of dynamics in South Asia. She discussed pathways to engagement and role of the international community for prospects for peace and prosperity in South Asia. APP

Pakistan Pavilion inaugurated at World Trade Center Dubai



Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi said that almost a hundred Pakistani companies associated with the food industry have gathered here, which was a welcome sign.

He said that Pakistan's exports especially rice and meat have increased significantly compared to last year.

Expressing pleasure over his interaction with the organizers and representatives of TDAP, he said that Pakistan was the third largest country in terms of milk production in the world adding that Pakistan, for the first time has entered the market of Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

The Ambassador said that he was very happy to see that Pakistani dairy producers were participating in Gulfood in large numbers.

Faisal Tirmizi said that Pakistan's economic development was directly linked to the country's exports. He said Pakistani businessmen and growers were backbone of the country's economy and their focus should be on increasing exports. INP

South Waziristan IBO martyr laid to rest with full military honour



town on Monday.

The 29 years old martyr was the resident of Haripur district, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

A large number of senior officers of Pakistan Army, soldiers, family members of the martyr and local people participated in the funeral prayer.

"These sacrifices strengthen the determination and enthusiasm to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from the motherland at all costs," the ISPR said. PR

Sanjrani's role for effectively running Senate affairs acknowledged

ISLAMABAD: During the House Business Advisory Committee (HBAC) meeting, the Parliamentary Leaders and members acknowledged and eulogized the role of Senator Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani for effectively running the affairs of Upper House of Parliament during his tenure as Chairman of the Senate.

Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani chaired a high level meeting of House Business Advisory Committee held at Parliament House on Monday.

Members observed that Chairman Senate Muhammad sadiq Sanjrani adopted all-inclusive and participatory approach for the House and provided ample opportunity to all the members to discuss and debate issues of national significance. "Political acumen of Sadiq Sanjrani is highly praiseworthy and his approach is unique", members stated.

Chairman Senate also thanked members of the HBAC and other senators. He expressed his gratitude for the cooperation extended by members during the last six years.



The Committee also discussed in detail legislative business to be transacted during the 335th Session of the Senate.

The session would take up discussion on other issues of extreme public significance. The HBAC decided that the current session would continue for more than two weeks.

The meeting was attended by Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem, Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Kamil Ali Agha, Senator Waqar Mehdi, Senator Sardar Shafiq Tareen, Senator Afnanullah, and Senator Ghafoor Haideri. Secretary Senate Mohammad Qasim Samad khan was also present during the meeting. INP

CJP Qazi Faez Isa expresses dismay over withdrawal of plea seeking annulment of Feb 8 polls

Orders the authorities to find the complainant Brigadier (retd) Ali Khan's & present him before the SC at the next hearing

ISLAMABAD: Expressing dismay over the withdrawal of the plea seeking annulment of the February 8 elections, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Monday ordered the authorities to find the complainant and present him before the Supreme Court at the next hearing.

Stressing that the top court cannot be subjected to such mockery, CJP Qazi Faez Isa directed the authorities to "find and present the complainant before the court" stressing that the SC will hear this case. The top judge's remarks come as a

three-member bench of the Supreme Court (SC) led by the Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali conducted the hearing on Brigadier (retd) Ali Khan's petition seeking re-elections over the issue of alleged rigging in the polls.

During Monday's hearing, CJP Qazi Faez Isa questioned whether the petition was filed for mere publicity. "The complainant [had] released the petition to the media as soon it was filed," the top judge said while directing the authorities to establish contact with the

petitioner via telephone. The top judge further directed the additional attorney general to coordinate with the relevant station house officer (SHO) and present the complainant before the court.

"Who knows if the complainant himself filed the petition or not? [...] What if he says that he hasn't withdrawn the petition," the chief justice questioned.

Chief justice while dictating the order of the hearing said that the petition was filed by the petitioner under Article 184-3 of the Constitution in the Supreme Court of Pakistan on 12th

February. The petition was released to electronic media prior to filing it in the Apex Court and it also got maximum publicity in the newspapers. The order says that the Registrar Office had raised several objections regarding the maintainability of the petition but due to the urgent matter relating to the elections we fixed it immediately for hearing. After filing the constitutional petition and gaining maximum publicity the petitioner filed request to withdraw the petition and said that he did not want to further proceed the case. The chief justice in the order said that the court had

issued notice to the petitioner for today's hearing and it was told that the petitioner was not found at his residence and not contact could be made on the mobile phone also, adding that we kept the matter pending and directed the office to contact with him and no contact could be made.

The order says usually the petitioner could withdraw the petition however if the court considers that the petitioner is doing this for publicity then it is tantamount to abuse the process of court and will not allow happening this. Chief justice said that prior to issue any order

we are issuing another notice to the petitioner so that he should appear on the next hearing of the case. Chief justice said that the service of the notice should be done through common service and through SHO of the concerned area.

The order says as the petitioner identified him as retired officer of Pakistan Army so the notice should also be sent to the petitioner through Ministry of Defence, attorney general should ensure the delivery of the notice. The court then adjourned the hearing till February 21. SABAH

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

Get ready for Gaza war to shift to West Bank

CHRIS DOYLE

If in doubt, escalate. This may as well be the motto for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu since Oct. 7. This is a man for whom "total victory" equals total destruction and for whom peace may mean prison. Bibi knows the polls. He knows that the knives are sharpened and at the ready; that the ides of March are fast approaching for this Israeli Caesar. Until that day of reckoning, when everyone expects him to be unceremoniously ousted from his residence in Balfour Street, Netanyahu feels he has no choice but to go all in. The likelihood is that he will not hesitate to order a full-scale ground invasion of Rafah in the coming days. He is prepared to risk Israel's relations with the US, with regional partners and even Israeli security for this end. In this, it must be remembered that he has the backing of many mainstream Israeli politicians, including his likely successor Benny Gantz. Many Israelis, including many of the families of the 134 remaining hostages, believe Netanyahu has sacrificed them in the cause of his own political survival.

If the above analysis is broadly accurate, Netanyahu has a massive problem when some form of calm descends on what remains of Gaza. When Rafah is flattened, with no doubt the percentage of destroyed and damaged buildings in Gaza heading more in the direction of 80 percent from its current 60 percent, major Israeli operations will inevitably be scaled back. Even for Netanyahu, dropping expensive bombs on rubble makes little sense.

The assumption must be that the medium-intensity conflict with Hezbollah is not one that the Israeli government wishes to escalate. The risks to all are just too high, too punitive. This leaves the West Bank, including Jerusalem. Here, Netanyahu can secure the full backing of his coalition and the ever more powerful settler movement for a major onslaught, up from the mid-level variety currently in play. Remember that, even for all those in Israel who have pushed for the recolonization of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank is indisputably the big prize. The settlers have been busily pushing Palestinians off their lands in Area C, which makes up some 62 percent of the West Bank — another process of ethnic cleansing alongside the massive process in Gaza. As the Israeli group Peace Now has reported, 2023 was, "for the settlement enterprise, probably the best year since the Oslo Accords," with record numbers of units advanced. Some 26 new outposts were established and 21 Palestinian communities forced from their homes. But if there was to be a major Israeli military operation akin to Operation Defensive Shield in 2002, the settlers would expect far more territorial plunder. Various areas would be in their sights. In the South Hebron Hills, the settlers see a job to be completed. East of Ramallah has also been a target zone. In the Jordan Valley, 20 Palestinian families had been kicked off their lands by mid-December last year. Israeli soldiers have denied Palestinians access to water as another way to force them off their land.

Thousands of settlers have been armed, given military uniforms and incorporated into "regional defense" battalions. Many of these settlers have a proven track record of violence against Palestinians. Once an area is "sterilized" — an official term meaning that it is free of Palestinians — the settlers will establish a raft of new outposts to formalize the theft of land. The Palestinians in the West Bank have already been softened up. Israeli armed forces have been targeting much of the north, including invading refugee camps in Jenin, Tulikarem and Nablus. Since Oct. 7, the Palestinian economy in the West Bank has been squeezed ruthlessly by the Israeli authorities. Palestinians have not been able to work in Israel or in settlements. Draconian restrictions on movement have likewise served to cripple economic activity. Last October, half of Palestinian farmers were unable to harvest their olives as a result of Israeli restrictions, according to estimates by the Palestinian Farmers' Union. The Israeli measures have included blocking the entrances to numerous Palestinian villages, immiserating the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. These are the most intense and devastating series of closures since the height of the Second Intifada. All of this is exacerbated by Israel holding on to Palestinian customs revenues. How will all of this be ignited? The fast-track option for Netanyahu is Jerusalem. This is the tried and tested way to set the West Bank on fire. Ramadan is approaching. Tensions in the Old City will rise, as ever. This may well be the time for Netanyahu to foment the explosion. He has done so before. In some ways, it would be the reverse of 2014, when Jerusalem got out of control and Netanyahu turned to invading Gaza. This time, smashing up Jerusalem may follow Gaza. The radioactive core of this will be Al-Aqsa. Any actions or even rumors of actions to change the status quo there typically leads to a Palestinian reaction. Netanyahu will wink at the settler extremists, who know all too well how to provoke their Palestinian neighbors. The other old city that could be set alight is in Hebron. This is home to some of the most violent extremist settlers, the ideological brethren of Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. They also see an opportunity to eject the Palestinians from the center of this ancient Palestinian city. Ben-Gvir can sense an opportunity to foment discord. "We should not allow residents from the (Palestinian) Authority to enter Israel in any way" during Ramadan, he said. "We cannot take chances and risks... It can't be that women and children are hostages in Gaza and we allow Hamas victory celebrations on the Temple Mount." Israeli media reports suggest Netanyahu agrees with him. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians worship at Al-Aqsa during Ramadan. In recent years, this month has been particularly fraught.

Chris Doyle is director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding in London. X: @Doylech



Noor Shahzad

Drowning in despair

it cannot send back refugees to war-torn countries where their lives are in danger. Facilitating the coastal guards in countries like Libya means that Europe is actively making the journey for illegal migrants exorbitantly precarious. While this may seem clever, it results in migrants being trapped and eventually succumbing to their deaths. In 2017 Italy signed a memorandum of understanding with Libya agreeing to work with the Libyan coastguard "to stem the influx of illegal migrants". The European Union pledged a sum of almost 100 million euros towards training and equipping the coastguard over the next few years.

Be that as it may, those who have

of Rs1 million and paid an advance to the agent. Abdullah travelled from Mandi Bahauddin to Islamabad then to Dubai, from Dubai to Cairo and Cairo to Tripoli. Upon reaching Tripoli he was told he was going to stay in an accommodation with others for a few days. The few days turned into nine months, and Abdullah was placed in a migrant detention centre in Ain Zara. In this centre, between 500 people they shared one phone that they had hidden. Some days they could have one piece of bread, khubz, and on others nothing. His health deteriorated. He got ticks. There was no light in the room, and they were not allowed to go outside — except for the ones who died and their bodies got thrown out into the

swimming towards the shore. I didn't know how to swim but I also jumped. Seeing death so up close one doesn't fear water". It turned out that the Algerian man was wrong. They had reached Trieste and were taken to a refugee centre. Abdullah, now a painter in Spain, sends back money to his wife and children in Mandi Bahauddin. They have recently gotten a new air conditioner installed. Nevertheless, the question remains: why leave a stable home for an unstable future abroad? Precarity is not only a precondition of life abroad but also of life at home. Life at home is precarious, filled with potholes and missteps, and chaotic at best. The chance that illegal migrants take is not between a stable home and a stable future at home rather it is between drowning at home — in debt, responsibilities of younger siblings and children, the financial upkeep of ageing parents, family feuds that one inherits — and drowning abroad in volatile waters. Men and young boys who leave face structural poverty and systemic oppression at home, the cycle is so pernicious that it seems impossible to get out of it unless one physically leaves.

In terms of possible outcomes of the journey, there is the plausibility of death but also the possibility of opportunity. Abdullah feels that the chance that he took was between death and change. "I knew the odds. Death being the worst. Detention, abduction, forced labour, injuries, and drowning being others." For many the dream of becoming a 'someone' really helps shape the contours of the journey and navigate all the uncertainties abroad. The definition of what it means to become 'set' is ambiguous but comes with affluence for those back at home in Pakistan than necessarily for oneself, like Abdullah, who was proud of the new air conditioner at his home in Mandi Bahauddin. People like him cross the bigger oceans to escape drowning at home but also to fend for those who stay put at home so they too can swim and reach a shore.

The writer is a researcher at the Mahbub Ul Haq Center at LUMS.

When people illegally migrate through precarious routes to Europe, which is colloquially referred to as 'dunki', the discourse surrounding these journeys and the migrants is: why put everything that is familiar at risk and pay exorbitant amounts of money to 'agents' to leave?

Even though the precise number of Pakistanis leaving the country through illegal migration methods, such as 'dunki', remains elusive, a significant number still do. This is evidenced by the fact that the influx of illegal migrants to Europe, which includes Pakistanis, has shown a consistent upward trend. For instance, in 2023 almost 3.5 million asylum seekers migrated to Europe - Spain witnessed a notable surge, receiving 163,000 asylum seekers, marking the highest number in the last three decades.

Perhaps that is why one of the major challenges Europe wishes to tackle this year is that of a 21.2 per cent spike in asylum applications. In this regard, the solution that the EU has come up with and has implemented quite successfully since 2015 is asylum offshoring. While officials in Europe portray it as an efficient migration management strategy, it is anything but. The only real achievement of asylum offshoring, as evidenced by data, is that it makes it harder and potentially more dangerous for migrants to cross over from different parts of the world into Europe.

Case in point: illegal migration from the Mediterranean region to Europe. It is an open secret that Europe supports coastal guards in countries such as Libya, and it does so because creating militia outfits results in better border control, which can act as buffers and deter migrants from coming into Europe. The reason Europe has to take this route of funding coastguards in other countries is that as per international law,

Even though precise number of Pakistanis leaving country through illegal migration methods such as dunki remains elusive a significant number still do

travelled from Libya to Italy describe it as "the journey of death". The number of people intercepted by the Libyan coastguard over the years has consistently seen an upward trend as has the death toll of those attempting to make the Mediterranean journey, where in 2020 there was a 5.0 per cent spike which is said to be a conservative estimate at best.

In 2020, Pope Francis compared Libyan migrant detention centres to Nazi concentration camps. Due to the heavy policing of the Greece route, in recent years the Libyan route has become increasingly popular with Pakistani illegal migrants and agents who they recruit. Such was the case with 34-year-old Abdullah, who was lured by a fellow Pakistani acting as an agent, who made YouTube videos of life in Europe. The promises made by the agent and the life that he showcased in his vlogs piqued Abdullah's interest, and he got in touch with the agent through a phone number given in one of the vlogs. Within a week Abdullah's visa was ready. His family was sceptical at best, but he had already taken a loan

sea. Every day Abdullah felt was the last. His skin had become mouldy from lack of hygiene and access to food and water. Days were painful and slow until one night, he was awakened by a boot on his neck. Fearing being thrown into the sea he was hesitant to go, however, he was put on a ship instead.

When the 'ship' that is supposed to cap at 30 carries more than 100 migrants, everyone prays for a miracle: one can hear the Kalma loud, as per Abdullah. "It was dark and cold. Everyone, the Arabs, Pakistanis, and Bengalis were reciting the Kalma. There were three pregnant women with us also." According to Abdullah, at one point, the Algerian man who was navigating their boat told him and his companions that they had lost their way. Upon hearing this, Abdullah felt that their death sentence had just been pronounced. "We hadn't eaten for three days and were extremely unmotivated, cold, and hungry." However, as dawn broke a shore was visible. "As we got closer, people started jumping from the boat and

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

Today in History

History of Pakistan



QUAID-I-AZAM MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH

Meanwhile, three Round Table Conferences were convened in London during 1930-32, to resolve the Indian constitutional problem. The Hindu and Muslim leaders, who were invited to these conferences, could not draw up an agreed formula and the British Government had to announce a 'Communal Award' which was incorpo-

rated in the Government of India Act of 1935. Before the elections under this Act, the All-India Muslim League, which had remained dormant for some time, was reorganized by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who had returned to India in 1934, after an absence of nearly five years in England. The Muslim League could not win a majority of Muslim seats since it had not yet been effectively reorganized. However, it had the satisfaction

that the performance of the Indian National Congress in the Muslim constituencies was bad. After the elections, the attitude of the Congress leadership was arrogant and domineering. The classic example was its refusal to form a coalition government with the Muslim League in the United Provinces. Instead, it asked the League leaders to dissolve their parliamentary party in the Provincial Assembly and join the Congress.

Another important Congress move after the 1937 elections was its Muslim mass contact movement to persuade the Muslims to join the Congress and not the Muslim League. One of its leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru, even declared that there were only two forces in India, the British and the Congress. All this did not go unchallenged.

To be continued....

Tom Hiddleston gives solo standing ovation for Jeremy Renner after comeback

Jeremy Renner made a surprise appearance at the awards show amid his recovery from a near-fatal accident



Tom Hiddleston was Jeremy Renner's biggest supporter at the 2024 People's Choice Awards. On Monday, Renner delighted fans and audience alike by making a surprise appearance at the awards show amid his ongoing recovery from a near-fatal snow-pow accident last year. As the Hawkeye actor stepped onto the stage to a room full of Hollywood A-listers erupting into applause, his Marvel co-star obligingly got up from his chair for a standing ovation. However, Hiddleston was the only one to do so, and he didn't sit down until the applause faded out and Renner began his speech. "Gotta say, it feels good to be back,"

Renner, 53, told the audience. "This year's been a heck of a journey and I'm happy to be here with you fans," he added, referring to his difficult recovery after he broke more than 30 bones. Also read: Jeremy Renner reflects on 'unbelievable battle' of recovery after snow-pow accident. He continued, "You guys are the best. You guys really brought this year. You broke records. You turned movies into movements. We heard you all loud and clear, we heard you." The father-of-one then went on to announce the winner of the TV performance of the year: Billie Eilish. As Eilish accepted her award, Renner stepped back and embraced Hiddleston as he headed backstage.

Showbiz

Tech

After Cold War, is world heading towards space war?

Space wars aren't just a topic for sci-fi anymore; the idea has now come to life. It is widely believed that the first shot of the next war between the world's big powers will be fired in space. A new "national security threat" debate has taken over the United States Congress, indicating that Russia is reportedly building a nuclear space weapon that has the potential to disband a large portion of the world's commercial and government satellites by producing a massive energy wave, Yahoo News reported. This would disable all communication lines affecting cell phones, paying bills, as well as the internet. While not much is known about the weapon at this point, the system is described as a potential "space-based nuclear weapon" in several sources. However, it's unclear if this refers to a nuclear bomb or a nuclear-powered gadget. White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said the US is closely monitoring this Russian activity and



will continue to take it seriously. President Joe Biden said: "There is no nuclear threat to the people of America or anywhere else in the world with what Russia is doing." According to the New York Post, upon questioning the Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, he dodged the claims and responded by suggesting that the propaganda was a ruse to whip up support in Congress to take action. He said: "It is obvious that the White House is trying, by hook or by crook, to encourage Congress to vote on a bill to allocate money; this is obvious."

What are harms of carrying water bottle? Listen to these experts

People usually carry a water bottle with them when they go out. Sometimes, the bottle is their company and they are attached to it. However, health experts have warned those people who carry a water bottle. If you are one of them, then you may listen to these experts. It is healthy to stay hydrated and maintain water intake for the smooth function of the body but drinking too much water may cause you serious harm leading to a fixation on hydration, according to health experts. A nephrologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota Dr Kambiz Kalantari said: "It's not easy to overwhelm your kidneys. But there are situations in which people are obsessed with drinking water. ... We're talking about 10, 15 liters that overwhelm their kidneys." There are some tips to keep your water intake in

check and mitigate the risk of over-hydration. Over-hydration: There is an old saying about how much water one should drink that does not fit every person as there is a difference in physique, activity, and other factors. According to a recommendation from the National Academy of Medicine, 3.7 liters of water for males and 2.7 for women in a day. This suggestion also includes sources other than only water, such as beverages and food. On the other hand, the Mayo Clinic recommended drinking 8 cups a day as it is easy to remember and typically keeps hydration levels balanced. Nevertheless, it depends on how much water one needs. Dr Kalantari said that it is not necessary to forcefully drink if not thirsty. "Drinking too much water would cause kidneys to excrete the excess fluid, resulting in a lot of uri-

nation," Dr Kalantari added. If a person has difficulty in excreting the fluid out when the kidneys are overwhelmed, it may cause a person to visit the hospital. According to Dr Kalantari, there are limits to the amount of fluid kidneys are able to excrete if a person has not eaten enough food that day. Dr Ryan Bober, an internal medicine specialist with Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles, said: "If you start to get to the point where you don't really have much of a thirst mechanism then you've kind of pushed yourself into the range of over-hydration." Water intoxication; When the excess amounts of water from the body cannot be removed from urinating or sweating, it causes water intoxication causing hyponatremia, in which the blood's sodium level is less than normal.



Health

Missing Baloch Students Case: IHC expresses dismay over absence of Caretaker PM

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday ruled that the caretaker prime minister should be removed from his office as he failed to answer in the missing Baloch students' case.

The Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar didn't appear before the court in person for second time in the case pertaining to the non-recovery of Baloch students.

"The Prime Minister didn't appear in the court for second time. He was summoned because he was answerable for all this," Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani remarked. Earlier, Justice Kayani had remarked that death sentence should be handed down to those behind forced disappearances.

The people involved in such disappearances should be awarded death sentence twice, he said during the last hearing. Justice Kayani said that defence secretary, interior secretary, DG ISI and DG MI are government officials and therefore PM was summoned because he was answerable for it.

All these officers are also responsible for this and no one is beyond the law, court ruled.

"Where are caretaker ministers, interior secretary and defence secretary," Justice Kayani questioned.

The court remarked that 12 missing students have not been recovered yet. Attorney General Mansoor Usman said that there were eight missing students yet. "Three consecutive governments couldn't do anything for missing persons," the court ruled and added that it is utter failure of state institutions.

Attorney General requested the court to grant some time to prepare the policy until the next government takes charge.

Justice Kayani said that the DC Islamabad is misusing the MPO order. A raid was conducted at the residence of PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat late night despite the fact that he is MNA and a lawyer, the court said. The IHC once again summoned the prime minister on Feb 28 before adjourning the case.

SC rejects withdrawal of plea seeking annulment of elections 2024

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday directed the police to present the plaintiff before it in a plea seeking elections 2024, void.

A three-member bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan headed by CJP Justice Qazi Faez Isa took up the plea of a plaintiff named Ali Khan, seeking to declare general elections of February 8, as void.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali are also part of the bench. At the outset of the hearing, the lawyer of the plaintiff said his client did not want to proceed with the plea and requested withdrawal of the plea. "Such a prank cannot be played on the Supreme Court. Bring the petitioner from wherever and present him before the court," Justice Isa remarked, adding that the bench would hear the petition. INP

Sherry challenges proposed public executions



ISLAMABAD: Senator Sherry Rehman, Vice President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), on Monday strongly opposed the proposal by Jamaat-e-Islami's Senator Mushtaq Ahmed to

introduce public executions for rapists through amendments to the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Criminal Procedure Code, calling it a counter effective measure in deterring sexual crimes and urged improved prosecutions and investigations to address the matter.

Speaking during a session of the Senate, she said: "The Peoples Party has always had a principled stance against the death penalty, whether public or private. While the PPP staunchly condemns rape as a heinous and grave crime, calling for the death penalty or public executions, as seen in various countries, have not proven to be effective in deterring sexual crimes.

We must prioritize enhancing prosecutions and investigations rather than resorting to barbarism and violence within society." She added that there have been historical attempts at public executions during Ziaul Haq's era which failed to reduce crime. "If public hanging is advocated for one crime, it will be demanded for other offenses as well. The PPP focuses on the importance of addressing the prevailing anger towards violence and sexual crimes through comprehensive measures, including improved funding for the police, enhanced criminal investigations, and better training for officers handling rape cases."

Further stressing the PPP's commitment to human rights principles, Senator Rehman advocated for comprehensive solutions and the reallocation of resources to better support survivors. "We reject the notion that public hangings serve as an effective solution and call for careful consideration of crimes, fair trials, and increased conviction rates as more practical deterrents," she said, adding that Pakistan already has life-sentence punishment for rape. DNA

University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir set to host 42nd Int'l Pakistan Congress of Zoology

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi expresses the university's pride in hosting the World Pakistan Congress of Zoology

MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) is gearing up to host the three-day 42nd International Pakistan Congress of Zoology at the King Abdullah Campus in April 2024, marking a significant milestone for the academic community.

According to the Public Relations Department of UAJK, the international conference is scheduled to commence on April 23, drawing the attention of scientists and researchers globally, including delegates from the USA, Australia, Switzerland, Greece, and various countries.

A comprehensive review meeting, held at the committee room of King Abdullah Campus Chatter Kallas, discussed the preparations for the congress. Chaired by Vice Chancellor

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, the meeting included figures such as Meritorious Prof. Dr. Ghulam Mur-taza, Deans from all four faculties, Controller Examinations, Director Finance, Director Planning, Director Works, Provost Hostels, Head of the Department of Zoology, and other Administrative Officers and Heads of Arrangement Committees.

Dr. Nuzhat Shafi, Chairperson of the Department of Zoology, highlighted the significance of hosting the 42nd International Pakistan Congress of Zoology under the auspices of the Zoological Society of Pakistan. She emphasized that it is a distinct honor for the UAJK and the Department of Zoology in particular.

The conference is anticipated to attract a substantial number of distinguished scientists, researchers, intel-

lectuals, faculty members, and students specializing in zoology from around the world. The three-day event will encompass various sessions featuring research papers, panel discussions, and lectures covering the latest developments, current issues, and opportunities within the field of Zoology.

Sessions will cover a wide range of topics, including entomology and pest management, cell biology, molecular biology, bioinformatics, environmental biotechnology, genetics, wildlife conservation, and several others. Delegates will have the opportunity to engage in discussions and share insights on cutting-edge research.

Addressing the meeting, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi expressed the university's

pride in hosting the World Pakistan Congress of Zoology. He emphasized the significance of the event for the UAJK and underscored the commitment to ensuring the conference's success. Prof. Dr. Abbasi issued directives to relevant departments, urging them to organize conferences not only in zoology but also across other sciences and social sciences to promote quality education and research.

As preparations intensified, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi directed the heads of the committees to complete all arrangements promptly and ensure that delegates from around the world received the necessary facilities for their participation in the three-day 42nd World Pakistan Congress of Zoology. SABAH



ISLAMABAD: Motorists on their way at Faisal Avenue during heavy rain in the Federal Capital. ONLINE

Political inclusion is imperative for financial progress & prosperity: President Alvi

Calls for respecting people's mandate, ensuring political inclusion

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that political inclusion is imperative for financial progress and prosperity. He hailed millions of young voters who had expressed their confidence in the democratic system. He added that if their confidence in the system was shaken, it would not be in the country's interest, and called for respecting the mandate of the people. He maintained that the blockage of social media websites in Pakistan was due to the lack of intellectual capacity to handle criticism. He also lamented that capable people were being kicked out of politics.

President Dr. Arif Alvi gave these remarks while addressing the third edition of Hosting Business Net 2024, a platform to promote financial inclusion and digital transformation and recognize the contributions of companies working in this sector. The ceremony was attended by members of the business and diplomatic community. Speaking on the occasion, the President called for enhancing the inclusion of deprived sections of society, especially women and persons with disabilities, in the mainstream of the economy through the digital transformation of the financial sector for socio-economic development. He said that financial inclusion was not possible without political inclusion of the people as excluding

them from the development process could have repercussions for the country.

Expressing concern over the slow decision-making and lack of leadership in the country, President Dr. Arif Alvi said that Pakistan needed good leadership and timely decision-making to put it on the path of progress and prosperity. He remarked that Pakistani people were a vibrant nation that had been blessed with abundant natural resources, adding that Pakistan needed to invest in their intellectual development and capacity building. The President highlighted that Pakistan could not progress without the inclusion of 26.2 million out-of-school children in the education system. He stated that educating such a large portion of our population would require thousands of new schools and additional resources. "If left unaddressed, Pakistan would export raw labour without any value-addition," he added. He cited the example of China which had lifted millions of its people out of poverty by investing in their education and health.

President Dr. Arif Alvi said that technology could have been utilized to grant the right to vote to overseas Pakistanis through internet voting (i-voting) as well as bring improvements in the electoral process through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). He regretted that i-voting and EVMs could not be introduced due to vested interests. The President highlighted the need for setting priorities for the country, making good decisions and efficiently utilizing its human resources for progress of the country.

He said that the low tax-to-GDP ratio was a perennial problem in Pakistan, adding that overcoming this issue would help reduce Pakistan's reliance on foreign loans. The President said that banks were offering business loans for women on easy terms and conditions, however, there was a lack of awareness about micro-credit facilities for women. He urged the banks to enhance their outreach by introducing cashless banking in far-flung areas through customized products and services.

CEO of Transforming Hub, Ifukhar Hussain, highlighted that BizNet was an ecosystem that had brought together the best minds by promoting increased collaboration, commitment and innovation. He underlined the pivotal role played by the banking sector in adopting the latest financial solutions paving the way for user-friendly banking transactions. Speaking on the occasion, CEO of Airlinks Communication, Muzaffar Piracha, apprised the audience that digitization of the economy was the first step towards financial inclusion which was not possible without advancements in the mobile industry.

Chief Digital Officer of Jazz, Aamir Aijaz, said that Pakistan had a large undocumented economy that was undermining the whole financial system as businesses/transactions were not registered. Financial inclusion through formal banking channels and proper payment mechanisms (gateways) could effectively address such issues and empower people particularly women at the grassroots level, he added.

IHC suspends notifications of Islamabad's 3 NA seats winners

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday suspended the notifications of the candidates winning from the three National Assembly seats of NA-46, NA-47, and NA-48 Islamabad.

The IHC bench comprising Justice Mian Gul Hasan Aurangzeb and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir suspended the victory notifications of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz candidates Anjum Aqeel from NA-46, Tariq Fazal Chaudhry from NA-47 and Raja Khuram Shehbaz from NA-48 Islamabad.

The bench took the decision while hearing comprising Justice the separate intra-court appeals of independent candidates Shoaib Shaheen, Aamer Mughal and Ali Bokhari Advocate.

During the course of proceedings, Shoaib Shaheen Advocate said that he had received all the Forms-45 of 380 polling stations in the election night and approached the returning officer to point out the irregularity. Form-47 was not issued till 1 a.m. and his workers staged a sit-in in protest, he added.

The lawyer said that firstly he filed an application before the returning officer and then to the district returning officer. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) stopped the RO from issuing the Form 47 and also sought a report within three days, which had not been filed as yet. Shoaib Shaheen said that the RO was supposed to prepare the Form-47 in the presence of all candidates. However, the ECP later issued the notification declaring Tariq Fazal Chaudhry winner without consolidation of the results.

Aamir Mughal's lawyer claimed that there were 343 polling stations in his client's constituency and as per the results he was leading. The petitioners prayed the court to issue directives to the ECP for withdrawal of the victory notifications of the three PML-N candidates in aforesaid constituencies as their complaints were already pending with the electoral body. APP

'IMF asks Pakistan for transparency in PSDP projects'

ISLAMABAD: Raising 'concerns' on the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has asked Pakistan for transparency in the projects, well-placed sources said on Monday. The IMF has raised concerns on the report shared by Pakistan regarding PSDP projects by saying the complete details of investment are missing. The international lender has urged Pakistan to make the budget documents 'effective' and include the location and development formats of the PSDP projects in it. The PSDP should be finalised by keeping the development projects in view in the upcoming budget, the IMF said as per sources.

Meanwhile, the sources within the Planning Commission said the finance and planning ministries will complete the paperwork in line with the IMF directions. On February 14 it emerged that Pakistan is likely to sign a fresh loan programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), after the completion of the current one. As per details, Islamabad is expected to sign the Extended Fund Facility programme for three years and would share budget proposals for FY-2024-25 with the International Monetary Fund, the sources said. INP

Equipping students with IT, AI dire need of hour: Governor Punjab

MULTAN: Governor Punjab, Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman has said that equipping students with Information Technology (IT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) was the dire need of the hour. While addressing convocation of a private institute here on Monday, he said that in the modern era, acquiring knowledge of modern sciences and arts holds key importance for progress and success. Baligh Ur Rehman further stated that hard work and consistency play a crucial role in the journey of progress.

Instead of reacting to false and misleading information on social media, ensure a research-based approach, he advised the students and added that reacting against corruption should be based on real data and facts from international organizations. The Governor Punjab noted that destruction and violent protests were extremely detrimental to the country. He said that determining those who merely talk against corruption and those who take practical actions was imperative.

Baligh Ur Rehman said that success in education was possible through collaboration with the private sector. Honesty and high moral values were the keys to success in practical life, he maintained.

The event was attended by Vice Chancellors (VCs) of public and private universities besides parents and graduating students were in attendance. INP

Senate of Pakistan rejects bill seeking to publicly execute those convicted of rape with a majority vote

Bill presented by Senator Mushtaq was supported by Senators Mehr Taj Roghani, Kamran Murtaza, Maulana Faiz Muhammad, Hafiz Abdul Kareem & others

ISLAMABAD: Senate of Pakistan rejected a bill seeking to publicly execute those convicted of rape with a majority vote on Monday, with parliamentarians strongly opposing the idea as a "counter-effective measure in deterring sexual crimes".

The upper house of parliament rejected the move to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, through the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill 2023 with a 24-14 vote.

The bill presented by Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Senator Mushtaq Ahmed was supported by Senators Mehr Taj Roghani, Kamran Murtaza, Maulana Faiz Muhammad, Hafiz Abdul Kareem, Kamil Ali Agha, Abdul Qadir, and others.

The senators who had voted against the bill called for improved prosecutions, investigations for combating sexual crimes, and a better jail environment to ensure that such heinous crimes are averted in the future.

Defending his proposal after it had been defeated, Senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan said the senators did not talk about the "basic issue" and noted that the lawmakers spoke about "brutality" becoming rife due to public executions, but it's already rife.

"I want to halt brutality through public executions. Did the motorway rape case woman and Zainab have no respect? [How] does a rapist have respect?" he wondered, claiming that publicly hanging such criminals would act as a "deterrence".

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl's (JUI-F) Faiz Muhammad, backing Mushtaq, said that culprits who commit such heinous crimes should be

hanged publicly.

Voicing concerns, Pakistan People's Party's (PPP) Senator Sherry Rehman strongly opposed the proposal, calling it a counter-effective measure in deterring sexual crimes, and urged improved prosecutions and investigations to address the matter.

Speaking during the session of the Senate, she said: "The Peoples Party has always had a principled stance against the death penalty, whether public or private."

"While the PPP staunchly condemns rape as a heinous and grave crime, calling for the death penalty or public executions, as seen in various countries, have not proven to be effective in deterring sexual crimes. We must prioritise enhancing prosecutions and investigations rather than resorting to barbarism and violence within society."

She added that there have been historical attempts at public executions during Ziaul Haq's era which failed to reduce crime.

"If public hanging is advocated for one crime, it will be demanded for other offenses as well. The PPP focuses on the importance of addressing the prevailing anger towards violence and sexual crimes through comprehensive measures, including improved funding for the police, enhanced criminal investigations, and better training for officers handling rape cases."

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Senator Sadia Abbasi said she opposes the bill as it would make the society more violent. "People were publicly flogged in this country [...] we saw the reaction that took place within the nation and abroad." SABAH



KARACHI: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi addressing the gathering at the award distribution ceremony organized by the Floral Arts Society, Gardenia Chapter.