

Early elections are a possibility, says Sheikh Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid on Thursday said members of the ruling PTI that "switching parties won't do them any good", saying that "turncoats must also keep in mind that early elections can also be called in the country".

He made these remarks during a press conference here during which he talked about the upcoming no-trust vote against Prime Minister Imran Khan.

"Those who are changing parties and thinking they will get respect, they are wrong," the minister said. He claimed the country would get "good news" from this point onwards.

He said allies generally took more time in taking decisions. "Those who are [genuine] remain intact with democracy and their party," he added.

Rashid advised political leaders in the opposition camp to stick to their decision as "it is their moral, constitutional and Islamic responsibility".

"Let me tell you with responsibility that nobody is going anywhere," the minister emphasised, saying he met Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar who was firmly standing with Imran Khan.

"He is also not going anywhere," Rashid said regarding Buzdar.

The removal of the incumbent Punjab chief minister from office is one of the key demands of the group of estranged PTI lawmakers led by Jahangir Tareen.

A close friend of PM Imran, Aleem Khan, had also announced that he was joining the Tareen group. He had assailed the Imran Khan government in the Centre and the Usman Buzdar-led Punjab government for "completely failing to fulfill its mandate and bring about the promised change".

During his presser, the interior minister claimed that some opposition members would also not go to parliament on the day of the no-trust vote. Terming those members "responsible", he said they understood that it would be "better" if PM Imran completed his tenure and early elections were called.

"The opposition has to rethink the situation in view of the global scenario," he added.

Last week, several lawmakers from the ruling PTI, who had been "in hiding" at the Sindh House in Islamabad, revealed themselves — proving that opposition claims of having won over members of the ruling coalition were indeed true.

The revelation came after PM Imran and some cabinet ministers accused the opposition of indulging in horse-trading ahead of the crucial vote on the no confidence resolution, disclosing that Sindh House in Islamabad had become a centre for buying and purchasing members.

But while government members continued to claim that these dissidents had "sold their souls for money", a number of TV channels that sent their teams into Sindh House to verify the claims were faced with nearly a dozen PTI members, who poured their hearts out and laid bare all their gripes with the ruling party.

The interior minister had appealed to the dissident lawmakers to return the PTI, assuring them that they would not be questioned.

The minister had suggested the disgruntled leaders of the PTI visit their constituencies and consult their voters on what they thought about their decision. The members of the National Assembly belonging to the ruling party would regret their decision if they did not return, he had added. INP



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed calling on Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar at CM House Lahore.

President lauds services of security personnel during calamities

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi said Thursday nobody can cast an evil eye on Pakistan in the presence of its disciplined and professional armed forces.

Speaking at a ceremony after giving away awards to the organizers of Pakistan Day Parade in Islamabad on Thursday, the President said Pakistan is strong and stable because of the strength of its armed forces.

Arif Alvi said Pakistan has always emerged victorious from difficult situation and foiled the conspiracies of the enemy. The President said our forces are the only ones in the world which successfully tackled the menace of terrorism. He said the sacrifices rendered by them in this war will always be remembered.

"Through its integrity, economic stability, strong defence and national unity, Pakistan will emerge as a country with an impact in the world," President said in his address to the military officers and soldiers, here at the Parade Ground.

The president joined the troops at the Bara Khana — a traditional joint feast for the officers and soldiers of all ranks, held at the culmination of the arrangements for the Pakistan Day parade.

President lauded the finest arrangements made by the administrators of the parade on March 23, which was also witnessed by foreign delegates including the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Countries.

President Alvi stressed a constant vigilance to counter nefarious designs of the enemy and called for effectively addressing the emerging challenges, particularly cyber warfare.

Dr Alvi paid glowing tribute to the country's armed forces for defending the frontiers and for their immense contribution to the sovereignty of the homeland.

"Your immortal sacrifices for the country will never be forgotten," he told the troops.

He said Pakistan Army was the only military in the world that fought the war against terrorism and extremism in a "proper and effective manner".

He said Pakistan secured the atomic capability for its defense and it has the potential to meet any challenge.

Arif Alvi was also appreciative of the services rendered by security personnel during calamities. The president joined the troops at the Bara Khana — a traditional joint feast for the officers and soldiers of all ranks, held at the culmination of the arrangements for the Pakistan Day parade.

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Red Zone sealed in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The authorities in Islamabad Thursday completely sealed all the ways leading to the Red Zone during hearing of the presidential reference in the Supreme Court.

It was reported that all the roads, leading to the Red Zone, including Serena Chowk, Nadra Chowk, D-Chowk and Marriott Chowk were closed.

Only Margalla Road was open for the people going to the Supreme Court and the Pakistan Secretariat. People faced a great deal of inconvenience due to closure of the roads.

A large number of policemen were deployed at the entry points of the Red Zone. Large police contingents were also deployed inside and outside the Supreme Court.

The police also deployed a water cannon outside the Supreme Court.

It is to be noted here that the government had filed a presidential reference in the Supreme Court, seeking interpretation of Article 63(A) ahead of crucial voting for the no-confidence motion against the Prime Minister of Pakistan. INP

Chinese-scholarship holder Pakistani youngster embraces great changes

ISLAMABAD: A Chinese-scholarship holder Pakistani youngster from a small town embraced great changes in life, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday.

The 30-year-old Malik Usama Hamid comes from Sharakpur Sharif, a small city close to Lahore proud of his life as he learnt Chinese language and culture.

"I got that scholarship opportunity with complete foreign studies expenses that was an amazing and life-changing moment which he will never forget," Malik said.

China has become a popular education destination for Pakistani students, according to China's Ministry of Education, the number of Pakistani students has risen in China with a series of preferential policies offered by the Chinese government after the launch of CPEC, a pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative. Many students have been facilitated to obtain scholarships under such a program.

"As we know, the Chinese language is one of the most difficult languages to master in the world. Reading, writing and typing in Chinese are all what I learned in China.

There are many similarities between Pakistani and Chinese culture. I think a language acts as a bridge between two countries. To better understand each other's feelings, one of the nicest ways to make the connection stronger is to communicate in their language."

Touching on ways to learn Chinese, Malik said that he adopted a mode of learning, that is, to watch Chinese cartoons. "In Chinese cartoons they use very daily routine words that were with English and Chinese simplified Pinyin subtitles. So that makes it very easy to understand the Chinese language." INP

FIA nabs two men for harassing us girl who committed suicide

FAISALABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested two people from Faisalabad after they shared obscene content related to a US girl on social media which led to her committing suicide.

According to the FIA, the two suspects used to share obscene content with the class fellows of the US girl and blackmailed her. "This resulted in the girl committing suicide in the United States," the agency said.

It further said that the US embassy has given a formal request to the agency to proceed against the suspects.

The agency is responsible for taking action against online harassment and blackmailing through sharing of obscene videos and recently its cyber-crime wing arrested a man for circulating unethical private pictures of a girl.

According to FIA, the perpetrator Sohail Khan is a resident of Rawalpindi. FIA cyber crime branch has registered an FIR against the detained Sohail Khan.

In a video statement released by the FIA, the detained Sohail can be seen admitting to sharing unethical photos of a girl over social media platforms. INP

CIUK holds Chinese speech contest to celebrate Pakistan Day

ISLAMABAD: To celebrate the Pakistan Day, the Confucius Institute at University of Karachi (CIUK) held the seventh "Pakistan Day" Chinese Speech Contest, Gwadar Pro reported.

Contestants were divided into junior group and senior group, and a total of 54 Pakistani students from Confucius Institute and teaching sites participated. After the preliminary selection, 20 contestants entered the final.

At the scene, students from CIUK presented the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic volunteer-themed song "Love Is Here". The youthful and passionate chorus instantly led to a warm atmosphere in the stadium. Students from CIUK performed folk dances from various provinces of Pakistan.

Teachers and students jointly sang the song "You Have Stolen My Heart", expressing their praise and blessing for Pak-China friendship. Laiba Faisal and Midhat Arif won the crown of junior and senior groups respectively.

According to Mr Zhang Xiaoping, Chinese director of CIUK, the "Pakistan Day" Chinese Speech Contest is a traditional event of CIUK. It has been successfully held for seven sessions since 2016 and has become an important platform for students to express their patriotic enthusiasm, eulogize Pak-China friendship, demonstrate their Chinese language proficiency, and promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan. On the occasion, Mr Muhammad Nasiruddin Khan, Pakistani director of CIUK highlighted that with joint efforts of Sichuan Normal University and University of Karachi, CIUK has developed into the largest Confucius Institute in Pakistan.

It has launched the first 2+2 joint training program for undergraduates majoring in Chinese in Pakistan, and students majoring in Business Chinese will be recruited soon after graduation. He believes that the cooperation between the two universities will get closer and closer. INP

Lahore man confesses ordering hitjob on brother's family

LAHORE: A Lahore man has confessed to ordering a hitjob to kill brother, sister-in-law and niece over a property dispute.

Amanat Ali, his wife Shabana and their two-month-old daughter Azal were murdered on February 27 in Agrics Town in Lahore's Chohang area.

Police arrested Amin, his son Shehzad and hitman Ashiq who confessed to their crimes.

Amin was imprisoned in 2014 for his father's murder where he met Ashiq who was among the most notorious inmates for their ruthlessness. He got Ashiq out of the prison and offered a contract of one million rupees to kill his brother, sister-in-law and their child. In his confessional statement, Amin said they entered Ali's house where Shehzad held Amanat Ali at gunpoint. Then they took him to the washroom and slit his throat. After this, they tied and killed Shabana and strangled Azal, an infant.

Amin did not want his brothers Saleem and Amanat Ali to have a share in their father's property. He killed his father over the same issue. Ali, who was a lawyer, was pursuing the case. Amin also planned to kill Saleem, but the police arrested him and foiled his bid. Amin was imprisoned in 2014 for his father's murder where he met Ashiq who was among the most notorious inmates for their ruthlessness. He got Ashiq out of the prison and offered a contract of one million rupees to kill his brother, sister-in-law and their child.

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Drugs recovered from two passengers at Islamabad Airport

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Thursday recovered 1.970 kg heroin from a Birmingham-bound passenger who wanted to take the drug to the United Kingdom from New Islamabad International Airport.

The drug was secretly hidden in the hotpots of the accused Sibghatullah's luggage who confirmed his ticket to the UK on EY-232 flight.

In another raid, the ANF recovered huge amounts of drug tablets that were secretly hidden in the sweets packets by another passenger heading for Middle East.

The accused wanted to take the drugs to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. INP

Bilal Yasin case: Prime suspect Mian Vicky gets pre-arrest bail

LAHORE: Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore on Monday granted pre-arrest bail to prime suspect Mian Haseeb alias Mian Vicky in a case pertaining to a gun attack on PML-N MPA Bilal Yasin. The court granted post-arrest bail to Mian Vicky till March 31 and directed him to submit Rs100,000 surety bonds for the purpose. Mian Vicky, who is currently in Dubai, "mastermind" the attack on Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) MPA Bilawal Yasin.

The Ministry of Interior in February issued red warrants for the arrest of "mastermind" Mian Vicky in MPA Bilal Yasin firing case. The foreign ministry sent red warrants for the arrest of Mian Vicky to Dubai foreign ministry. Bilal Yasin got injured in the armed attack in Lahore's Salamat Mohalla on Mohni Road on Dec 31. Two unidentified men on a motorcycle opened fire at him, as a result of which he sustained bullet wounds and was subsequently taken. INP

Islamabad police introduces 'online complaint management system': IGP Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Inspector General Police Muhammad Ehsan Younas has said to facilitate public and resolve their complaints on priority basis an "online complaint management system" has been introduced in the federal capital.

He said the citizens will be able to avail all the services from their homes through the system. He added that all out efforts are being made to provide facilities to the public at their doorsteps.

Inspector General Police further said that Islamabad Police have launched the online complaint management system to provide seven different services to the public. These services include FIR registration, complaints about traffic, complaints against any police official and regarding any investigation.

The citizens will be able to get an e-tag number through their mobile phones without visiting police station. The e-tag numbers will be sent to the complainant through WhatsApp and text message.

The citizens are advised to visit Islamabad Police website or go to a direct link (complaints.islamabadpolice.gov.pk) to register their complaints.

Muhammad Younas Ehsan said the police are striving to make Islamabad a crime-free city by timely addressing complaints of the public. INP

PPP to SC: article 63(A) can't be invoked before no-trust vote

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Thursday submitted its response to a reference filed in the Supreme Court by President Dr. Arif Alvi seeking the interpretation of Article 63(A).

The PPP stated that the reference doesn't fall within the ambit of Article 186 of the Constitution under which the president can seek the top court's opinion. The court's opinion on the matter will prejudice the right to appeal, the opposition party argued, adding Article 63(A) cannot be invoked against any member of the National Assembly before the process of a vote of no-confidence against a prime minister. Earlier today, former Senate chairman Raza Rabbani approached the Supreme Court to become a party in the presidential reference. He moved an application in the apex court stating that he headed a parliamentary committee on constitutional reforms that were introduced in the Constitution through the 18th Constitutional Amendment. INP



ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson for the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) Marriyum Aurangzeb speaks during a media talk outside Supreme Court.

Presidential reference: PML-N terms it 'pre-mature, unnecessary exercise'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Thursday submitted its reply to a presidential reference filed from President Arif Alvi in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, seeking opinion on article 63 (A) of the Constitution of Pakistan.

The PML-N has termed filing of the reference as an attempt to waste precious time of the apex court in its response filed by their counsel Makhdoom Ali Khan.

The article 63 (A) and article 95 are clear and every member of the Parliament has the right to vote under the Constitution of Pakistan, it said and added that every vote casted by the MNA will be counted.

The presidential reference is a premature and unnecessary exercise, the PML-N counsel said and added the court has the authority to give interpretation of the Constitution not the constitutional amendments.

Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) submitted in the apex court its reply to the presidential reference seeking the interpretation and scope of Article 63(A).

The SCBA stated that an individual MNA can participate in the proceeding of a vote of no-confidence against a prime minister under Article 95.

"An MNA's right to vote is an individual right under Article 95 and this right doesn't belong to the political party he or she belongs to," the top lawyers body contended, adding no member of the lower house of Parliament could be barred from exercising the right to vote.

Article 63 doesn't allow preemptive action against any MNA on the apprehension that they might defect from a parliamentary party, it said and added that every vote cast under Article 95 is liable to be counted.

The SCBA argued any MNA going against party directives during the proceedings of the vote of no-confidence cannot be disqualified under Article 63 (A). INP

Hypocrites like PM Imran made fake promises to masses: Shazia Marri

KARACHI: Central Information Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPP-P) and member of the National Assembly Shazia Atta Marri has said that hypocrite person like Prime Minister Imran Khan is trying to hide himself under the cover of religion.

In a statement issued on Thursday in reaction to the prime ministers speech, she said that Premier Imran Khan had promised to provide houses and jobs to the people but instead of it, he had snatched employment and houses from people. She said that the PM also deprived thousands of employees of Steel Mill from their jobs and made them unemployed.

While slamming PTI leadership, Shazia Marri said that Imran Khan also made fake promise to provide five million houses and 10 million jobs but thousands of houses of the poor people were demolished in the name of encroachment by him.

She said that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's historic long march from Karachi to Islamabad had ruled against evil. INP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry speaks during a media talk outside Supreme Court.