

Daily

SOON TIMES



Parvez Elahi allowed to contest by-election from PP-32

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President summons National Assembly session on April 1



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned the National Assembly session on April 1.
The president has convened the assembly session using powers conferred on him under Article 54 (1) of the Constitution. President has convened the assembly session in Parliament House on first April (Monday) at 4pm (afternoon).
This will be the second session of the present 16th National Assembly of the country.
Also Read: Delay in KP Assembly session irks opposition

PIA privatisation plan approved by newly formed board



Soon Times Correspondent KARACHI
The privatisation and restructuring plan of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Tuesday was approved by its board of directors which was recently constituted.
The 83rd meeting of the PIA's board of directors was held on March 25 during which the scheme of arrangement for the airline's privatisation and restructuring was approved, as per the official announcement.
The board of directors will coordinate with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), said the statement.
Meanwhile, as per the sources, the plan also discussed different proposals regarding the future of the organisation's employees.
The government had appointed Ernst & Young — a global financial advisory firm — to prepare the plan for the loss-making firm which completed its task during the caretaker setup.

PM Shehbaz vows to bring economic stability, ensure GDP growth

Premier announces restructuring of FBR to increase tax revenue



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the ceremony of the Tax Excellence Awards 2024 in Islamabad on March 26, 2024.

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed the resolve on Tuesday to bring macroeconomic stability and put Pakistan on the path of growth.
Addressing the Tax Excellence Awards ceremony in Islamabad, the premier said ensuring export-led growth through joint efforts was the only solution to make the country debt-free.
The prime minister also said the government will strive to elevate productive sectors such as industries, information technology (IT), and agriculture.
Referring to the new IMF

programme, the premier said the government is taking the step to bring stability to the country's economy.
"The state will also focus on addressing the issue of inflation while ensuring growth and creating job opportunities," said PM Shehbaz, adding that the federal government along with the provincial governments will create an enabling situation for the private sector and address the issues faced by the sector.
Shehbaz added that refunds to the tune of Rs65 billion were made to the exporters and expressed determination for timely payments of refunds in the future.
The prime minister also vowed

to provide electricity to industries at competitive rates with the aim of increasing productivity.
In regards to investments, the PM said that a platform of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has been formed to attract foreign inflow and the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be developed in a timely manner.
Talking about tax reforms, the PM said the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) will be restructured and mentioned the hiring of consultants, scheduled for next month, for the complete digitalization of the tax collection body.

PTI to stage protest demo for former PM's release



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is all set to hold what it calls the biggest ever protest demonstration in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the release of the PTI founder.
PTI chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said this while talking to media on Tuesday.
He said the PTI founder had said his life is for the country and would die here while the workers should not be bewildered.
Gohar said Senate elections and Demand for Justice statements were discussed with the PTI founder and he wanted Azaam

Majeed to come forward to record his statement again.
Rajan Nasir Abbas would be the PTI candidate for Punjab while Mian Aslam Iqbal parliamentary leader for Punjab, the PTI chief said.
The PTI chairman said Zulfi Bukhari would also be a PTI candidate for Senate election from Punjab while Faizur Rehman and Dr Shadfat Ayyaz would contest from KP.
"Azaam Swati would be a candidate for the technocrats post from KP. In case of any objection Noorul Haq Qadri will replace him," Khan said.
He said Basma Bibi had nothing to do with anything and she was sentenced to pre-arrested the PTI founder.
He urged the chief justice to hear their cases and decide them at the earliest and let the not wait for 45 years.

Domestic consumption should determine crop cultivation: Maryam Nawaz



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Tuesday said cultivation of different crops in future should be based upon the domestic consumption and requirements, as she directed to use artificial technology and other options to determine how much production is needed.
The remarks came as she chaired a Punjab cabinet meeting which approved ministerial committee for devising a policy on wheat procurement and other subjects. Food Minister Bilal Yasin will head the panel comprising finance, agriculture and information ministers.
At the same time, the cabinet also agreed to consult the Punjab Assembly members on wheat procurement and also approved reconstitution of standing committee on wheat as well as the Food Department's Commodity Financing Committee.
Maryam's observations about crop cultivation are very important, as crop pattern or the area on which any crop is cultivated has been determined according to the market needs. That's why we often see shortage of various food items — ranging from cereals to vegetables.
It also affects the farmers who are left at the mercy of market forces which exploit them in case of oversupply and



do not give them the actual value when they profit by genuine or artificial shortage.
Meanwhile, the consumers are the worst affected when there is shortage in the market. The prevailing inflation sustained by higher food prices is a proof of this trend.
KITE TWINE DEATHS
Maryam directed the officials to launch a campaign for installing safety rods on bikes to protect the people from kite twines which have claimed multiple lives in recent days.
CHRISTIAN WORKERS
The cabinet also endorsed the suggestion to announce Easter holiday for the Christian community, as Maryam expressed her condolences over the death of sanitary workers in recent incidents.
An overwhelming majority of sanitary workers in Pakistan are Christian. In fact, the job announcements specifically mentions the religion as a basic requirement.
The chief minister regretted that death of a poor was only news in the society and promised that an effective legislation would be introduced to protect the lives of sanitary workers in the province.

Pakistan welcomes UNSC resolution demanding immediate ceasefire in Gaza



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Pakistan on Monday welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2728, demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza for the holy month of Ramadan.
In a statement, the Foreign Office spokesperson said,

"We also welcome the Security Council's call for allowing free flow of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, lifting of all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance, and ensuring protection of civilians in the entire Gaza Strip."
"Over the course of past six months, Pakistan has repeatedly expressed its strong and unequivocal condemnation of the indiscriminate use of force by Israel, calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, unimpeded humanitarian assistance to the besieged people of Gaza, return of the displaced Palestinians.

Five Chinese among six killed in Bisham suicide attack



Islamabad Web Desk
At least six people, including five Chinese nationals, were killed in an explosion when their convoy was attacked by a suicide bomber in the Bisham area of Shergilla district on Tuesday, a top police officer said.
A suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a convoy of Chinese engineers which was on its way from

Islamabad to their camp in Dasu in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, said DIG Malakand Mohammad Ali Gandapur.
"Five Chinese nationals and their Pakistani driver were killed in the attack," Gandapur confirmed.
A large contingent of law enforcers reached the site soon after the attack and cordoned off the area. Traffic on the route has come to a standstill as authorities investigate the attack.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad, and met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to offer condolences over the death of Chinese nationals in the suicide attack.
In July 2021, nine Chinese nationals and four Pakistanis were killed and around two dozen others suffered injuries when a shuttle bus they were travelling in plunged into a deep ravine after an explosion on board.

Talha Mahmood joins PPP, Kundi sees forward bloc in SIC's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
JUI-F Senator Talha Mahmood on Tuesday announced his decision to switch his loyalties and join the PPP, citing his desire to work at the national level as the sole reason behind the move.
Addressing a press conference, Talha said everyone could see the prevailing economic crisis and political situation as well as the challenges being faced by Pakistan.
"Each of us has to play a role to rescue Pakistan out of the crisis," said the former JUI-F leader who was flanked by Nayyar Hussain

Bokhari and Faisal Karim Kundi of PPP.
Talha said he had first obtained a JUI-F ticket in 2006 for a National Assembly seat and had not joined any other party since then. During the last 18 years, he told reporters, he neither received any salary nor enjoyed perks and privilege despite serving in different capacities, including as a federal minister.
He met President Asif Ali Zardari a week ago, who had invited him to join the PPP, which was the best option to work at the national level.
Speaking on the occasion, Bokhari welcomed Talha into the party's ranks and mentioned that he had always played a positive role in the parliament.
Similarly, Kundi, who is the PPP information secretary, said they would work hard for

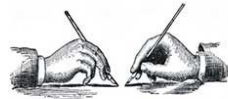
Militant attack on Pakistan Navy base in Turbat foiled: ISPR

Terrorists attacked naval base on night of March 25 and 26.

RAWALPINDI Web Desk
Security forces successfully thwarted an attack attempted by terrorists on PNS Siddique — a naval base in Balochistan's Turbat city, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement on Tuesday.
The attack, which took place on the night of March 25 and 26, was foiled following the swift and effective response by the troops ensuring the safety and security of personnel and assets, the military's media wing added.
Synergistic and effective response by the armed forces enabled the killing of all four terrorists in the ensuing joint clearance operation, the statement read.
A blurred image of one of the killed terrorists — ISPR.
A blurred image of one of the killed terrorists — ISPR.
"Security forces in the vicinity were immediately mobilised to support



the naval troops," it added.
In the wake of the attack, a 24-year-old Frontier Corps trooper, Sepoy Noman Farid, embraced martyrdom after gallantly fighting the terrorists. The martyred soldier was a resident of Muzaffargarh and was serving in Frontier Corps Balochistan.
"Sanitisation operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area," the statement read, adding that
Pakistan's armed forces remain "committed to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country at all costs".
The attack comes almost a week after a group of gunmen stormed the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) colony with security forces acting swiftly and foiling the fierce attack.
Own troops, the ISPR said, employed for security responded immediately and effectively engaged the terrorists, and in ensuing fire exchange, all eight terrorists were sent to hell.



Gwadar Power Plant

Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to expedite the construction of Gwadar Power Plant. The minister made these directions while chairing a meeting to review the progress of Gwadar Power Plant. The meeting was attended by the officials of the ministry, Managing Director, Private Power, Infrastructure Board (PPIB), Commercial Minister Counselor from Chinese embassy, Mr. Yang Guangyuan and other relevant stakeholders. It is noted that PPIB is processing the 300MW coal

power project at Gwadar, being developed by M/s CIHC Pak Power Company (Pvt) Limited (CPPCL). The project is in the 'priority list' of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and holds paramount importance for the energy infrastructure and economic development of the region. "The supply of electricity is essential in Gwadar and no delay will be accepted," said the minister while directing the concerned stakeholders to remove all the bottlenecks and start the construction work immediately. Terming Gwadar 'the gateway of CPEC', the minister said that the incumbent government has expedited the

implementation on phase 2 of the CPEC while integrated it with five new economic corridors. The development of Gwadar Port City, New Gwadar International Airport and East Bay Expressway is going to transform the city of Gwadar into a maritime trade hub and a new smart port for the region. It will also lead to industrialisation in Balochistan," he said. It is noted that all major projects under CPEC in Gwadar, including Gwadar Power Plant, distribution of 2000 Boat engines to fishermen of Gwadar, Khuzdar-Panjgur Transmission line (via Nag-Basima) which connect Markran with National Grid,

New Gwadar International Airport Project, the China-Pak Friendship Hospital, China-Pak Technical and Vocational Institute in Gwadar, the Gwadar East-bay Expressway Project, Gwadar Free Zone, and Gwadar Port would become a shining pearl in the region. During PDM's tenure several projects were completed by the then government in Gwadar particularly related to water and electricity that were neglected by the previous government deliberately. Besides, in budget 2023-24, the allocation of development funds for Balochistan had been doubled.

Acknowledging The Unshakable Faith Of Palestine.

Rabiya Yousuf

With utmost respect for our brave Palestinians, whose faith triumphs during the month of Ramadan, it is disheartening to witness the savagery displayed by Israeli criminals. It is not unjust to label Israel as "war criminals" due to their brutal exploitation of human rights and the restriction of aid into Gaza. Their use of starvation as

a "weapon of war" constitutes a clear war crime. The cruel and unacceptable methods employed by Israel have led to a dire situation of hunger, starvation, and famine. However, amidst these challenges, the Palestinian people continue to demonstrate an unshakable faith that serves as an inspiration for all Muslims. The patience exhibited by Palestinians aligns with the teachings of Ramadan.

Despite regular storming of the Al Aqsa mosque by Israeli forces, Palestinian worshippers remain steadfast in their devotion during this holy month. Given the ongoing barbaric situation in Palestine, it is imperative for the Muslim community to unite and provide aid and support. Let us not underestimate the power of prayer in bringing about positive change.

Iran and Shanghai Cooperation Organization



Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaher

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an organization led by China and Russia with the participation of some regional countries. Iran has been participating in the SCO since 2005 as an observer. It also has applied for full membership several times. It took more than 15 years for the endorsement of its permanent membership. Iran's frustration with the United States prompted him to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In addition, Afghanistan's neighboring countries, including Iran, pay close attention to the country's situation. In fact, they are trying to prevent large numbers of jihadists from entering Afghanistan, which might pose a threat and harm to regional countries particularly. The fight against terrorism is also one of the key issues of the SCO. By joining the SCO or strengthening counter-terrorism cooperation within the SCO framework, Iran will maximize its regional worth and security.

Iran has long been isolated by some Western countries, led by the United States. Washington continues to impose sanctions on Iran. Although US President Joe Biden's administration has promised to restore the Iran nuclear deal, he has done nothing about lifting sanctions

yet. The new Iranian president, Ibrahim Raisi, and his government have no illusions about improving Iran-US relations, and Raisi has repeatedly agreed to work with China and Russia. Due to the Iranian nuclear issue, the West has long considered Iran a doubtful and insecure to the international community. After the joining with the SCO; Iran will avoid such diplomatic and political isolation to the point of sightlessness. This means that Iran's recognition as an important country of the region by some major powers will bring significant political benefits for it. In terms of security, the SCO's counter-terrorism efforts are much significant. Now Iran is a member of the SCO, it will cooperate in intelligence sharing and coordination with other member states. It will also serve as a strong deterrent to the possible spread of extremism in the future of Afghanistan.

Moscow has stated that Tehran plays important role in the region and works closely with SCO. According to the Tehran Times, during a telephone conversation between Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Iranian Foreign Minister Hussein Amir Abdullahian, Abdullahian thanked Wang for supporting Iran's permanent membership in the SCO. On the other hand, China has been little bit cautious of Iran's entry into the SCO because US-Iran tension. China had reservations about Iran's membership, which had always taken a hard line

against the United States, and China did not want to give the impression to the international community that the SCO was an organization aimed at competing with the United States. But, Beijing also hopes that Tehran would achieve peaceful coexistence with the Washington and never provide any chance to the United States for incitements. China and Iran have formally signed a 25-year long-term cooperation agreement in March, reflecting China's desire to strengthen cooperation in various fields. Now Iran has become a member of the SCO, then strengthening ties with Iran is not a bad option for China.

This situation means that China and Russia have built up consensus on the regional issues. But it may take some time to complete all the procedures. Against the backdrop of the confrontation between China and the United States and between Russia and the United States, it would be a tendency for China, Russia and Iran to strengthen their cooperation and alliance. These three countries are much important to the region. Their solidarity, especially cooperation through the SCO platform, will serve as a counterbalance or deterrent for the United States. The newly appointed foreign minister of Iran Hossein Amir-Abdullahian welcomed the endorsement and states that "important impact of on the process of Iran's comprehensive cooperation in the lines with its neighborhood and Asia centered policy".

Pseudo English-medium schools

Aqeel Malik

"The most important word in the English language is hope" (Eleanor Roosevelt) English is an international language and it is a means of communication in science, research, business, entertainment, technology, and the like. For Pakistan, the importance of the English language can not be denied by a sane mind. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, English language is not taught. You might not see this assertion eye to eye, since we have many private English medium institutes running in Pakistan. There have indeed been numerous English-medium institutes working in Pakistan, but, according to a report conducted by the British Council, in nearly all the pseudo-English-medium schools in Pakistan, the medium of communication between the

students and the teachers is "Urdu". The need of the hour is for the parents to be vigilant about the school they get their progeny admitted to. If you are paying thousands of rupees just to get your child into a good English-speaking environment, but the school has been unable to meet the requirements of the students, you are wasting your money. Now, some critics might come up with the notion that English is taught in every school and this accusation is just based on paranoia. The answer to this question is simple. "English is taught in schools as a subject, not as a language". There is a dire need to teach English as a language rather than a subject. There are two kinds of learning in this context. One is learning a language, and the other is learning about a language. The former is vital for the progress of the youth and the prosperity

of our country. If you are learning about a language, you will have to learn grammar, rules, and all the theory. Here, the problem is that, if you go abroad or be a part of an educated social circle, no one is, preferably, going to ask you to define the "verb". Instead, one's communication skills come into play. Henceforth, it's our duty as well as the responsibility of the government to be on the lookout for the fabricators and those who are just all hat and no cattle regarding teaching the language in consideration. Moreover, it is the foremost task of the administration of those institutions to hire teachers who are well-equipped with the tools and expertise to impart an impactful knowledge of the use of language. Since we have quoted "Eleanor Roosevelt" about hope in the beginning, we hope this problem will be dealt with with an iron hand.



The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, H.E. Mitsuhiro Wada, called on Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, the Minister for Finance and Revenue, today.



Negligence of MC management took another life; A 2-year-old girl fell into the sewer & died

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: The administration in Sargodha has made a mockery of CM Punjab's Clean Punjab programme. The negligence and carelessness of Metropolitan Corporation management and CO Corporation continues. In Railway Colony, 2-year-old Iman Fatima drowned in the sewer and died. Iman

Fatima went out of the house and fell into the sewer. The girl was pulled out of the drain and shifted to the hospital where she succumbed to her injuries. The girl's father says that the sewage drain should be covered immediately so that no further damage occurs. Iman Fatima's mother says that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif should take action against those responsible so that such incidents do

not happen in future. Residents of the area say that the municipal corporation has been asked many times to clean the sewage drain and cover it, but they have failed to do so. CO Tariq Paroya is not even ready to listen to us. CO Municipal Corporation and administration are flouting the orders of Chief Minister Punjab. Immediate action should be taken against them.



NPC & Christian Youth Welfare organize seminar

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: A seminar was organized at a local hotel in collaboration with the National Peace Committee for Interfaith Harmony and Christian Youth Welfare, DPO Sargodha Faisal Kamran, Chairman National Peace Committee for Interfaith Harmony District Sargodha Anjad Mehmood Bhatti, Shaan Masih from Christian Youth

Welfare specially participated in the seminar. The event was attended by representatives of all religions across Sargodha, including business community, lawyers, heads of Pakistan Awami Tehreek, Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan Muslim League-N and other religious, political and social organizations. Addressing the participants of the event, the speakers said that the challenges faced by Pakistan in the present era will have to

be tackled together. We have to work together for the security of the country without regard to caste, community, color, race and religion to bring the anti-patriotic elements who are trying to spread chaos in Pakistan to justice. We should all play our part in promoting peace. On this occasion, iftar dinner was also organized for all the participants. At the end, a special prayer was made for the safety and development of the country.

Commissioner Gujranwala visits Pindi Bhattian & reviews development projects



Soon Times Correspondent Pindi Bhattian: Commissioner Gujranwala Syed Naveed Haider Shirazi visited Pindi Bhattian. The Commissioner reviewed various examination centers and reviewed the arrangements for the peaceful and transparent conduct of the examinations. He also visited the construction site of disposal works for Pindi Bhattian City.

the foundation stone of "Rusqaya Begum Chauthan Training Center" organized by "Meri Roshni Trust" at Pindi Bhattian. During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner visited various examination centers and reviewed the arrangements for the peaceful and transparent conduct of the examinations. He also visited the construction site of disposal works for Pindi Bhattian City.

The distribution of Nigehban ration package to deserving families during Ramadan is a historic public service program benefiting millions of people. Commissioner Gujranwala said that at the cost of 30 billion rupees, in the history of Punjab, on the instructions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Ramadan ration package is being delivered to the homes of the beneficiaries, which is a historic program of public friendship and public service. The Commissioner said that the implementation of other public welfare measures including the Chief Minister's Clean Punjab campaign will solve the basic problems of the people and give them relief. Cleanliness of urban and rural areas has clearly improved with the Clean Punjab campaign.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad, and met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to offer condolence over the death of Chinese nationals in a suicide attack in district Shangla on March 26, 2024.

Sher Afzal Marwat denies altercation with fellow PTI members

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: A day after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) core committee meeting was reportedly marred by a heated exchange between leaders, the party's newly elected lawmaker, Sher Afzal Marwat, has refuted the reports regarding the squabble. Clarifying the situation with regards to the reports, the politician termed the exchange of bitter words with party's Karachi-based leader, Shamim Naqvi and others as "false and malicious".



"The debate in a party meeting ought not to be construed as differences in the party," he wrote in a post on X, formerly Twitter. Marwat reiterated that the party is "united" and its members will "continue to work together like a rock". Allegations and counter-allegations allegedly became a reason for a bitter argument between Marwat and Niazullah Niazi on the

question of the ing on Monday 'batsman' (PTI-Nazriyati) during the party meeting on Monday. During the meeting, Marwat asked who brought the (idea of) 'batsman' and that all the damage to the party was caused by it. After having been denied by it 'bat' as its election symbol, the PTI first decided to field its candidates from the platform of a break-away faction — PTI-Nazriyati, which received 'batsman' as its election symbol. But it did not materialise after which the party fielded its candidates as independents.



Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Awan-e-Sadr.

PM Shehbaz, President Zardari discuss political, economic situation in first meeting

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari held their first meeting on Tuesday since assuming charge of their respective offices. PM Shehbaz and President Zardari exchanged views on the country's overall political and economic situation. Both high-ups expressed joint commitment to steer the country out of challenges. They also discussed measures for providing relief to the masses during the month of Ramadan. It may be noted that the PML-N formed the government in Centre and Punjab with the support of PPP, with both parties pledging to work together to end the economic crisis in the country. Taking the country's reins, the PML-N expressed confidence in the economic revival of the country after a few years of

hardship. Party's supreme Navaz Sharif expressed hope that Pakistan will come out of difficulties in the next two years by taking difficult decisions. "I believe the next 1.5 or 2 years will be difficult but we have to stay united [during the difficult times] and face our opponents," he said while addressing the parliamentary party meeting after the decision on government formation last month. He pledged on the government's behalf of providing relief to the masses by bringing down inflation, food prices and utility bills as well as stabilising local currency value against the US dollar. The PML-N supreme had also heaped praise on his younger brother and party president Shehbaz Sharif, saying he dealt with immense challenges during his brief stint in power.

KP MPAs-elect urge ECP to defer Senate polls till they are sworn in

PESHAWAR: Members of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly elected on reserved seats on Tuesday urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to defer the Senate elections until they are sworn in. A five-member bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, heard the petition filed by the newly-elected women and minority MPAs, against the denial of oath-taking. The newly-elected members appeared before the ECP bench in Islamabad. The KP Assembly secretary was also present on this occasion. During the hearing, complainants' counsel Shah Khawar said the ECP issued notifications for the female members on March 4, so the KP speaker should have taken oath from them after that. The KP Assembly speaker was bound by the constitution and law to convene a session and take oath from them, he maintained. The chief election commissioner asked the lawyer how the ECP could give instructions to the KP Assembly speaker. The ECP also inquired the KP Assembly representative why the newly-elected MPAs were not being sworn in. In his reply, the secretary said the speaker never refused to administer their oath, nevertheless the act of KP governor's convening the session was "illegitimate". Earlier, the KP governor wrote a letter to summon the assembly session on the opposition's request, upon which the KP

government raised objections. The assembly secretary said legal interpretation for the governor's convening a session was being carried out. They would see if the governor could himself convene a session without a summary or not, he said, adding that the MPAs-elect would be sworn in when the assembly session is called. ECP member Ikramullah asked what the consequence would be if the KP Assembly speaker did not accept the top electoral body's order. He questioned whether the election commission even had the authority to take action against the speaker if he denied acting upon the ECP order. Khawar replied the ECP could not intervene in assembly's internal proceedings. The ECP director general for law responded it was the commission's responsibility to hold polls and the matter of taking oath following the elections also lied within the election body's jurisdiction. He added that electoral body could issue instructions for taking oath of the members and could intervene if the speaker delayed fulfilling his responsibility in this regard. After hearing the arguments, the ECP reserved its verdict in the case. Opposition approaches PHC A day ago, the opposition parties in the KP Assembly also moved the Peshawar High Court (PHC), seeking the court's intervention on the issue of oath-taking of members on the reserved seats.

