



All but three new judges sworn in after Zardari's nod

- Three SHC additional judges to take oath today
- Four permanent judges of PHC and one of LHC also administered oath
- Equalisation of Supreme Court and FCC judges' perks green-lit
- President approves Haroon Akhtar's appointment as adviser to PM, okays pending bills

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: Sixteen of the 19 additional judges of the four high courts across the country were sworn in on Tuesday within hours after President Asif Ali Zardari assented to their appointments, ending a weeks-long deadlock between the Presidency and the PML-N government over the judicial appointments.

A permanent judge of the Lahore High Court (LHC) and four Peshawar High Court (PHC) permanent judges also took their oath the same day after the president approved their confirmations.

Of the 19 additional judges, 10 were appointed to the LHC and three each to the Islamabad, Balochistan and Sindh high courts. The new appointments were made for one year from the date of their oath.

While all the newly appointed judges took oath of their offices, the three additional judges of the SHC will be sworn in on Wednesday.

The appointments of additional judges and confirmation of permanent judges had been pending since July 20 and July 21, when the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) — the body responsible for appointing judges to the superior judiciary — recommended them.

After approval of the summary based on the JCP recommendations and forwarded by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the Presidency, the Ministry of Law and Justice issued notifications.

The oath-taking ceremony for the additional judges, scheduled for July 27, was indefinitely postponed after

President Zardari neither approved the summary nor returned it for reconsideration. The government maintained there was no legal justification for the delay.

The president's legal team had raised objections to the JCP proceedings, noting that nearly all PPP nominees were rejected and that some recommended candidates had criminal records.

The delay prompted the federal government to consider invoking Article 48(1) of the Constitution to bypass presidential approval, arguing that the president was required to act on the summary within a fortnight, sources said.

However, officials later maintained that, with the matter sub judice, notifications could not be issued. Sources said the government's legal team planned to seek an "out-of-court" settlement with the Presidency.

The approvals followed a meeting between the two legal teams, with sources describing the matter as "on its way to resolution". Another meeting was expected in the coming days.

The delay had created practical difficulties for the high courts. Four PHC additional judges whose confirmation had been recommended by the JCP ceased to hold office after their terms expired on August 4.

Similarly, the term of SHC Additional Judge Justice Khalid Hussain Shahani expired on July 29 after completion of his six-month extension.

To address the issue, the law ministry's notifications said the four PHC judges' appointments would take effect from

Continued on Page 5

Results withheld in Bagh, Haveli amid demands for recounting

- Defeated ex-PM Sardar Attique congratulates Sajid Iqbal Abbasi for Dhirkot victory
- PPP candidate ahead in LA-15; 'N' man leads LA-16 count
- Race between PM Rathore, PML-N's Mohsin Aziz remains disputed

By Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Election Commission on Tuesday announced the result of one constituency, but withheld the results of two others in Bagh district pending repolling at 23 polling stations over the weekend.

The announced result was for LA-14 (Bagh-I), commonly known as Dhirkot, where Jammu Kashmir Awami Dast-o-Bazu Party candidate Sajid Iqbal Abbasi secured

a landslide victory with 40,522 votes.

He defeated former prime minister and Muslim Conference president Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, who received 19,637 votes. PML-N candidate Raja Faisal Azad secured 3,031 votes, while PPP candidate Raja Mubashar Ejaz got 2,748 votes.

In a social media post, Mr Khan congratulated his electoral rival on his success and said he accepted the people's decision with an open heart.

"I congratulate Sajid Iqbal Abbasi, chairman of Awami Dast-o-Bazu, on his success in the election and accept the people's decision with an open heart," he wrote.

In LA-15 (Central Bagh), PPP's Sardar Ziaul Qamar was leading with 16,637 votes, followed by PML-N's Mushtaq Ahmed Minhas with 15,015 and Jamaat-i-Islami's Brig (retired) Dr Muhammad Khan with 12,259 votes.

On Monday night, AJK Legislative Assembly

Continued on Page 5



INTERIOR Minister Mohsin Naqvi speaks to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Tehran.—Reuters

Islamabad looking to breathe new life into mediation push

- Mohsin Naqvi meets Pezeshkian and Araghchi in Tehran
- Khawaja Asif says warring sides nearing 'some sort of an arrangement'
- Tehran sees Islamabad MoU as 'only legitimate framework' for resolution of wider war
- Trump rails against 'devious Iranian negotiators'

By Baqir Sajjad Syed

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and President Masoud Pezeshkian in Tehran on Tuesday to follow up on the stalled Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), as Islamabad seeks to revive its mediation efforts between Iran and the United States.

Naqvi, who arrived in Tehran earlier in the day, was received by his Iranian counterpart Eskandar Momeni, and later held talks with Mr Araghchi. The two interior ministers are also expected to hold detailed bilateral discussions during the visit.

A diplomatic source told *Dawn* from Tehran that the principal objective of Mr Naqvi's visit was to

follow up on the Islamabad MoU and Pakistan's mediation between Iran and the US, which has remained largely dormant as Oman took the lead in negotiations over arrangements for navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

The reported progress in Oman-Iran dialogue has created

Mideast outreach: Editorial on Page 6

an opportunity for Islamabad to move for reviving the broader process that had emerged from the June agreement.

Separately, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif told *Bloomberg* that the United States and Iran are close to "some sort of an arrangement".

"Things are shaping up again

in favour of a peace arrangement or a deal. The signals over the last three days are that we are close to some sort of an arrangement," he added.

Diplomatic efforts

Pakistan had recently invited Mr Araghchi and Iranian parliament speaker and chief negotiator Bagher Ghalibaf to visit Islamabad at the "earliest possible opportunity". Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei, however, said on Monday that the visit of the two Iranian leaders would take place "at an appropriate time".

Mr Naqvi's visit assumes significance as an effort to keep Pakistan's mediation channel active rather than wait for the Iranian

Continued on Page 11

Three Pakistanis die as multiple ships attacked in Gulf waters

- Six killed as Tanzania-flagged ship attacked in Bab el-Mandeb, says Yemen govt
- Houthis claim attack on Saudi ship in Red Sea
- US forces 'disable' Panama-flagged container ship trying to break blockade

DUBAI: Three Pakistanis are said to be among the six people who lost their lives on Tuesday, as three different ships came under attack in the Red Sea and Gulf of Oman, taking simmering tensions in the world's most key energy trading corridor up another notch.

Yemen's coastguard on Tuesday said strikes by the Houthi rebels on a cargo vessel — identified as the *Tihamah* — resulted in the death of four sailors and two members of rescue personnel deployed during a rescue mission to evacuate the ship.

In a separate incident on Tuesday night, the *Saba* news agency reported that Houthis attacked a Saudi ship carrying military equipment in Bab el-Mandeb. However, there was no immediate confirmation

from Riyadh.

The initial salvo targeting the Tanzania-flagged *Tihamah* "caused a fire to break out aboard the vessel and inflicted extensive damage, in addition to causing deaths and injuries among its crew, including three Pakistani nationals and one Indonesian national killed," the coastguard said in a statement.

A second strike targeted the vessel as rescue workers carried out a mission to evacuate the ship.

"The attack struck the site of the rescue operation and resulted in deaths and injuries among the forces participating in the response operation," the coast guard added, saying 10 people were injured

Continued on Page 3

Govt claims progress, but transporters keep vehicles off the road

By Kalbe Ali

ISLAMABAD: The government on Tuesday claimed progress towards resolving the goods transporters' strike after two days of negotiations, but transporters rejected the official account and vowed to keep heavy vehicles off the roads until their demands were accepted, as textile exporters warned that continued disruption was putting orders worth millions of dollars at risk.

A statement issued by Communications Minister Abdul Aleem Khan, convener of the committee constituted by the prime minister to negotiate with the transporters, said consensus decisions had been reached with the All Pakistan Goods Transporters Ittehad after two days of talks.

The statement said it had been decided to establish a joint monitoring committee comprising Customs authorities and representatives of goods transporters.

On the axle-load issue, transporters expressed support for the communications minister's proposal that overloading should be controlled at

Continued on Page 5

TODAY'S FUEL PRICE

Petrol	Rs325.92	↓
Diesel	Rs382.25	↑

Source: Petroleum Division

ON OTHER PAGES

Petrol dealers threaten shutdown

The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association has issued a 72-hour ultimatum to the government over its failure to fulfil promises to resolve their issues, especially the increase in margin to 8pc on the retail sale price of petrol. The association warned that if the government failed to meet its demands, petrol pumps across the country would shut down indefinitely from 6am on Saturday. **Page 9**

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