

QUETTA VOICE

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Quetta Safe City Project: Watchful Dawn Breaks Over City Scarred by Tragedy

Syed Ali Shah:

Quetta: For too long, Quetta has borne the scars of tragedy etched deep in its heart. From the reverberations of the Civil Hospital blast that snatched innocent lives lawyers to the chilling silence left by the Police Training College massacre, the city has known the harsh sting of terror. But amidst the echoes of pain, a beacon of hope ignites – the Quetta Safe City Project.

This ambitious initiative, finally nearing completion, stands as a testament to the city's resilience and the government's unwavering commitment to its safety. Over 1,400 watchful eyes, embodied in cutting-edge cameras, will soon peer across 255 key locations, woven into a protective tapestry that will blanket the city. No longer will shadows play host to hidden menace, for Quetta's streets will be bathed in the unflinching light of vigilant technology.

This symphony of safety transcends mere hardware. It's a collaborative masterpiece, orchestrated by the government, conducted by the expertise of the National Information Technology Board, and played by the dedicated instruments of law enforcement agencies. Together, they harmonize into a powerful chorus of protection, its melody



drowning out the discordant notes of fear.

But this fortress of safety is not an imported marvel; it's a local masterpiece, crafted by the ingenuity of Quetta's own sons and daughters. From the command center, a nerve cen-

ter pulsating with digital intelligence, to the intricate network of cameras, the project hums with the heartbeat of self-reliance. This is not just technology; it's a declaration of a city refusing to be defined by its past, choosing instead to forge

a future bright with safety and hope. As the project prepares to unveil its might, Quetta residents whisper dreams of nights untroubled by anxiety, of care-free laughter echoing through bustling markets, and of evenings where children play un-

afraid beneath the watchful gaze of technology's sentinels. The Quetta Safe City Project is not just a shield against threats; it's a bridge to a future where trust flourishes between citizens and law enforcers, paving the way for a dawn

of peace and prosperity.

However, the marathon towards a truly safe haven requires unwavering commitment. The government must be the unwavering torchbearer, ensuring the project's lifeblood of resources flows uninterrupted. Law enforcement agencies must be the agile runners, adapting their strategies to dance in perfect step with technology's swift rhythm.

The Quetta Safe City Project is more than just circuits and wires; it's a poem of possibility etched in the city's soul. As the cameras begin their vigil, let us remember that the true poem is penned not by technology, but by the collective will to write a new chapter for Quetta. Together, let us turn the final page on fear and open the first chapter of a safe, vibrant future for this city, rising from the ashes of tragedy to become a fortress of safety under a hopeful sky.

This editorial acknowledges the tragic past of Quetta while celebrating the present progress and highlighting the collective responsibility to ensure the project's success. It uses evocative language and imagery to paint a hopeful picture of the future and expresses appreciation for the government's proactive initiative.

PTI issues show-cause notice to Senator Saifullah Abro for withdrawing from NA-194 in Bilawal's favour

WEB DESK: The PTI on Friday issued a show-cause notice to Senator Saifullah Abro — a party-affiliated candidate contesting for the February 8 elections from NA-194 — after he withdrew from the constituency in favour of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court upheld the Election Commission of Pakistan's decision to revoke the PTI's iconic electoral symbol 'bat' and declare its intra-party polls as "unconstitutional".

Subsequently, the PTI fielded its leaders as independent candidates with a variety of electoral symbols.

Abro's decision to switch parties came after he met Bilawal a day earlier in Lahore, according to the PPP.

In a post on social media platform X today, Abro confirmed the meeting and said he had decided to withdraw from the election race for the constituency of NA-194, drawing in favour of Bilawal and had decided to compete with the tiger (PML-N), he said.

Meanwhile, Bilawal thanked Abro for his support. "PTI workers across the country are beginning to understand that the only way to stop PML-N is to vote for



PPP's arrow on Feb 8," he wrote on X.

"I also appeal to political workers from all parties to vote smartly and we can pull off a surprise on Election Day," the PPP chairman added.

Responding to the development, the PTI issued a show-cause notice to Abro for going against the party policy.

"You being elected as a senator

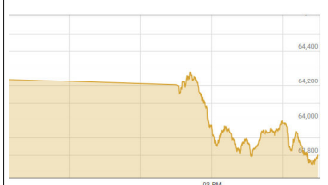
on the party's ticket in the Senate of Pakistan and also awarded party ticket to contest General Elections 2024 have shown grave indiscipline by violating the party's discipline," the notice, issued by PTI General Secretary Omar Ayub Khan, said.

It directed Abro to provide a written response within three days on why action should not be taken against him. "If your re-

sponse is unsatisfactory or you do not respond, further action will be taken as per party policy and rules," the notice added.

At a rally a day earlier, Bilawal had urged PTI workers not to "waste" their votes on independent candidates and instead opt for his party's candidates on Feb 8. He said if PTI supporters wished to stop PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif.

Shares at PSX lose nearly 500 points on profit-taking



NEWS DESK: Bears continued to dominate the trading floor of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday as shares traded in the red and lost nearly 500 points.

According to the PSX website, the KSE-100 index closed at 63,815.06 points, down 484.94 or 0.75 per cent from the previous close of 64,298.00.

After rallying for three consecutive sessions, the benchmark index faltered yesterday on uncertainty about whether the International Monetary Fund would give its go-ahead to the government's plans for reducing industrial power tariff and energy sector circular debt.

The caretaker prime minister

had on Wednesday directed the energy ministry to formulate an effective and durable strategy to do away with the circular debt.

Speaking to Dawn.com today, Tahir Abbas, head of research at Arif Habib Limited, noted that the market remained particularly volatile ahead of the upcoming Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting — which is due on Jan 29.

Investors remained cautious and booked profit while the KSE-100 index declined," he said.

According to a survey conducted by brokerage firm Topline Securities, 68pc of key market participants expected no change in the key policy rate while 32pc predicted a reduction.

Gwadar Security Forces Defuse Bomb, No Casualties or Damage Reported

News Desk:

Gwadar: In a swift and commendable operation, security forces in Gwadar successfully defused a potentially dangerous bomb near the Paleri pump. The incident, which took place earlier today, raised concerns among residents, but the prompt response of the security forces ensured the safety of the community.

No loss of life or property was reported in connection with the incident, alleviating fears that initially gripped the area. Authorities have commended the efficiency and professionalism of the forces involved in neutralizing the threat and preventing any potential harm to the public or infrastructure.

The circumstances surrounding the placement of the bomb are currently under investigation, and authorities are working diligently to determine the motives behind this act. The



defusing of the bomb near the Paleri pump underscores the

importance of a vigilant and responsive security apparatus

in ensuring the safety and well-being of the community.

Balochistan Imposes Section 144: No Public Gatherings in Quetta Amid Security Threats

News Desk:



Quetta: Caretaker Information Minister of Balochistan, Jan Achakzai, took to social media to announce the prohibition of public gatherings in Quetta for the next two weeks due to heightened threat alerts.

The decision comes in response to directives from the Islamabad High Court, leading to the implementation of Section 144 across Balochistan.

In light of these security measures, all concerned agencies

have been instructed to prioritize the safety of the general public. District Commissioners (DC) are now mandated to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for any gathering in Quetta, including election rallies.

Emphasizing the significance of maintaining law and order, the Government of Balochistan underscores its commitment to ensuring the well-being and security of the citizens during this sensitive period.

Intersectoral health

By Zafar Mirza:

Gas Injustice Chronicles: Sui Southern Gas Company Under Scrutiny

Editor: Asim Khan

Editorial:

As the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) awaits an impending judgment, it finds itself entangled in allegations that go beyond mere billing discrepancies. Increasing gas meter tampering exposes a systemic problem within the company in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan...

This is what we know about the third aspect: intersectoral health interventions. The WHO Constitution (1948) and Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986) have mentioned peace, shelter, education, food income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity as fundamental prerequisites. These are complexly interrelated the distal determinants of health.

According to the DCP-3 (Distal Control Priorities), the more proximal risk factors are grouped into two categories: environmental and behavioural. Environmental risks include lead and other chemical contamination, climate change, occupational hazards, unsafe roads and vehicles, outdoor air pollution, indoor air pollution, unsafe water and poor sanitation.

Behavioural risks to health include unsafe health care, inadequate nutrient intake, excessive nutrient intake, suboptimal breastfeeding, risky sexual behavior, physical inactivity, tobacco use, harmful alcohol use, harmful use of injectable drugs, and other addictive substances.

Improvements in education levels. If not controlled, these risk factors result in a plethora of decline in adult mortality despite an increase in human capital in education. Female education was found to be much more important than male education in reducing child and adult mortality.

In order to meaningfully advance universal health coverage, DCP-3 has also proposed a package of intersectoral interventions along with 218 essential health services. The DCP-3 intersectoral package consists of 71 essential policy/ fiscal interventions. These interventions include health taxes and subsidies, regulations, built environment (roads, parks, buildings, etc.), and information provision. These four kinds of interventions are made in five risk domains: addictions, environmental health, environment, injuries, and others. Out of these 71 essential intersectoral interventions, 29 are shortlisted as the highest priority.

The analysis of health risks in Pakistan is conducted by the Global Burden of Disease Study (1990-2019) by the Seattle-based Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, informs us that over half of Pakistan's total burden of diseases (53% of total DALYs) is attributed to these risks. DALY is a metric that stands for Disability Adjusted Life Years, which presents years of life lost due to premature death plus years lived with disability.

The burden of injuries in Pakistan has increased from 10,641 per 100,000 in the year 2000 to 13,885 per 100,000 in 2019. Of these, more than one-fourth (27pc) are transport-related injuries; 31m injuries during 2019 resulted in 85,346 deaths, out of which 20,747 deaths were related to road accidents. In Pakistan, the development of a package of intersectoral health interventions was part of our vision. After completing the development of EHPHS at the federal and provincial levels, the Health Planning, System Strengthening, and Information Analysis Unit at the Ministry of National Health Service, Regulation and Coordination continued the work on the intersectoral package.

A draft 'Health Related Intersectoral Interventions Action Plan 2022-30' consisting of 30 high priority interventions recommended by DCP-3 has been developed. Considering TOP26 commitments, the intervention of the Climate Resilient Health System has been added. The packages to be implemented in a phased manner and will involve seven ministries including National Health Service, Regulation and Coordination (10 interventions), Climate Change (0), Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (4), Education (2), Communication, Information and Public Security and Research (1), and the National Disaster Management Authority (1).

Risks related to unsafe water, and sanitation (including handwashing), are the third highest contributors of BoD (burden of disease) in Pakistan responsible for 79.813% of the total BoD. The packages to be implemented in a phased manner and will involve seven ministries including National Health Service, Regulation and Coordination (10 interventions), Climate Change (0), Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (4), Education (2), Communication, Information and Public Security and Research (1), and the National Disaster Management Authority (1).

Occupational risks in Pakistan contribute to 22,690 deaths annually, out of which around 44pc are due to injuries at the workplace, 37pc due to occupational problems, and 19pc due to occupational fatalities. Occupational fatalities are due to occupational carcinogens and 6pc due to occupational fatality deaths.

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Graveyards of coal

By Naeem Sadiq:

OTHER than the oft-quoted figure of over 300 coal miners dying in Pakistan's coal mines every year, the exact number of mines, their workforce, lives, deaths, injuries and EOBH registration is a wild guess. Anyone who smells coal in his backyard can hire a contractor equipped with a paxka, spade and two labourers to dig a cave that will sooner or later collapse and consume the finest but neediest children of Pakistan.

After years of futile attempts to obtain data on coal mines and linked tragedies, I began to create a database of the miners and daily accidents from Jan 1, 2024. By Jan 10, at least eight deaths of miners had been recorded.

This was just the data of some prominent mines. Newspapers reported less than half of these deaths. The government and mine departments remain silent. After all, these calamities are of their own making. Pakistan is home to 186 registered and over 1,500 unregistered, unregulated, unsafe and contractor-operated and medical mines. The mines offer less than the minimum legal wage, no EOBH benefits and no social department. What they do offer is the bright possibility of being blown to smithereens in methane explosions, or being killed by crumbling roofs and uncontrollable fires. Survivors find themselves loaded with car-

bon dust and affected by asthma, tuberculosis and blindness. Thanks to complexity among influential circles, miners, greedy contractors and corrupt inspectors, the coal mines largely operate with gas detectors, wireless communication, ventilation systems, smart helmets, air purifiers, oxygen supplies, alternative egress routes, alternative egress routes, rescue services, and personal protective equipment (PPE). The equipment used in mines such as motors, fans, plugs, sockets, lights, junction boxes and cables are mostly inflammable and often a source of ignition/explosion.

The other essential task for mine departments ought to be to conduct physical surveys and place updated data of the GPS location, output, workers, EOBH registration, accidents, injuries, and deaths of all coal miners on their respective websites. This is also requirement under Pakistan's right to information laws.

Sadly, over 90 per cent of coal miners are not registered with the EOBH.

This is an unforgivable failure of the institution. Describing the miners' exploited lives, the secretary general of the Pakistan Centre Mined Labour Federation said: "They usually, face a long and arduous work at the age of 13 and by the time they reach 30, they are forced into unemployment due to chronic respiratory illnesses, tuberculosis, loss of eyesight, and injuries." Also deprived of EOBH benefits, the pension-less coal mine retirees are driven into a life of misery, poverty, and dependence.

Have we whitewashed the old mine laws by changing their cover pages? Pakistan's coal mines are essentially

MHPSS roadmap in KP

By Asma Humayun:

IN early November last year, a primary care physician from Chitral reported a case on the mental health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) web portal of the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

The case pertained to a 27-year-old married woman who had been unwell for 16 months. The patient's family had sought advice from a few aadims and pirs, spending Rs50,000 without any relief.

The patient had also made seven trips to Peshawar to consult a handful of psychiatrists before being referred to an ICD, where she eventually travelled to a major hospital in Karachi to seek help, incurring a total cost of Rs40,000. Multiple psychiatric medications with associated side effects and a couple of misdiagnosed labels.

Three days after the case was reported, the lady was assessed (online) by a psychiatrist from the MoPD&SI team in Islamabad and a diagnosis of a dissociative disorder was confirmed. Following this, the reporting doctor from Chitral was supervised

to manage the case to the highest care levels. medication, and to support her and counsel the family. This supervision continued over the next three months.

Today, the patient is symptom-free—for the past seven weeks—and has resumed all domestic responsibilities. The reporting doctor feels confident about his skills to identify and manage such cases.

In 2023, approximately 100 cases of mental health conditions were managed through the MHPSS project. The doctors received a five-day training in mhGAP-IPD guidelines (recommended by the WHO and UNHCR) to help non-specialists manage common mental conditions.

These guidelines had been adapted for Pakistan's cultural and healthcare context and published by the MoPD&SI. The trained doctors are now registered and thus connected to the web-portal through a mobile application which systematically takes them through the assessment and management protocols.

Her commitment to education was unmatched. I often invited her to accompany me to school visits. I was amazed by her meticulous observation and analysis. She was always to be spotted on when I probed further.

So far, 400 cases have been reported on the portal, indicating vital demographic and clinical information. Over 70 per cent of people were women. Over half of health conditions were under the age of 40; two-thirds of the total cases were in rural areas. Only nine districts have psychiatric services, and some of these are limited to just one or two psychiatrists per district. There are no psychiatric services at the primary level.

KP is a part of the MHPSS initiated by the MoPD&SI after mental health was identified as a critical but neglected aspect of healthcare in the country in 2021. Notably, mental health burden and severe distress of specialists serves, the ministry developed a model for delivering evidence-driven, rights-based and scalable MHPSS services across the country.

This is a comprehensive multilayered model which aims to provide mental health care and primary, secondary and tertiary care. The pilot was undertaken during the second half of 2023, in collaboration with the Directorate of Public Health in KP and supported by the International Medical Corps to build the capacity of primary care physicians in the selected districts. A situation analysis shows that KP has 37 districts with a population of over 40 million with at least 80pc living in rural areas. Only nine districts have psychiatric services, and some of these are limited to just one or two psychiatrists per district. There are no psychiatric services at the primary level.

At the same time, consider that the average district has at least 100 doctors working at the primary care level who are potentially a huge resource for providing MHPSS services. This is because, according to the WHO, 70pc of common mental disorders can be effectively managed in the primary care.

This is where the MoPD&SI comes in. It has the technical expertise to develop, lead and scale up a system for integrating mental health into primary care services. This includes instituting a mechanism to register doctors, provide supervision, evaluate and monitor the performance of trained doctors, develop a referral mechanism and collect vital data. This is just the first step. At the provincial level, mental health has to be identified as a priority public health issue. A coordinating mechanism is needed between the health department, humanitarian agencies and development partners. At the moment, many projects are undertaken in silos with blurred and short-term outcomes.

She knew best

By Zubeida Mustafa:

WHY the hurry to leave? Why no farewells? Regrettably, we will never know. Farida Akbar, the best exponent of Dr Maria Montessori's philosophy in Pakistan, is no more. She passed away on Jan 10, leaving her loving family, friends, Montessori fraternity and admiring students bereft.

Mrs Akbar's unassuming and quiet personality concealed a beautiful mind that revealed itself when she spoke. Her knowledge of various social philosophies, the education systems in vogue and child psychology was

phenomenal. Given her love of books and huge capacity to listen patiently to those around her, she was an excellent and reassuring counsellor to parents and students alike. Good! Minwala, who studied the Montessori system from Dr Maria Montessori herself, founded the Pakistan Montessori Association in 1949. Mrs Akbar never tired of reminding us of the greatness of her mentor who had helped her discover the intricate workings of the human mind. Mrs Akbar already had two Master's degrees — in psychology and education — when she obtained her Montessori diploma in 1975. There was no looking back thereafter. Having joined the PMA and emerged as Mrs Minwala's 'right-hand woman', she became the key figure in introducing the Montessori pedagogy in Pakistan. She went on to become the 'trainer of trainers' and was appointed chief executive and director of training of the Montessori Teachers' Training Centre in 1999, retiring in 2020. Having a deep knowledge of the Montessori philosophy and an understanding of its application, she became the best friend a child studying in Pakistan could have. Only if the

government had sought her advice! She believed in giving a child freedom of choice within the bounds of a safe environment to help the child discover her own potential, while allowing a sensory, motor, emotional and cognitive development to advance at their own pace. "When I teachers try to control a child to discipline it?" she would often say, with exasperation in her voice. "You cannot teach critical thinking to a child. It comes naturally to it. You allow to express itself in the language it has been learning since birth. It explores by asking questions in its own language and you must provide it answers. Teaching it in a language that it doesn't know at this stage will dumb the child." There was much wisdom in what she had to say. I could not resist quoting her on a child's needs and how the child must be handled. It was one of her pedagogies for me when she agreed to guide me in an experiment: "I launched a 'Ma'as' school named 'Aao Khaleem Markaz' to see how young children learn in a relaxed environment. They should communicate in their own language (in this case Urdu) and play with the learning material of their choice. Although

the Markaz could not survive for long (the parents failed to understand the concept), I learnt a lot myself by tracking the process of the child, especially in articulating his needs. Mrs Akbar was deeply interested in the Markaz and would visit frequently to demonstrate the pedagogy to Hawwa, my friend who had volunteered to teach the students. Mrs Akbar would call me to invite Hawwa for lunch to explain the principles underlying the practice. She would also make flash cards herself, pushing aside my protests, saying she enjoyed doing it. I think it was her that I think it was the teacher in her that drove

her. Her commitment to education was unmatched. I often invited her to accompany me to school visits. I was amazed by her meticulous observation and analysis. She was always to be spotted on when I probed further. She never said no when her advice was needed in any matter pertaining to education. Once she spent the entire day with two teachers from the community school in Khairo Dero, teaching them how they should make use of Montessori materials themselves and use them in their classrooms. As a member of the PMA, she helped establish schools in the northern areas, attended numerous Montessori conferences within the country and participated in a number of international examinations for Montessori institutions in many countries. She was always to be spotted on when I probed further. The Association Montessori International (AMI) in Amsterdam appointed her twice to the Scientific Pedagogical Committee. She was always to be spotted on when I probed further. Her love of Urdu literature, and her interest in intellectual activities, such as panel discussions, lectures, festivals and book club sessions, made her a willing and enjoyable companion.

Root removes Jaiswal but India on course for big lead

HYDERABAD (INP) England struck twice on Friday in the morning session of the second day but India reached 222-3, on course for a big first-innings lead in the opening test.

KL Rahul led India's reply with a fluent 55 not out, while Shreyas Iyer survived a bouncer barrage from Mark Wood, England's lone fast bowler in the match, to be on 34.

England, who were bowled out for 246, opened with Joe

Root and the part-time spinner struck in his first over dismissing the dangerous-looking Yashasvi Jaiswal. Jaiswal hit Root's second ball for a four but his attempt to play a similar shot two balls later resulted in a high return catch to Root, who leapt to pouch the ball.

Jaiswal hit three sixes and 10 fours in his entertaining 80. Root looked the most threatening of the English bowlers and could have ended with three wickets in his

first spell. Rahul got a reprieve when Ben Foakes grassed a tough chance behind the wicket after the batter had edged Root. Root was also unlucky again when Shubman Gill miscued a shot but Ben Stokes, stationed at mid-off, lost sight of the ball against the sun.

Root was taken out of the attack after four overs, which was as surprising as England's decision of not using his off-spin on Thursday when Jaiswal was toying

with the England spinners. Tom Hartley had suffered the most at the hands of Jaiswal in his debut test but the left-arm spinner put that behind him and claimed his maiden test wicket when Gill (24) casually whipped a ball towards Ben Duckett at mid-wicket. Root was brought back for a couple of overs before the lunch break but Rahul and Iyer, who have added 63 runs for the unbroken third wicket, were set by then.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior and Commerce Dr Gohar Ejaz & Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Dr Nadeem Jan visited PIMS hospital.

Roach annihilates Australia top order in three blistering overs

GABBA (INP) Kemar Roach rocked Australia's revamped top-order in five overs of carnage, leaving them in all sorts of trouble at 24 for 4 at dinner after Kevin Sinclair scored an impressive half-century on Test debut to help West Indies post an imposing 311 on day two at the Gabba.

Roach took three wickets, including two off the last two balls of the session, to leave Australia reeling on the second day after they struggled to find a knock over the West Indies tail in the first 90 minutes of play as they posted the second highest total by any team against Australia in 12 pink-ball Tests.

Steven Smith was trapped lbw in Roach's opening over of Australia's innings, shuffling back and forth across the pitch as he tried to find a way to survive. Roach was quick to exploit the batsmen's indecision, hitting them for sixes and fours. He finished with three wickets, including two off the last two balls of the session.

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ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of Tajikistan Ismatullo Nasredin, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Pakistani, Iranian envoys discuss ties in Belarus

ISLAMABAD (INP) Pakistan's Ambassador to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan held a meeting with Ambassador of Iran to Belarus Alireza Sanei in Minsk, Belarus discussed matters of mutual interest.

During the courtesy call, the two nations' strong and deep rooted brotherly ties and rejoiced in their return to their respective embassies by January 26, 2024. Honored to receive Alireza Sanei, Ambassador of Iran to Belarus who paid a courtesy call today.

Exploring our nations' strong and deep rooted brotherly ties and rejoiced in the return of Ambassadors of Pakistan and Iran to their respective Embassies by January 26, 2024. In a post on X, the Pakistani ambassador said, "Looking forward to the visit of Iran's Foreign Minister to Pakistan on January 29, 2024. Celebrating the lasting Pakistan-Iran friendship!"

Iran violated Pakistan's airspace on Jan 16, Tuesday, by firing a missile at Balochistan, resulting in the tragic death of two children and injuries to three girls. Tehran's unilateral move prompted Islamabad to recall its ambassador. Islamabad also conveyed to Tehran that their envoy might also not return for the time being.

APHC-AJK holds protest rally in front of Indian High Commission in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP) The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter in collaboration with Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell held a protest rally in front of Indian High Commission in Islamabad to observe India's Republic Day as Black Day.

Former Ameer of Kashmir Jumaat-e-Islami Abdul Rasheed Tarabi, Hurriyat leaders Syed Yusuf Naseem, Farooq Rehmani, Ghulam Muhammad Saif, Altaf Hussain Wani and Ghulam Nabi Butt also participated in the demonstration.

APHC-AJK leaders Sheikh Abdul Mateen, Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Zahid Saif, General Secretary of Muslim Conference, Mehr-un-Nissa, Samia Sajid, senior journalist Bashir Usmani, Mahtab Ashraf, Rashid Kazmi, Director, Liberation Cell Raja Khan Ahsan Khan, Sardar Sajid Mahmood, Sardar Najeib Al-Ghafoor Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq and others addressed the protest rally.

Speakers on the occasion said democracy is the name of respect for public opinion but India has never respected it. They said India has no right to celebrate its Republic Day in occupied Jammu as it has occupied Jammu and Kashmir against the will of the Kashmiri people.

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SC allows Sanam Javed to contest elections

ISLAMABAD (INP) The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan on Friday allowed five candidates of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), including incarcerated activist Sanam Javed, to contest the upcoming general elections, slated for Feb 8, 2024.

Besides Sanam Javed, the top court approved appeals of PTI candidates Umer Aslam, Major (rd) Tahir Saqib, and Shaukat Mahmood Basra against returning officers' (ROs) decisions to reject their nomination papers from different constituencies.

Akhtar overturned the rejection of PTI leaders' nomination papers by the Lahore High Court (LHC) and the election tribunal. The apex court directed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to publish and print the names of the PTI allowed candidates in the ballot books. Sanam Javed has been allowed to contest polls from NA-119, NA-120, and PP-125 while Basra got permission to contest from NA-163 (Bahawalnagar).

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court also allowed incarcerated party president Pervez Elahi to contest the upcoming February 8 elections.

A three-member SC bench headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah allowed the PTI leader to contest the general election from the PP-32 constituency of Gujarhat district. Elahi had filed a petition in the Supreme Court to seek permission to contest the general election. He made the election commission and appellate tribunal as respondents.

He pleaded to the apex court to declare January 13, 2024, decision of the Lahore High Court as void. The high court had dismissed his appeal regarding the rejection of his nomination papers by the returning officer.

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Government of Pakistan - Ministry of Defense. National University of Pakistan (NUP) Secretariat. Federal Government Employees (Contract/Temporary) Directorate. Sir Syed Road, Rawalpindi Cantt.

NOTICE FOR BLACKLISTING. M/S. Muhammad Farooq Construction Co. Govt. Contractor regarding the work, Construction of Youth Hostel (Female) District Ziarat PAFSP No. 055/27/19, 1/15. In this connection your personal and immediate attention is invited to the following details of correspondence.

TENDER NOTICE/CORREIGMENT. Note: In All Procurements of CQB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA CQB.

APHC-AJK. Project Director, National University of Pakistan. FGD Directorate, Sir Syed Road, Rawalpindi Cantt. PH 081-8910020. PFD (I) No. 454/21

Sino-Pak charity group brings vision to cataract sufferers in Pakistan

RAWALPINDI (INP): In a heartwarming Sino-Pak cooperation, the China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community joined forces with the Beijing One Heart Sphere Charity Foundation in a campaign that provided life-changing cataract surgeries to 3,000 impoverished patients in Pakistan.

Launched in collaboration with local hospitals and eye care centres in Rawalpindi, the initiative, reaching as far as Balochistan, aims to restore vision and improve the quality of life for those who have been living in darkness due to this debilitating condition.

A total of 1,200 patients with eye conditions have been

examined professionally since January 15, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday.

Based on this, the medical team successfully completed the operation on the first 100 cataract patients by January 21.

In the coming days, the team will provide surgery to 100 cataract patients in Kashmir.

"We want to give these patients their sight back so they can lead independent and productive lives," said Ma Bin, chairperson of China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community.

"The operation is a microcosm of the friendly relations between China and Pakistan

and a testament to the power of humanitarianism and unity."

Doctors and volunteers from both countries worked side-by-side to perform the surgery.

Many patients who have undergone the procedure have described it as a "second chance" in life, saying they are now able to see their families, go to work, and engage in activities they were not capable of for years.

As the organization continues its efforts, it hopes to further expand its reach and impact, ultimately making a significant difference in the lives of thousands of cataract patients across Pakistan.



QUETTA: In the presence of Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar, a Memorandum of Understanding is being signed between BUTEMS University and BRSP.

'Let people decide': SC allows PTI candidate to contest elections, quashes RO verdict

ISLAMABAD (INP): As general elections are scheduled to be held on February 8, the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) on Friday allowed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Umar Aslam to contest the upcoming elections. Reference was made to Article 17, emphasizing that people hold paramount importance under fundamental human rights, as noted by Justice Athar Minallah. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah advocated for letting the people of Pakistan decide their elected representatives.

The discussion further explored the clauses of Article 17, 62, and 63 that prevent a fugitive from participating in elections, with Justice Mansoor Ali Shah asserting the role of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) or the courts in determining the status of an individual as an advertisement. The omission raised concerns, and when questioned about his son's properties in London by the returning officer, the petitioner reportedly remained silent. The SC remarked that two FIRs were registered against Arif Abbasi in the Wars Khan police station, a fact brought to light by the petitioner's lawyer during the proceedings.

Notably, one application for Umar Aslam's election candidacy was rejected, while another was approved, creating a legal paradox. A division bench of SC heard the cases of the appeals against rejected nomination papers of candidates by Returning Officers (ROs).

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked on the fundamental right to participate in elections, stating that punishing any individual by

depriving them of this right required careful consideration. The debate also touched upon the legal aspects of preventing a fugitive or an individual violating advertising laws from contesting elections. Reference was made to Article 17, emphasizing that people hold paramount importance under fundamental human rights, as noted by Justice Athar Minallah. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah advocated for letting the people of Pakistan decide their elected representatives.

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making process before the irreversible printing stage.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah pointed out the need for foresight before printing, suggesting that anticipating legal challenges could have prevented the complications that subsequently arose in the courts.

Arif Abbasi returns empty-handed. On the other hand, PTI leader Arif Abbasi faced a setback as his appeal against the rejection of nomination papers for PP-19 was dismissed. The apex court upheld the Election Tribunal's decision, citing critical factors that contributed to the dismissal.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) revealed that the petitioner had two criminal cases against him wherein a detail that was not disclosed in the nomination papers. The omission raised concerns, and when questioned about his son's properties in London by the returning officer, the petitioner reportedly remained silent. The SC remarked that two FIRs were registered against Arif Abbasi in the Wars Khan police station, a fact brought to light by the petitioner's lawyer during the proceedings.

ECP receives over 449,000 applications for postal ballot

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has received a staggering 449,287 applications for postal ballots nationwide, as reported on Friday. The fervor is notably high, with 73,586 applications for National Assembly seats and 74,274 for provincial assembly posts in Punjab alone.

Balochistan follows with 5,758 applications for National Assembly seats and 60,550 for provincial assembly seats.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa contributes significantly, with 72,769 applications for National

Assembly and 81,281 for Provincial Assembly. Meanwhile, Sindh reports 24,420 applications for National Assembly seats and 26,649 for provincial assembly ballots.

The Election Commission, gearing up for the scheduled general elections on February 8, underscores the democratic spirit as preparations enter the final stages. The printing of ballot papers is well underway.

The postal ballot process, initiated by the Election Commission of Pakistan, began a few days ago. Eligible voters, including government employ-

ees on duty away from their constituencies and incarcerated individuals, were directed to complete the voting process by January 22. Application forms for postal ballots are available for download on the Election Commission's website. The provision extends to government employees and their families, ensuring access to voting for those outside their constituencies on election day. Notably, prisoners and individuals facing various charges are also eligible to cast their votes through the postal ballot system.



MASTUNG: Chief Executive Officer of Shaheed Nawab Ghous Bakhsht Raisani Memorial Hospital in Mastung, Dr. Saied Ahmed Mirwani, is presiding over the meeting organized by the hospital regarding the proposed arrangements during the general elections.



SIBI: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki speaking at the inauguration ceremony of DH Buzfree Lance Training Program.

ECP grants magisterial authority to DROs, ROs

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has delegated the powers of a first-class magistrate to District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) to ensure the seamless execution of the general elections 2024.

According to the ECP notification released on Friday, magisterial powers were conferred upon...

District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) in accordance with Section 193 of the Election Act 2017.

These powers can be utilized by ROs and DROs during the general elections for national and provincial assemblies in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan until the official announcement

of final results for the candidates.

Returning Officers (ROs) and District Returning Officers (DROs) have the authority to initiate action against candidates who breach the code of conduct prescribed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The aforesaid officers will exercise the powers of the Magistrate first class in respect of the offences defined in Sections 169 and 171 and take cognizance of any such offence under Section 190 of the code of criminal procedure and shall try it summarily under Chapter XX of the code.

A day earlier, the Federal cabinet issued an official notification regarding the deployment of Pakistan Army's personnel across Pakistan to perform

duties at sensitive constituencies and polling stations during the general election 2024.

"Under Article 245 of the Constitution, the army will be deployed across the country," the notification stated.

The notification further stated that the military personnel – deployed outside sensitive polling stations from Feb 05 till Feb 10 – will serve as a quick response force.

The notification mentioned that the deployment of Army personnel will play a major role in the transparent and peaceful polling process.

The notification further added that the Civil Armed Forces will also be stationed at the Printing Corporation of Pakistan and the Pakistan Post Foundation.

Pneumonia continues to take heavy toll on children

LAHORE/DG KHAN (INP): Pneumonia continues to take a heavy toll on children as 12 kids reportedly died during the last 24 hours across Punjab on Friday, taking the total number of deaths to 220 since Jan 1.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) issued a public advisory, cautioning individuals about the proliferation of fake calls on WhatsApp.

In an official statement, the ECP advised individuals who receive suspicious calls or messages purporting to be from senior officers of the ECP or any other high-ranking ECP official to verify the authenticity through a landline by directly contacting the official of the ECP.

"There have been reports of a series of fake calls and messages impersonating the Chief Election Commissioner," it said.

Moreover, the advisory was extended to the ECP's own members, including district returning officers (DROs) and returning officers (ROs).

The ECP emphasized that these members should refrain from taking any action on calls or messages until they have been thoroughly verified by the Chief Election Commissioner's staff officer.

The ECP urged the entire election staff, including DROs and ROs, to strictly adhere to these guidelines and avoid immediate action on calls or mes-

sages until complete verification.

Meanwhile, an election candidate could not display picture of a government officer on posters, banners and handbills, ECP sources said.

According to sources, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in a circular to provincial election commissioners prohibited printing of picture of a government officer on posters, banners and handbills of an election candidate.

The ECP has directed in circular to take action against the candidates using government officers' pictures.

"It will be violation of clause 27 of the election code of conduct".



Quetta: Provincial Minister of Local Government Sheikh Mahmood Al Hassan, is meeting with Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Mohammad Khan Jogizai.

Fog continues to affect flight operations in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Dense fog in Punjab continued to disrupt countrywide flight operations on Friday.

As per details, 24 flights were cancelled and four were diverted from their actual place of landing due to dense fog.

Islamabad and Lahore-bound flights from Damam were diverted to Lahore airport.

The dense fog has blanketed parts of Pakistan especially Punjab, disrupting air, rail and road traffic.

Two Jeddah-bound flights from Islamabad were cancelled due to dense fog.

Furthermore, ER702, PK-

233 and PF-735 international flights to Dubai and Muscat were also cancelled. Four Gilgit-bound flights PK-601, PK-602, PK-605 and PK-606 were cancelled.

Two PIA flights to Sukkur from Karachi airport were also cancelled due to foggy weather.

The dense fog has blanketed parts of Pakistan especially Punjab, disrupting air, rail and road traffic.

Different sections of the motorway have been temporarily closed due to dense fog.

According to National Highways and Motorway Po-

lice, the closed sections include: M-1 from Rashakai to Peshawar toll plaza.

M-2 from Babu Sabu to Thokar Niaz Baig and Thokar Niaz Baig to Ferozabad.

M-3 from Faizpur to Rajanah.

M-4 from Gojra to Faisalabad and Pindi Bhattian to Faisalabad.

M-11 from Mehmood Booti toll plaza to Kala Shah Kaku toll plaza.

Commuters have been advised to make their travel plans after getting latest updates from National Highway and Motorway helpline 130 and its social media platforms.