

# QUETTA VOICE

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## Balochistan Boosts Public Transportation: 25 Additional Green Buses Soon in Quetta

Quetta Voice Special Report:

**QUETTA:** In a bid to enhance transportation facilities for the masses, the Balochistan government has announced a significant expansion of the green bus fleet. Dr. Faisal Ahmed Khan, the Chief Executive Officer of Balochistan Public Private Partnership (BPPP), revealed that 25 more eco-friendly buses are set to grace the roads of Quetta shortly. The provincial government has already submitted a comprehensive feasibility report to the Planning Commission of Pakistan, seeking approval for the purchase of these green buses.

Dr. Faisal Ahmed Khan stated that the ambitious plan aims to have a total of 100 green buses navigating the streets of Quetta in the coming months. The green bus project, initially approved by the former Chief Minister of Balochistan, Jam Kamal Khan, has garnered momentum under the current administration.

### Green Buses To Operate From Marriabad To Hazara Town

The expansion of the green bus service is not confined to



the city center, it is set to reach various key areas, including Hazara Town, Marriabad, Samangli Road, Sariab Custom, Nawab Killi, and other crucial parts of the provincial capital. Dr. Faisal Ahmed Khan emphasized that this move is a response to the long-standing demand for decent transportation facilities by the masses.

Currently, only eight buses operate from Balochistan Uni-

versity to Belli Airport Road, prompting calls from the public for an increase in the number of green buses. Asadullah, a young resident, expressed relief at the introduction of the green bus service and demanded an expansion to meet the growing demand.

### PM Promises Provision Of 100 Green Buses

In a recent visit, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq

Kakar announced the provision of an additional 100 green buses for Balochistan, further solidifying the government's commitment to improving public transportation in the region.

As the Balochistan government continues to prioritize sustainable and accessible transportation, the upcoming influx of green buses is poised to alleviate the commuting challenges faced by the residents of Quetta.

## Chaman Pak-Afghan Border Market: Driving Economic Growth in Balochistan

News Desk:

**CHAMAN:** The fruit and vegetable market in the Pak-Afghan border area of Chaman, a landmark project under the supervision of Balochistan's Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki, has reached its final stages.

The official inauguration of this state-of-the-art facility is scheduled for mid-February, according to the Planning and Development Department.

The comprehensive project, with a total cost of Rs 1656.936 million, encompasses essential features such as a truck stand, taxi stand/bus stand, fruit and vegetable stand, central dual carriage-way, and a mosque.

These facilities are poised to transform Chaman into a vital hub for the supply and distribution of agricultural products, providing a platform for buying and selling.

Sources from the Depart-



ment of Planning and Development emphasize the collaborative financial support from both the federal and provincial governments, marking a crucial step toward fostering economic

development in Balochistan.

Beyond its impact on business professionals in the fruit and vegetable sector, the market is expected to facilitate the

timely and quality delivery of agricultural products throughout the country, positioning Chaman as a pivotal center for trade and commerce in the region.

## Peshawar High Court suspends ECP order stripping PTI's 'bat' symbol

**PESHAWAR:** The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday suspended the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) declaration of the PTI's intra-party polls as unconstitutional and the revocation of the party's 'bat' election symbol. Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhet announced the verdict shortly after reserving his order on a PTI petition against the ECP decision.

The court order, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, said that general elections were scheduled for February 8 and the last date for allotment of election symbols was January 13.

It directed that notices be issued to all respondents for Jan 9 and suspended the ECP's December 22 order. The court also ordered the ECP to publish the PTI's certificate on the commission's website and restore the party's election symbol "keeping in view the urgency that a political party has been denied of its symbol, meaning thereby that aspirants from the general public who were willing to vote for the petitioners' party were divested of their right to vote as per their choice".

The submission of the party's plea comes after the electoral watchdog last week voted, for the second time in under a month, the PTI's internal elections in which Barrister Gohar Ali Khan was elected as the party's new chairman. The ECP had issued a verdict following a first-of-its-kind



microscopic examination of the inner workings of a political party and declared the party ineligible to obtain an election symbol to contest the upcoming general elections.

"It is held that PTI has not complied with our directions rendered therein order dated 23rd November 2023 and failed to hold intra-party election in accordance with PTI prevailing Constitution, 2019 and Election Act, 2017, and Election Rules, 2017," the ECP had said in its 11-page order.

The party had termed the decision part of the "famous London Plan" and a "disgusting and shameful attempt to stop PTI from participating in the election".

It had also claimed that the party would still win the general elections, maintaining that it would appeal the decision at a verdict forum. It asserted that its candi-

dates would indeed contest the polls with the 'bat' symbol, come what may.

### Election symbol is the life of any party: Ali Zafar

Talking to the media after the PHC verdict, PTI counsel Barrister Ali Zafar said the election symbol was the "life" of any party and a basic constitutional right of the organisation and its workers, supporters and voters. "Today the high court has upheld that basic right and declared that the 'bat' symbol belongs to the PTI and restored it," Zafar said the ECP had given its verdict in the case as if it was an "opponent" of the PTI instead of a just arbitrator and also questioned why the lawyers from parties or the government were present in today's hearing.

"It seemed that they were against the PTI together with the ECP," he said. Zafar said that the ECP should remain "independent and free". Meanwhile, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said the PHC had undetermined and eliminated the "conspiracy against the PTI, its symbol and its supporters" with its order. He added that the high court had restored the trust of the party and the nation in the judiciary. "It seemed as if the ECP were against us, it did not feel as if they were fair," PTI lawyer Ali Zafar said while speaking to the media outside the PHC alongside Gohar Khan, adding that a symbol is a fundamental right. "The way lawyers from different parties were arguing in courts today, it seemed as if they were collaborating against PTI. One should not get this perspective, they should stay independent," he said. Gohar said there was a "great need" for the suspension order since nomination papers for the general elections have been filed and the scrutiny process is underway. He said the PTI had sent its priority list and all the provinces accepted it other than Punjab, adding that the final list issued included all political parties other than the PTI.

The PTI chairman said the party would request the ECP to ensure elections were free, fair and transparent, adding that the party had always expressed confidence in the watchdog. **News Desk**

## Seven Former Balochistan Chief Ministers Gear Up for General Elections

Syed Ali Shah:



**QUETTA:** In an electrifying turn of events, Balochistan braces for the upcoming general elections with a formidable lineup that includes seven former Chief Ministers vying for key political positions.

The political landscape in the province has been set ablaze as parties officially kick-start their election campaigns.

Among the prominent contenders, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, a political stalwart, sets the stage by participating in both the National and Provincial Assembly elections. Simultaneously, the seasoned leader of Jamiat Ulema Islam, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Khan Raisani, former Chief Minister and Chief of Sarawan, throws his hat into the ring for a seat in the Balochistan Assembly.

### Dr. Malik Baloch, Nawab Zehri Also In The Run

The political arena is further charged as Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, former Chief Minister and National head of his party, and Nawab Samaulah Zehri, former Chief Minister and leader of the People's Party, intensify their presence in the electoral battlefield. Adding to the mix, Jam Kamal

Khan, former Chief Minister of Balochistan from the Muslim League-N, demonstrates full force in preparation for the elections scheduled for February 8. Additionally, Sardar Saleh Bhatani, former Chief Minister hailing from Hub, is set to contest from his constituency.

Notably, Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly, Jan Janah, throws his hat into the ring, adding another layer of intrigue to the upcoming elections.

### Significant Twist With Maulana Fazal Contesting From NA 265 Pishin

As the series of seat-to-seat adjustments between political parties continues, the February 8 elections bring a significant twist with Maulana Fazlur Rehman Pashin, the Chief of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Central Amir, choosing to contest the National Assembly seat from NA 265 Pishin.

The political battleground is set, and Balochistan anticipates a riveting electoral showdown, with seven former Chief Ministers shaping the narrative in this crucial chapter of the province's political history.

## WAF Quetta Supports Baloch Women March, Urges Just Resolution

News Desk:



**Quetta:** The Women Action Forum (WAF) Quetta expresses unwavering solidarity with the courageous women and girls leading a historic month-long protest in Balochistan.

The unprecedented peaceful long march from Turbat to Islamabad, organized by women from inter Balochistan, marks a significant moment in Pakistan's history. Paying tribute to the passion and perseverance of the protesting women, children, and men, all hailing from missing persons' families, WAF Quetta calls upon the government and relevant au-

thorities to heed their demands for justice. As the demonstrators faced numerous hardships during their journey through different cities, they were greeted with support from civil society along the way. Presently, they continue their sit-in protest at the Islamabad Press Club, steadfast in their pursuit of rights and justice for the oppressed families. WAF Quetta urges a compassionate response, emphasizing the critical need for the government to listen attentively and fulfill the legitimate demands of these resilient protesters.

## Police Officer Injured In A Hand Grenade Attack In Quetta

Staff Reporter:



**QUETTA:** A police officer was injured in a hand grenade attack in the provincial capital on Tuesday night.

Police sources said unknown terrorists lobbed a hand grenade at a police mobile in the Nawab Killi area of the city. As a result of

the attack, a police assistant sub-inspector was injured. The injured police officer was rushed to the hospital for medical treatment. The attackers escaped unhurt from the spot. Police reached the spot as an investigation into the incident went underway.

DIALOGUE

Editor: Asim Khan

Collaborative Growth with German Consulate's Focal Person for Economic Development

Editorial:

In the bustling city of Quetta, where the echoes of development are becoming increasingly audible, the people and business leaders of Balochistan extend a heartfelt appeal to the German Consulate in Karachi. Today, as we reflect on the dynamic friendship between Pakistan and Germany, we take a moment to express our gratitude to the German government for its sponsorship of various development projects that have notably enhanced the socio-economic conditions of our province. Balochistan, with its vast and untapped potential, stands as a reservoir of economic opportunities awaiting exploration through international partnerships. Recognizing this significant potential for collaboration, we underscore the crucial role that the German Consulate can play in promoting economic growth, facilitating trade, and attracting investments to our resource-rich region. The spirit of our appeal lies in a call for enhanced cooperation, urging the German Consulate to facilitate dialogues and engagement sessions with local entrepreneurs, industrialists, and investors. This collaborative approach promises not only to benefit the business community but also to contribute significantly to the overall economic development of Balochistan.

Our province boasts untapped resources such as agriculture, fishery, and forestry, aligning harmoniously with Germany's interests and expertise. By actively involving the business community, the German Consulate has the opportunity to identify mutually beneficial opportunities and contribute to the prosperity of both regions. While expressing our appreciation for the appointment of a focal person for the business community of Sindh and Balochistan, we humbly stress the importance of broader consultation with all stakeholders in Balochistan.

We believe that inclusive decision-making will undoubtedly enhance the success of such initiatives. We are optimistic that, under its current leadership, the German Consulate will not only recognize the significance of Balochistan's economic landscape but also take proactive steps to strengthen economic ties. Our people and business leaders eagerly anticipate constructive engagement that fosters a lasting partnership between the German Consulate Karachi and our province. Together as great friends on the global stage, Pakistan and Germany can unlock the full potential of economic collaboration and contribute to the shared prosperity of our regions. Balochistan, with its rich tapestry of opportunities, should not be overlooked in development and key appointments. We trust that our collective efforts will pave the way for a brighter future for all, and as a newspaper, we remain committed to facilitating this collaborative journey toward progress and prosperity.

Unjustified stigma

By Ali Burhan Mustafa:

PAKISTAN is grappling with the stigma surrounding mental health. A social fabric steeped in tradition often finds itself at odds with the modern need for progressive mental healthcare solutions. This clash is exacerbated by misguided religious on shams and archaic spiritual rituals, propelled by misinterpreted religious doctrines, rather than scientific psychiatry interventions. This dependency on traditional healers, especially in impoverished areas, perpetuates the stigma.

Child sexual abuse in Pakistan, with its dismal conviction rates, casts a long shadow over our human rights record. Chilling statistics from organisations like Sahil, reveal those who fail to report such cases face a conviction rate of less than two per cent. Despite initial Bill and national sex offender registries, the acute scarcity of child psychiatrists and underdevelopment of specialised branches, such as Forensic and community psychiatry, are a glaring oversight in addressing mental health after abuse.

Pakistan faces a dire human rights challenge, as detailed by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. A woman is raped every two hours and a woman is sexually assaulted every 10 minutes. This is potentially more frequent, with claims of such incidents occurring every 20 minutes by groups such as Pakistan Men Against Rape. The distressingly low rate of cases being reported and even fewer convictions exposes deep flaws within the justice system. A number of high-profile rape cases, including the Zainab Ansari incident and a mother abused sexually in front of her children, necessitates a demand for forensic psychiatric assessments in court proceedings.

Pakistani women are encumbered with a long tradition of shaming over our human rights record. Chilling statistics from organisations like Sahil, reveal those who fail to report such cases face a conviction rate of less than two per cent. Despite initial Bill and national sex offender registries, the acute scarcity of child psychiatrists and underdevelopment of specialised branches, such as Forensic and community psychiatry, are a glaring oversight in addressing mental health after abuse.

inflict fear and profound physical and psychological trauma, often leading to myriad mental health disorders. This crisis is exacerbated by the lack of adequately trained healthcare providers who can recognise and assist victims and victims a shortfall highlighted by the Unicef-initiated mental health and psychosocial support services programme in 2021. Medical studies corroborate this gap.

In Pakistan, the intersection of mental health and human rights is brought into sharp relief by the impact of blasphemy laws on the mentally ill. Between 1986 and 2010, an alarming surge in blasphemy cases resulted in over 50 extrajudicial deaths. The existing laws, increasingly religious and far-reaching, ensure the caretaker cabinet to join the same party, again, ostensibly at the same time as the caretaker cabinet.

Electoral and constitutional democracy demands constant vigilance from the people. Stamping a ballot paper can neither be the starting nor the high point of the democratic process. Due diligence of election manifestos of political parties, their past record in delivering on their promises, and an utmost commitment to hold them accountable throughout their tenures in office is the bedrock of a functional representative polity. The most common refrain during the election season is 'We will turn Larkana into Paris'. While the French capital's reputation has so far not been commensurated, many a chateau in the south of France routinely becomes the stomping grounds for these peddlers of promises from Larkana to Rawalpindi. Take Karachi and most of its iconic landmarks; for instance, Frere Hall was built by the bad old British colonialists and ruled us. How greedy, unscrupulous, shameless, and downright evil these politicians have been recorded quite sufficiently and is being rubbed in these days by Shahbaz Khan and many others. That we have no love lost for the colonisers and their Raj is axiomatic. However, it is worth summarising that the British conceived and constructed the urban structures worthy of declaring as monuments or heritage sites in that city which 'public welfare' schemes

By Jawed Naqvi:

It wasn't surprising in the end that the presiding officers of the two Houses of India's parliament, both handpicked by Prime Minister Modi, suspended 146 opposition MPs en masse. This was unprecedented and worrisome for the troubled democracy. The MPs had hoped to ask layered and probing questions about a security breach at the Lok Sabha. Answering questions, however, in Mr Modi's forte or that of his home minister. Mr Modi openly relishes his reputation as India's only prime minister who hasn't held a press conference in 10 years.

The incessant crop of questions from the opposition pertains to the two men who jumped into the Lok Sabha from the visitors' gallery. It was an unavoury incident for the spanking new parliament house, which Mr Modi had inaugurated with gaudy fanfare and medieval ritual. The same day, Dec 13, in the old British-built parliament house, under another BJP government, an equally curious breach of security had occurred. It had led to a terrifying military standoff with Pakistan. Major embassies in Delhi moved out their staff over fears of a nuclear

exchange. It was as bad as the breach, earlier, again under a government with BJP's muscular nationalist leaders as key ministers. But it was not deemed threatening by the government. Dandavate, former minister of socialist beliefs, had smuggled an unloaded pistol into parliament. He was highlighting lax security under the Janata Party's watch. Subsequent security lapses — in 2001 and now in 2023 — suggest that Dandavate's alert had gone chronically unheeded. On the two serious close calls, the government, habitually, stonewalled key questions. In 2001, a car with a home ministry sticker drove into the parliament, both perhaps have been too embarrassing for the government to come clean on. The questions won't go away. For example, how were the two men known to the BJP MP from Mysuru who sponsored their security passes? How did the government plan to re-clean on the questions? How were the men able to smuggle the gas canisters under the nose of a security detail by its nature involves the protection of the prime minister and all senior and junior leaders of India? Two other colleagues of the intruders were arrested from outside parliament as they

in the ensuing shootout. Intriguingly, none of the intruders was captured alive. Some MPs said they saw a sixth man on the closed-circuit TV, but the claim was spurned by the government like most other questions. A redemptive feature of themselves by releasing yellow gas from canisters they had apparently smuggled in. They raised slogans but were rounded up by MPs and handed to the marshals. A redemptive feature of the latest security lapse was that Pakistan wasn't blamed.

The answers that opposition MPs expected from the government about the Lok Sabha intrusion, perhaps have been too embarrassing for the government to come clean on. The questions won't go away. For example, how were the two men known to the BJP MP from Mysuru who sponsored their security passes? How did the government plan to re-clean on the questions? How were the men able to smuggle the gas canisters under the nose of a security detail by its nature involves the protection of the prime minister and all senior and junior leaders of India? Two other colleagues of the intruders were arrested from outside parliament as they

protested against unemployment and authoritarianism. This was the tricky part. Any discussion on the security lapse would have led to discussion on rampant unemployment, that too on the eve of crucial general elections. It would also have brought another troublesome discussion on the force of authoritarianism. The government obviously wouldn't want any of that. The 2001 intrusion into the old parliament spawned similar questions. Several have remained unanswered to this day.

Arundhan Roy and A. G. Noorani raised these issues vociferously. For example, months before the attack on parliament, both the government and police had been saying that parliament could be attacked. On Dec 12, 2001, at an informal meeting then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee warned Kapil Sibal reportedly that parliament would be attacked. Given that there was an 'improved security' repeat? How were the men able to smuggle the gas canisters under the nose of a security detail by its nature involves the protection of the prime minister and all senior and junior leaders of India? Two other colleagues of the intruders were arrested from outside parliament as they

By Shahzad Sharjeet:

ELECTIONS are in the air and potted plants are being transported to suitable soil with the most earthworms and compost available. Sunshine is essential, but the time to make hay is later. In a no-holds-bar environment, the logic is the first crucial. How does one explain a televised interview in which the caretaker cabinet accused the leadership of a political party of all manner of crime? Some of those who did it at the instigation of the powers that be. Fine. How do you then explain ministers resigning from the caretaker cabinet to join the same party, again, ostensibly at the same time as the caretaker cabinet?

Electoral and constitutional democracy demands constant vigilance from the people. Stamping a ballot paper can neither be the starting nor the high point of the democratic process. Due diligence of election manifestos of political parties, their past record in delivering on their promises, and an utmost commitment to hold them accountable throughout their tenures in office is the bedrock of a functional representative polity. The most common refrain during the election season is 'We will turn Larkana into Paris'. While the French capital's reputation has so far not been commensurated, many a chateau in the south of France routinely becomes the stomping grounds for these peddlers of promises from Larkana to Rawalpindi. Take Karachi and most of its iconic landmarks; for instance, Frere Hall was built by the bad old British colonialists and ruled us. How greedy, unscrupulous, shameless, and downright evil these politicians have been recorded quite sufficiently and is being rubbed in these days by Shahbaz Khan and many others. That we have no love lost for the colonisers and their Raj is axiomatic. However, it is worth summarising that the British conceived and constructed the urban structures worthy of declaring as monuments or heritage sites in that city which 'public welfare' schemes

Plantation drive

Hall, Merewether Tower, Empress Market, Johar Kotla, Parade Pavilion, and Bandstand at Clifton. The Brits built them with much help from the city's Parsi and Hindu communities. Rupchand Baram Park, a magnificent facility, has never been commensurated. It has now been conveniently appropriated as Bagh Bihari. The incident would have been a similar 'Islamic-touch' since foreign masters since colonial times have ruled the city's public spaces like the Mughals were not accountable to the populace, they could spend money as they pleased when they wished on grand schemes and fantastic monuments to their names and their loved ones. In modern times, elected, accountable administrations can only do so much for their citizens. The problem today is that the only such 'public welfare' schemes

that come to mind are overhead bridges and underpasses. While most of these are helpful to the public, they tend to crumble and flood, without any accountability and much too quickly for any chance of attaining an iconic status. Not sure where the 'chinaman delivery' got its name. It is the same Kapil Sibal cutting. While the former is widely known in the world of cricket as a left-arm fast bowler, the latter is restricted to Karachi, though just the name as the practice of appropriating public property for personal gain is rampant country-wide. In the spirit of fair representation, let us trash problem and waste. The textbook practice is putting a trash dumpster on any spot with commercial potential. Rest assured, we will dump all sorts of trash everywhere that we can. The next step is to remove the dumpster, level the plot, and grant

the prime piece of land for a nursery. The change of scene could not be more dramatic, and hovering kites to pots of saplings and flowerbeds amidst rows of terracotta ornaments. Everybody breathes a sigh of relief. The civic bodies and cantonment are praised instead of being asked how the lease for the nursery was granted and what terms. The grantees are kicked out after a couple of years, and a spanking cash-and-carry is built. The process has been honed to perfection. The same community that created the trash problem and waste. The textbook practice is putting a trash dumpster on any spot with commercial potential. Rest assured, we will dump all sorts of trash everywhere that we can. The next step is to remove the dumpster, level the plot, and grant

What the Baloch want

By Arifa Noor:

EARLY on Sunday, there were few people in the green areas of the Islamabad Press Club. The rows of quietly seated protesters were missing as were the cameras and visitors. The camp was just waking up. The young men were busy fixing their hair, straightening out rugs, etc. One of them carried away a ring-light and stand used with phone cameras. Most were masked, but there was little uniformity in hairstyle or clothes. From shalwar kameez to jeans to heavy Balochi shalwars, one could see it all. A small group of women sat in a corner. Their crumpled clothes and matted-up hair were the chadors of dupattas indicated the day was just beginning. Most were young. One seen many studying in a school in

Karachi where her family was based; another in a university in Islamabad in 2021 also had her head on her knee as if she still had some more sleep in her, was also in middle-class backgrounds. In this and their presence in Islamabad less the changing environment of Balochistan's politics and society. Mahrang Baloch are not outliers, even though they have become the face of this particular march. This longest-running insurgency in Balochistan has been led by the middle class from the province's non-tribal areas. Those who are picked up and those who fight for their return are both from this class, and not the tribal sardars who continue to be the face of Balochistan in Islamabad. The sardars, as seen many other MNAs are the first

to be maligned when the issue of Balochistan's development comes up and they are to be exploited economically and politically. But more and more, it appears, they are irrelevant to the people. Why else would they be absent from this protest camp in Islamabad where young men and women dominate, negotiating with ministers, facing the cameras, and are greeting those who come to show sympathy? The absence of the sardars who have been the Balochistan in parliament reveals the disconnect between the electoral exercise and Baloch people. It is perhaps not an unfamiliar point to anyone interested in the issue. But circumstances of class and unrepresentative politics have led to the emergence of many take place in a Pakistan

where distances are becoming shorter, physically and otherwise. So many a one ex p l a n a t i o n. Smartphones have allowed dissent to be communicated in a way that the state is struggling to deal with. Take the Baloch protesters. Their protest in Turbat, which reached Islamabad. This was not just made easier by the social media, but also by the internet migration. Over the years, many Baloch and Pakistanis have moved out of conflict areas to urban centres such as Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. Many have moved for employment and others for education. This has also created a network which make such protests and visibility possible. Journalists and researchers such as Zia ur Rehman argue this has

exposed Baloch students to left-wing parties and mentors outside their shikhs. More and more protesters from the peripheries are now reaching Islamabad where their stories are heard more widely. Contrast the Chaman sit-in with the protest in Turbat which reached Islamabad. This was not just made easier by the social media, but also by the internet migration. Over the years, many Baloch and Pakistanis have moved out of conflict areas to urban centres such as Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. Many have moved for employment and others for education. This has also created a network which make such protests and visibility possible. Journalists and researchers such as Zia ur Rehman argue this has

these young people and all-outreach classes, instead of silencing them.



PAC organizes musical show in connection with Quaid's day

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Guest Waqar Ahmed said that the historical struggle of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for the establishment of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent will be highlighted in various aspects so that the new generation can be enlightened about these principles.

Through his visionary leadership, the father of nation played an important role in reshaping the map of the world. The new generation needs to adopt Quaid-e-Azam as a role model and follow his principles, he added.

Assistant Director Muhammad Sulaiman said that Punjab was a rich province in terms of culture, in which colors of Punjabi, Saraiki, Pothohar culture were prominent. Culture was the identity of any region. Nations that do not protect their culture lose their identity in the world.

He said that Punjab Arts Council and Department of Information and Culture have rendered valuable services for the protection of culture. A large number of people from the cities participated in the grand musical event.

Speaking on the occasion, the visiting ambassador said her country has invested in the oil industry in Pakistan. She also lauded good quality of rice product of Pakistan.

CM Baqar invites Austrian investors to invest in Sindh

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar has invited the Austrian investors to come forward and invest in the province.

The chief minister extended the offer during a meeting with Ambassador of Austria Mrs. Andrea Wicke during a meeting with here in Karachi on Tuesday.

During the meeting, bilateral relations, trade and investment and climate change issues came under discussion.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Gohar Ejaz interacting with the members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Commerce Ministry.

Australia make solid start to Boxing Day test in rainy Melbourne

MELBOURNE (INP): Australia made a solid start to the Boxing Day test against Pakistan on Tuesday but rain washed out a chunk of play and tight bowling restricted them to 187 for three at the end of the opening day. Marnus Labuschagne, who had made 44 not out, and Travis Head, who was unbeaten on 10, will resume on Wednesday as the hosts seek a victory that would seal a series triumph with the third and final test to spare.

After an emphatic 360-run victory in the first test in Perth two weeks ago, the world test champions were looking to quickly drive home their advantage when they were put in to bat on a greenish wicket at Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Pakistan needed something to restore their morale after a heavy defeat as well as a couple of injuries. Left-arm seamers Shaheen Afridi and Mir Hamza soon got the ball moving both ways to trouble the Australian openers.

David Warner, playing the penultimate test of his career, should have departed for two in the third over when he edged an Afridi delivery to the slips only for Abdullah Shafigue to ground a regulation catch.

It was not until just before lunch that Pakistan finally wicketed Warner out for 38, the opener losingly reaching for a wide delivery from spinner Agha Salman and edging it to Babar Azam in the slips.

"It was quite challenging," said Warner. "When they put the ball in the right areas, they challenged our front-foot defence. A lot of play and misses..."

"They didn't give us too many freebies, which in Perth I felt they did a bit. So yeah, it was a tough start." Usman Khawaja, sporting the names of his daughters on his boots as part of his continuing feud with the International Cricket Council, lasted another six overs before he edged a Hasan Ali delivery to Salman in the slips for 42.

Labuschagne and Steve Smith came through a thorough examination before heavy rain sent a large part of the 62,167 crowd scurrying for the exits and forced an early tea break.

The questions continued to be asked when play resumed and Smith was given out leg before wicket on 19. He reviewed the decision, however, and ball tracking showed Afridi's delivery would have gone over the stumps.

Pakistan govt to outsource eight airports, Senate told

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan government has decided to outsource eight airports phase-wise. Advisor to PM on Aviation Farhat Hussain Shah told the Senate on Tuesday.

Shah in his statement before the Senate earlier announced to outsource Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi airports, but now has decided to outsource eight airports.

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) had approved the draft Transaction Advisory Agreement reached with the International Finance Corporation for outsourcing of three airports.

The ECC was informed that the outsourcing of three airports has been initiated within the scope of the Public-Private Partnership Act-2017 to engage private investors through a competitive and transparent process to run the airports, develop appertaining land assets and enhance avenues for commercial activities and gamer full revenue potential.

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HYDERABAD: Doctors and Health workers hold a protest rally after boycott from COVID-19 activities, at DHO office on Hyderabad.



KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi giving away the degree and gold medal in the Pakistan Navy Engineering College

Citizens need to take 'seasonal influenza vaccine' to avoid virus: Minister

ISLAMABAD (INP): Punjab Caretaker Health Minister Dr Javed Akram has said that the citizens need to take special care of their health during the recent days as Punjab was adversely affected by air pollution due to heavy smog and cases of the illness causing flu-like symptoms among people, especially among elderly citizens were increasing.

Speaking in a private news channel on Tuesday, he said that the new virus could be "COVID", adding that currently, various types of viruses are affecting the health of citizens, and children and elderly people are more affected by this virus.

Dr Javed Akram also asked citizens and residents to immediately take the seasonal influenza vaccine.

An alarming increase in the cases of respiratory infections including influenza A, B and others were being reported in hospitals, he added.

The minister advised citizens to use face masks, avoid close contact, and wash their hands to avoid the influenza virus as it is easily transmissible from an infected person to others. He also advised to adopt a healthy lifestyle as it played the main role in fighting against ailments.

Dr Javed Akram urged the authorities to take necessary measures to spread awareness about the flu while apprising the participants about the symptoms and precautions of influenza A and B. Patients with chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, cardiac and lung diseases, pregnant women, elderly people, and children under five years are at higher risk of developing severe or complicated diseases, he warned.

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Qureshi likely to be released from Adiala jail

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi is likely to be released from Adiala jail on Tuesday after the Supreme Court granted him bail in the CIPHER cases.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi's legal team, led by Barrister Tamoor Malik, arrived at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi with the required bail bonds, including the presence of Special Court Judge Abul Hassanat Zulfqarain.

claim that there is no substantial evidence supporting the offense under Section 5(3) of the Official Secrets Act. The top court ruled that additional inquiry is warranted regarding the alleged violation of the Official Secrets Act, with the trial court empowered to make decisions on the ongoing trial would remain unaffected.

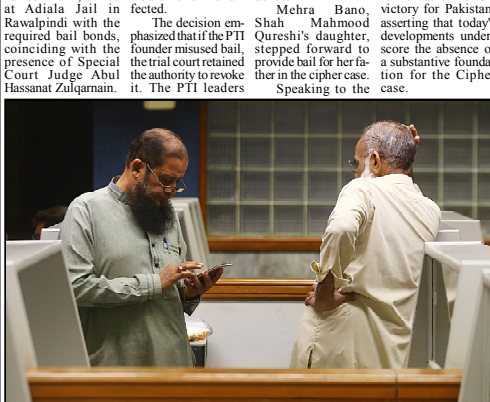
Mehra Bano, Shah Mahmood Qureshi's daughter, stepped forward to provide bail for her father in the cipher case. Speaking to the media outside the Supreme Court, she affirmed that her father, who endured four months in custody in a politically charged case, intended not only to contest upcoming elections but also to lead the electoral campaign for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

The apex court's bail decision, spanning four pages, with Justice Athar Minallah contributing a separate five-page note in concurrence, ensured that the ongoing trial would remain unaffected.

The decision emphasized that if the PTI founder misused bail, the trial court retained the authority to revoke it. The PTI leaders

claim that there is no substantial evidence supporting the offense under Section 5(3) of the Official Secrets Act. The top court ruled that additional inquiry is warranted regarding the alleged violation of the Official Secrets Act, with the trial court empowered to make decisions on the ongoing trial would remain unaffected.

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KARACHI: Stockbrokers monitor the share prices during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi, Pakistan, 26 December 2023. The Pakistan benchmark 100 index 59,170.97 was down 2534.12 with points during the trading session.

Huawei launch White Paper on AFCI for Pakistani PV systems

ISLAMABAD (INP): Power Infrastructure Board (PIB), CERAD and Huawei Pakistan on December 19 jointly unveiled the White Paper on Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) for Photovoltaic systems, marking a major advance in field of solar power technology.

The launch, a result of cooperative efforts with Private Power & Infrastructure Board (PIIB) and the Center for Advanced Research in Engineering and Development (CERAD), is expected to redefine the development pattern of PV power plant development in Pakistan.

The event, according to Gwadar Pro, adorned with a technical white paper launch ceremony, featured Chief Executive Officer of Huawei Pakistan, Eshan Sun, who emphasized the importance of AFCI in promoting the development of advanced PV technology because it could provide a systematic reference for enterprises involved in the development of PV power stations.

"This document serves as a comprehensive guide for related stakeholders, expounding the development background, technical principles, challenges, features, and the tangible results of AFCI technology verification and evaluation," Sun added.

Shah Jahan Mirza, Managing Director of Private Power & Infrastructure Board, praised Huawei's commitment to technological advancement and emphasized that the introduction of this cutting-edge technology will play a key role in solving Pakistan's power challenges.

"This white paper is a comprehensive industry guide," Shah Jahan Mirza emphasized, "at the same time, Huawei's smart PV insights and capabilities undoubtedly add value to its efforts, further consolidating the reliability of the assessment results." A staff of Huawei Smart PV Business Solutions in Pakistan told Gwadar Pro reporter that so far, Huawei's smart PV business has entered the Pakistani market for nearly 10 years.

"This document serves as a comprehensive guide for related stakeholders, expounding the development background, technical principles, challenges, features, and the tangible results of AFCI technology verification and evaluation," Sun added.

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## Shaheed BB's sacrifice for restoration of democracy to be remembered: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (INP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf on Tuesday said that the sacrifice rendered by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto for the restoration and strengthening of democracy in the country would ever be remembered in the political annals of history.

He said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto sacrificed her life for the restoration and strengthening of democracy in the country.

He said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto had the honour of being the first elected woman Prime Minister of the Islamic world. He expressed these views on the 16th martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto.

He said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was conscious of threats and dangers posed

by anti-national elements but she remained resolved to resist terrorism and extremism.

"BB had fought against terrorism for the development and prosperity of the country and the strengthening of democracy," he said.

Raja Pervez Ashraf said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was the pioneer of democratic struggle in Pakistan and she always stood for the protection of the downtrodden classes of the society, the rights of minorities, and the development and independence of women.

The speaker further said that Benazir Bhutto's mission was to establish a democratic system and a society based on equality.

She carried forward the mission of the People's Leader Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and said that Shaheed Benazir

Bhutto remained committed to her mission with patience and courage till the last breath of her life.

Raja Pervez Ashraf said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto promoted the politics of tolerance and dialogue instead of imposing ideas.

Her struggle to fight and eliminate the scourge of terrorism is of key importance.

The speaker said that by adopting the mission of Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, we can take the country on the path of development.

After the martyrdom of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, the way Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto led the party and the country is admirable. He expressed his determination that the mission of Ms. Benazir Bhutto Shaheed will be completed.

## Shehbaz Sharif links peace, stability to economic revival

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif has said that a crucial election is going to take place on Feb 8 and the party would win it with public support.

Addressing the 16th party parliamentary board meeting at Model Town here on Tuesday, he said that following the return of PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, there was immense enthusiasm and fervor among party members and workers.

"The rally on Oct 21 at Minar-e-Pakistan was one of the most successful receptions in our political history," he said and acknowledged the participation of people from KP province in the rally and paid tribute to party workers, general public and KP leaders who had gathered to welcome their

Quaid at Minar-e-Pakistan.

He emphasized the vital role of peace and stability in the economic revival of the country and credited PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for his significant efforts in restoring peace in Karachi from 2013 to 2017.

He said that when he had reached Karachi in 2018 for votes, the people of Karachi expressed their gratitude for peace restoration in the business hub of Pakistan.

He said that if Quaid Nawaz Sharif had not started electricity projects, the country would still have been in darkness. He recalled that there were 20-hour load-shedding in Pakistan daily but his party successfully overcome the issue.

He said that it was Quaid Nawaz who tackled the men-

ace of terrorism, adding that people still remembered development works carried out during that period across Pakistan. "The way terrorism had been eradicated from the country was recognised even by enemies as well," he maintained.

He said that every Pakistani witnessed the situation of Peshawar's development project called BRT (Bus Rapid Transit), but if the project had been supervised by Quaid Nawaz Sharif, then it would have been successful like Orange Line Metro Train and Metro Buses in Lahore and Karachi.

PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif, Senator Ishaq Dar, Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz, Vice President Hamza Shahbaz, Secretary General Ahsan Iqbal and others were present.

## Authorities urged to take notice of Khattak's statement

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice President Sher Faraz Marwat has demanded authorities take notice of Pervez Khattak's recent statement of offering the bat symbol to PTI. Marwat, speaking to the media in Peshawar High Court, asserted that only the Election Commission can assign party symbols and questioned Khattak's motive for proposing an alternative emblem.

"Why was there a need to offer the bat symbol?" Marwat asked, highlighting that Khattak had already formed his own party separate from PTI. "Pervez Khattak's statement

exposes the collusion between him and the Election Commission," he further claimed, emphasizing that the cricket bat has been and will remain PTI's sole symbol.

Marwat also addressed his own political future, revealing that PTI founder Imran Khan had nominated him to contest the NA-32 Peshawar election in the last party meeting. "I am ready to contest from NA-32 if the party decides," he declared, but added that he is not opposed to other arrangements. "I am not stubborn and will accept whatever decision the party takes," he assured.

On the legal front, Marwat

expressed confidence in PTI chairman Imran Khan's eventual release on bail in all pending cases, including the cipher, Toshakhana, and Al-Qadir Trust matters. "Imran Khan has already been granted bail in the cipher case," he pointed out, "and bail will be granted soon in the other cases as well."

Marwat's statement comes amidst PTI ongoing concerns about electoral fairness and transparency. He raised the issue of party symbols being potentially taken away, arguing that such actions would disenfranchise voters and hinder free and fair elections.

## Election 2024: Exchequer get Rs 655.7m in lieu of nomination papers fee

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is witnessing a surge in financial activity, setting the stage for one of the country's most expensive polls to date. Nomination fees have already reached an impressive total of 655.7 million rupees.

The National Assembly race stands out as the epicenter of financial movement, with candidates competing for the 8,312 general seats collectively contributing nearly 250 million rupees in nomination fees. Notably, the reserved seats for women and minorities have

also witnessed significant financial commitments, as 459 candidates and 140 candidates have invested 13.8 million rupees and 4.5 million rupees, respectively.

In parallel, the provincial assembly elections reflect a similar enthusiasm, boasting a substantial collection of over 406 million rupees in nomination fees. The lion's share of this amount comes from the general seats, with 18,546 candidates contributing a hefty sum of 379.2 million rupees. Additionally, reserved seats for women and minorities have

attracted 1,365 and 393 candidates, resulting in 27.3 million rupees and 7.8 million rupees, respectively.

These staggering figures underscore the intense competition expected in the upcoming elections, with candidates demonstrating a willingness to invest substantial amounts to secure a coveted place in the political landscape. While the elevated nomination fees may pose a barrier to entry for some aspirants, they also raise concerns about the potential influence of money in Pakistani politics.



ISLAMABAD: Newly appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalil Hashmi calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## PM for prioritizing climate resilience, finance aspects in Balochistan hydro projects

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has stressed prioritizing climate resilience and climate finance aspects in hydro projects of Balochistan and reiterated government's commitment for leaving no stone unturned for progress and prosperity of the people of province.

He was chairing a meeting to review important matter relating to Balochistan province. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Chief Minister Ali Mardan Dombki, Balochistan Education Minister Dr Qadir Baloch, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir, Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning Sam Saeed, Federal Minister for Law and Water Resources Irfan Aslam and other relevant senior officials, said press release issued by PM Office Media Wing.

Balochistan Chief Secretary briefed the meeting on the construction of two-lane highway from Khuzdar to Karachi and observed that with its construction, the different parts of the country would get an al-

ternate leeway, besides strengthening of the linkages.

He also asked for an immediate resolution of the financial issues faced by the universities in the province.

The caretaker prime minister directed for constitution of inter-provincial committee with regard to matters of Kachhi Canal project and the inclusion of caretaker minister for planning and caretaker chief ministers of Punjab and Balochistan provinces as its members.

The committee would be tasked to finalize proposals about the restoration and expansion of the canal. A directive was also issued for the construction of check dams to utilize water from the hilly rivulets and streams and protection of Kachhi Canal and Pet Feeder from the hilly torrents.

PM Kakar ordered for formulation of a comprehensive mechanism over registration and fitness of vehicles in the province in collaboration with the National Highways and Motorways Police and National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).

The meeting was apprised that for holding of free and fair elections in the province, the caretaker provincial govern-

ment was taking all possible steps and in this regard, all the directives of the Election Commission of Pakistan were being implemented.

The meeting was also apprised of the mechanism for enhancing the tax and non-tax revenues in the province and it was added that the tax revenue collection system was being digitalized.

A briefing was also given over the steps taken for industry status to the mining sector. For the miners, a special Rescue 1122 center was established in District Quetta, it was added.

Moreover, the meeting was told that a systematized motors testing was in the offing to ensure safe travelling on motorways and highways in the province.

The provincial government with the help of federal government was taking steps against illegal fishing in its maritime borders.

The prime minister also directed for installation of tracking system on trawlers to end illegal fishing in the oceanic frontiers of the country.

For enhancing administrative transparency, verification of all the government employees of Balochistan province was being made from NADRA.

## Protest in Jhelum Valley against custodial killings of Kashmiris in IIOJK

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A big protest demonstration was held in Jhelum Valley, Azad Kashmir, today, against the custodial killing of three Kashmiri civilians by Indian Army in Siranokot area of Poonch district of occupied Jammu and Kashmir on Friday.

The protest was led by Hurriyat leader and Vice Chairman Tehreek-e-Shabab-ul-Muslimeen Mushtaq Ahmad Butt. The participants raised high-pitched anti-India and pro-freedom slogans, on the occasion.

Addressing the protestors, Mushtaq Ahmad Butt said that

the Indian Army has martyred more than ten thousand Kashmiris in detention during the past three decades. He said the Seranokot incident is the worst example of Indian Army in Siranokot area of Poonch district of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Butt pointed out that more than one million Indian soldiers deployed in occupied Kashmir have created an atmosphere of fear and terror in the entire occupied territory.

Speakers on the occasion appealed to the nations and international human rights organizations to take immediate notice of the custodial killings of Kashmiri

civilians in Sarnakot and increase pressure for an impartial investigation and strict action against the Indian soldiers involved in the crime. Prominent among those who attended the protest included Riaz Ahmed Awan, Munir Kunshi, Jahangir Qureshi, Zubair Khan, Durran, Saleem Mr. Asif Durran, Imtiaz Awan, Arshad Awan, Aftab Awan, Nazakat Qureshi, Falak Khan, Raja Abbas Khan, Qudus Kashmiri, Siddique Khan and Rashid Awan.

Besides, a large number of youth and citizens participated in the anti-India protest.

## Mandviwalla, Iranian Consul General for promoting business, trade ties

KARACHI (INP): Chief Whip in Senate of Pakistan, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla on Tuesday visited the Turkish Consulate General in Karachi and called on Consul General Mr. Cemal Sangu.

On the occasion, Mandviwalla recalled his visit to Turkey in 2010, during which he met with Prime Minister Mr. Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul.

Highlighting the desire to strengthen ties, Senator Mandviwalla called for exploring more investment opportu-

nities and multifaceted collaboration.

Emphasizing the importance of bilateral relations, both sides expressed mutual support for promoting business and trade ties.

The Consul General shared that two Turkish companies were keen on investing in Pakistan to establish solar systems near Islamabad and Karachi. Senator Mandviwalla, declaring Turkey as their second home, pledged support and encouragement for Turkish companies.

Following the Consul General's advice, Senator Mandviwalla expressed intent to meet with Kalyion in Karachi and also showed interest in meeting the representative of Aysis company involved in clearing work in the southern areas of Karachi.

In a friendly gesture, Senator Mandviwalla extended an invitation to Mr. Cemal to attend his son's wedding, concluding the meeting with a reaffirmation of the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Turkey.

## PPP to unveil manifesto for general elections tomorrow

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party's (PPP) electoral manifesto has been finalised, which will likely be announced tomorrow by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

General elections are scheduled to take place on February 8. After the end of the deadline for submission of nomination papers on December 24, the ECP is currently conducting scrutiny of the papers.

According to sources, the PPP's manifesto for the general elections 2024 has been finalised after consultation with experts.

The announcement will likely be made by PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in tomorrow's public gathering in Larkana to mark the death anniversary of former

prime minister Benazir Bhutto or in Karachi, the sources said.

According to party sources, the PPP's manifesto is prepared in the form of a booklet that include the achievements of its former

government including rehabilitation of flood victims by constructing new homes for them, expansion of the Benazir Income Support Program, youth card, labor and farmer card extension?

The manifesto includes "Bilawalayega rozgar layega" slogan while mitigating poverty, social security, power generation? employment growth and business industry subsidies Packages are also part of the manifesto? foreign investment. Analysts

credit factors such as improved product quality, diversification of export markets, and government incentives for exporters as contributing to the surge in exports to Southern Europe.

The continued decline in imports could also be attributed to ongoing efforts by the Pakistani government to promote domestic production and reduce reliance on foreign goods.

Overall, the expanding trade surplus with Southern Europe paints a promising picture for Pakistan's economic outlook. With sustained efforts to boost exports and optimize imports, the country is well-positioned to strengthen its trade ties with this important region.



BANGKOK: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf in group photo with participants of 8th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave in Thailand.