

QUETTA VOICE

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Qureshi re-arrested immediately after release from Adiala jail

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi was arrested again on Wednesday just as he was released from the Adiala jail after securing bail from the Supreme Court (SC) in the cyber case four days ago.

The apex court had, on December 22, granted bail to Qureshi and former prime minister Imran Khan. However, their immediate release from jail was hindered by their involvement in other ongoing cases.

Today, the former foreign minister was arrested by Rawalpindi Police in the GHQ attack case. A heavy contingent of police took the PTI leader in custody from outside the Adiala Jail, and reportedly shifted him to an unknown location.

As per police sources, a case against Qureshi, for attacking the GHQ during the May 9 riots, was registered at the RA Bazar police station. The PTI leader will be produced before an anti-terrorism court either today or tomorrow for remand.

The arrest came after Rawalpindi Deputy Commissioner Hassan Waqar Cheema revoked Qureshi's detention orders, issued a day earlier, on the police's request. A notification confirming this withdrawal was issued.

Upon release from jail after the initial detention orders expired, Qureshi was promptly re-arrested.

A day earlier, Rawalpindi Police had initially detained Qureshi under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO). Following due process, he was presented before an anti-terrorism court (ATC) Qureshi is expected to return to Adiala jail.

Expressing frustration, Qureshi, while addressing the public and media from an armored vehicle, said, "I was released on bail by the Supreme Court. This is a cruelty; I am being penalized for serving the nation."

Responding to the former



minister's arrest, PTI chairman Barrister Gohar urged the apex court's intervention, emphasizing Qureshi's importance to the party.

Stressing fair elections, Barrister Gohar stated that, "Given the Supreme Court's grant of bail, no further arrests should occur." Highlighting Qureshi's history of arrests, he questioned the justification for Section 3 MPO, stressing its infringement on rights.

Despite being provided relief by the superior courts, the PTI leader was detained at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail for 15 days under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance.

Qureshi's daughter expected her father to be set free on Tuesday as she said he was not wanted in any other case. However, just as the family reached the jail to pay the surety bond, and before they could acquire his release order, they found out that he had

been detained for 15 days.

Qureshi's fresh detention order was issued by Rawalpindi Deputy Commissioner Hassan Waqar Cheema.

It read that the PTI leader's release might pose a threat to peace and security as he was involved in the attack on the gate of the GHQ during the May 9 riots earlier this year.

It mentioned that the city's police chief in a letter had proposed a 45-day detention period on the recommendation of the relevant SHO.

In his letter, the Rawalpindi police chief wrote that Qureshi was a member of a political party, which was involved in anti-state activities and caused damage to public and private property.

The letter added that it was probable that Qureshi would engage in the same activities again and cause a law and order situation, and harm life and property

of the general public.

It continued that the district intelligence committee had also concurred with the assessments of the police and security authorities.

The Rawalpindi deputy commissioner wrote in the order that he was satisfied that Qureshi's detention was necessary and "expedient in public interest" to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the public safety or the maintenance of public order. While granting Qureshi the right to appeal, the order detained Qureshi at Adiala jail for 15 days.

Special Court Judge Abul Hasan Zulqarnain, who is hearing the cyber case, later issued the release order but by then it was too late for the PTI leader.

The cyber case pertains to a piece of paper that Imran had waved at a public rally on March 27, 2022, ahead of a vote of confidence that he lost. **News Desk**

Balochistan High Court Annuls Teachers Tests By SBK University

Staff Reporter, News Desk:



QUETTA: In a groundbreaking judgment, the Balochistan High Court (BHC) has nullified the tests and interviews conducted by Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University (SBK).

A division bench, presided over by Mr. Justice Kamran Khan Malakhail and Mr. Justice Shaukat Raskhshani, declared the entire recruitment procedure undertaken by SBK null and void. The court ordered the recovery of fees from both the university and the testing service responsible for the initial assessments.

The decision came following a constitutional petition filed by Bayazed Khan Kharoni, challenging the legitimacy of the recruitment process.

The selection process for successful candidates will include interviews conducted by the commissioner and senior education officers, further elevating the standard of scrutiny and fairness in the recruitment process.

Govt Of Balochistan Directed To Forge A Fresh Agreement With HEC

In a bid to restore integrity to the recruitment process, the BHC directed the education department of the Government of Balochistan to forge a fresh agreement with the Higher Education Commission (HEC). Subsequently, the Education Testing Council of HEC has been mandated to conduct new tests and interviews for positions ranging from grade 9 to 15.

To ensure transparency and

Candidates Fee Shall Be Refunded: Court

In a noteworthy provision, the court ruled that previously submitted fees by candidates would not be refunded, except for those individuals who fall into the category of fresh candidates. Only new candidates are required to submit fees for the upcoming assessments.

Judgment Sets A Precedent Of Transparency

This landmark decision by the Balochistan High Court not only upholds the principles of justice but also sets a precedent for transparent and accountable recruitment practices within the education sector.

Balochistan Govt Formed Committee About Balach Baloch Turbat Incident: Domki

Staff Reporter:



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Ali Mardan Domki, on Wednesday said the provincial government has formed an investigation committee to probe into the Balach Baloch Turbat incident. CM Domki chaired a high-level meeting in the provincial capital to review law and order across the province.

"Genuine grievances of the participants of the Islamabad sit-in would be addressed", the Caretaker CM assured. He said the federal government has also formed an inquiry committee to probe into the incident.

Caretaker Home Minister Balochistan, Captain (R) Zubair

Ahmed Jamal, Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shaheed Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Zahid Saleem and other high-level officers attended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, the CM stated that the provincial government was committed to solving the demands of the Islamabad sit-in within the constitutional framework. "Our doors are always open for meaningful negotiations". CM Domki stated.

CM Domki called for an end to protests and said that his government was committed to addressing issues through political means.

Sardar Abdul Rehman Kheran and Son Inam Khetran Vie for PB-4 Barkhan

Syed Muhammad Qaseem, News Desk:

QUETTA: The landscape of Balochistan's political theater is set to witness a riveting clash as Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, a seasoned chieftain and former provincial minister, and his son, Sardar Inam Khetran, lock horns in the upcoming general elections for the PB-4 Barkhan Musakhail seat.

This father-son duo, once aligned under the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), now finds themselves on opposing sides, with Sardar Khetran choosing the Pakistan Muslim League (N) ticket, while his son, Sardar Inam Khetran, opts for the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Barkhan Campaign Drama: Father-Son Feud Takes Center Stage

Launching their respective campaigns in the underdeveloped district of Barkhan, situated in the remote North-Eastern reaches of Balochistan near the Punjab province, both candidates are gearing up for a battle that extends beyond party lines.

Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, a pivotal figure in the formation of BAP, made headlines



this year with his departure from the party following the return of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan from London.

The political rift has added a layer of complexity to an already charged electoral atmosphere.

On the opposing side, Sardar Inam Khetran, while engaged in a fervent election campaign, has been vocal about his discontent with his father. Previous allegations leveled against Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, particularly during protests by

Mari tribesmen in Quetta, have added a contentious element to the contest. The charges, related to the alleged involvement in the killings and abduction of Gran Naz and others, were vehemently denied by the senior Khetran and his party.

Electoral Dynamics in PB-4 Barkhan: A Complex Balancing Act with Seasoned Leaders

The dynamics of the race are further intensified with new delimitations, as Musakhail district now falls within the PB-4 Barkhan provincial assembly seat.

Potential contenders include Maulvi Sarwar Nadeem of the Jamiatul Ulema e Islam and Abdul Kareem Khetran from the National Party, adding layers of diversity to the electoral mix.

Notably, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, elected as an MPA from Barkhan in 2018, seeks to reaffirm his political influence, while also navigating the shifting alliances within the province.

As the Khetrans brace for this electoral clash, the overarching landscape of Balochistan's politics is further punctuated by the participation of eight former chief ministers, including prominent figures such as Jam Kamal Khan, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani, Sardar Saleh Bhootani, Jan Jamali, Nawab Sanauallah Zehri, and Mir Qudus Bizenjo.

The convergence of such seasoned leaders promises an election season fraught with intrigue and significance for the future political trajectory of Balochistan.

Tragedy Strikes Dukki as Masked Gunmen Fatally Attack Shopkeeper

Hussain Zarkoon:

DUKKI: In a shocking incident that unfolded on Dukki Zaman Road, the peaceful town was thrust into chaos as armed and masked motorcyclists unleashed a hail of gunfire on an unsuspecting shopkeeper. The victim, identified as Sadiq Shah, fell victim to this senseless act of violence and lost his life as a result.

Eyewitnesses recount a horrifying scene as the assailants, with faces concealed, stormed the shop with weapons drawn, leaving the community in shock and mourning. The assailants swiftly carried out their deadly mission, leaving behind a trail of panic and disbelief.

Sadiq Shah, a respected



member of the community, met his tragic end in the line of duty, as he bravely attempted to navigate the chaos.

The targeted attack has

raised concerns among residents about the safety and security of the locality, as authorities work tirelessly to apprehend the perpetrators.

Faisal Saleh Hayat quits PPP, joins PML-N

WEB DESK: In a significant political development on Wednesday, former interior minister Faisal Saleh Hayat quit the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and joined the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) ahead of the 2024 general elections. As per details, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif welcomed.

Hayat to the party as he arrived in Jhang, where a meeting was held at the residence of the former minister. Shehbaz invited Hayat to join the party during the meeting.

Following the meeting, Hayat formally announced his inclusion in the PML-N.

By the grace of Allah, I am hopeful that the inclusion of



Faisal Saleh Hayat and his group will significantly strengthen the PML-N, particularly in the dis-

tricts of Jhang and Chhmit," said Shehbaz while speaking to the media following the meeting.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Editor: Asim Khan

Quetta Gas Explosions: Urgent Calls for SSGC Accountability and Gas Load Shedding Schedule

Editorial:

The recent spate of gas-related explosions in Quetta has cast a dark shadow over the city, leaving behind shattered lives and a community grappling with grief. The incidents in Eastern Bypass, Nawan Kali, and Kuchlak have not only resulted in severe burn injuries to innocent individuals but have also exposed the pressing need for a comprehensive and immediate review of safety protocols surrounding gas infrastructure in the region.

Consumers Bore The Brunt Of SSGC Inefficiency

The most heart-wrenching episode unfolded near Quetta East Bypass Bhoos Mandi, where a house, under a gas explosion, became a tragic testament to the vulnerabilities faced by Quetta's residents. A family, comprising a husband, wife, and five children, bore the brunt of the blast, suffering severe burns that have left them fighting for their lives in the burn ward of Civil Hospital in Quetta.

The incident in Kuchlak further adds to the distressing narrative, with four individuals from the same household falling victim to another gas explosion. The fact that such incidents occurred in separate localities raises grave concerns about the overall safety standards and practices in place.

Silent Menace Of Gas Leaks Poses A Serious Threat

Quetta, it seems, has become a city under siege, besieged not by external threats but by the silent menace of gas leaks. The frequency of such incidents has not only left the community in mourning but has also prompted questions about the efficiency of safety measures and the maintenance of gas infrastructure.

It is disheartening to note that Quetta has been no stranger to gas-related tragedies in recent times. Each incident not only inflicts physical harm on the victims but also sows the seeds of fear and uncertainty within the community. Addressing the root causes of these explosions cannot be overstated, and the responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of the authorities.

SSGC Should Not Evade Accountability

The Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC), being the custodian of gas infrastructure, must not evade accountability in the face of such calamities. The lack of responsiveness from the company's head office in Karachi to inquiries from Daily Quetta Voice is both perplexing and unacceptable. In times of crisis, transparency and communication become paramount, and the SSGC must step up to address the concerns and queries of the affected community.

One of the glaring issues highlighted in the aftermath of these incidents is the need for a structured schedule of gas load shedding. The prevailing chaotic weather in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan exacerbates the situation, leading to prolonged and unannounced load shedding. The hide-and-seek of gas supply has become a dangerous game, and it is the innocent consumers who pay the price.

In this editorial, we call upon the Sui Southern Gas Company to take immediate and decisive action. The company must announce a clear schedule of gas load shedding, ensuring that consumers are aware of the timings and can plan accordingly. Moreover, there is an urgent need for the SSGC to engage in a proactive campaign to create awareness among consumers about gas safety measures.

SSGC Must Announce Schedule Of Gas Load Shedding

The safety of Quetta's residents should be non-negotiable, and the SSGC must collaborate with local authorities to conduct thorough investigations into the recent incidents. Only through a transparent and accountable approach can the root causes be identified and rectified, preventing similar tragedies in the future.

As the injured continue their arduous journey towards recovery, the entire community watches and waits for tangible actions that will guarantee the safety and well-being of Quetta residents in their homes. The Sui Southern Gas Company must rise to the occasion and prove its commitment to the safety of the people it serves. The time for decisive action is now.

Obliterating Gaza

By Mahir Ali:

It took several days of diplomatic negotiations for the Security Council to come up with a sufficiently bland Gaza resolution that the US would not feel obliged to veto. Even after it had been diluted to a meaningless plea for unspecified measures that "create the conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities" — which Israel would interpret, from the green light to persist with its genocidal military campaign — the wretched Biden administration could only bring itself to abstain. The resolution also called on all parties to "facilitate and enable the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale" to the Palestinians in Gaza — almost 90pc of whom have been displaced, pushed into ever-diminishing "safe zones" that are often promptly targeted by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). Even if by some miracle the Security Council had managed to clearly demand a ceasefire, and "it would have ignored it, as it has routinely done since 1948, without facing consequences. The protection of its American godfather is paramount. Western media outlets have lately been promoting the impression that the US is striving to persuade Israel to reduce the intensity of its onslaught. That's the equivalent of requesting a serial killer to be less indiscriminate, while supplying him with weapons to accomplish his aims. Had the US seriously wished to do so, it would have ordered the slaughter in which entire branches of Palestinian family trees are being hacked off, it could have done so by cutting off the military, diplomatic and financial supply chains crucial to sustaining Israel's capacity for

monstrosity. But don't hold your breath.

After all, it took decades, plus the relentless efforts of activists, for the US to recognise the horrors of South African apartheid (prompted up with surreptitious Israeli back-ing) and endorse sanctions against Pretoria. Going further back, the Nazi regime enjoyed the sympathy of key components of Western elites, from the British royal family to American captains of industry. Long before that, the US King of Arms Commission was dispatched to the Levant in 1919 to solicit popular opinion about territories adjacent to the Gaza Strip, the areas violated by Hamas and its associates on Oct 7 — by casting them into the wilderness. The atrocities committed in the kibbutzim cannot be denied, while acknowledging that some of the deaths and damage can be attributed to the manner in which the IDF response unfolded. The precise details may never emerge, but the century-long colonial oppression and dispossession in occupied Palestinian territories cannot be ignored in contemplating today's dire realities as the seeds of hatred are sown anew.

Benjamin Netanyahu's response to the UN resolution was to visit his troops in Gaza on Christmas Day and declare that his war would be intensified, even as Bethlehem marked the occasion with a rabble-rousing Nativity scene. Reading about a Children's Happiness Centre levelled by the IDF in its scorched earth campaign alongside hospitals, homes and schools, I was reminded of Northern Ireland, where the British soldier and fighter Bobby Sands' prison diary entry shortly before he succumbed to the privations of a hunger strike:

Publisher magazine in 1922, and continued to be disregarded when US backing for Israel went into high gear following the 1967 "pre-emptive" Israeli assault against its neighbours. A Palestine Liberation Organisation pamphlet noted that the population density "jumped in a few weeks from 208 to more than 6,000 persons per square kilometre".

Gaza's population has more than quadrupled since then, and the conditions have deteriorated. The IDF has lately been renewing the status of long-standing refugees — often from territories adjacent to the Gaza Strip, the areas violated by Hamas and its associates on Oct 7 — by casting them into the wilderness. The atrocities committed in the kibbutzim cannot be denied, while acknowledging that some of the deaths and damage can be attributed to the manner in which the IDF response unfolded. The precise details may never emerge, but the century-long colonial oppression and dispossession in occupied Palestinian territories cannot be ignored in contemplating today's dire realities as the seeds of hatred are sown anew.

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Zahid Hussain:

SIXTEEN years ago this day, Benazir Bhutto became the highest-profile victim of terrorism. The wound inflicted by the assassination of one of Pakistan's most charismatic leaders has not yet healed.

With the country facing what is perhaps the most difficult and testing time in its history, the loss of Benazir Bhutto is felt more than ever. The long shadow of despotism hanging over the country yet again. Benazir galvanised a people's way of a long period of authoritarian rule and gave voice to the dispossessed and disenfranchised masses. Even her bitter political opponents gave her credit for her courage and defiance, which many have ultimately cost her her life. The controversy over how Benazir was killed exposed the chaos of the military's usurpation of trust between the Pakistani state and its people. It is still not known who plotted her assassination.

Benazir undoubtedly had her weak points but her sincerity to the cause of democracy was beyond doubt. It was a witness to the era that marked the end of her political struggle. As a journalist, I was privileged to be with her at various stages of her political struggle.

During that period, I had numerous on- and off-the-record conversations with her, giving me

a rare insight into her political evolution. She was a fighter all the way.

She began her political career as the daughter of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto but turned out to be a leader in her own right. She had the intellectual capacity to engage with even her strongest critics, a quality rarely found in our political leaders. Her loss is more than that of a political leader. She came to symbolise the unity of an uneasy federation. Her death exacerbated political divisions and polarisation.

Benazir served twice as prime minister but both her terms were short-lived. Her first stint came just before the polls in 1988 following the death of Gen Zia in an air crash. It was apparent that she would not have been re-elected. She conceded reluctantly to the people's verdict. The handing over of power to an uneasy federation was not uncontroversial.

It was fairly obvious that the powerful generals had never reconciled with the idea of a Bhutto government. But she accepted the challenge. "I had never reconciled with 'not give up,'" she told me in her first interview as prime minister. And that is her struggle.

The generals waited for an opportune moment to strike. After just over a half year in power, the PPP government was removed in August 1990 in what was described as a constitu-

tional coup.

Benazir was implicated in a number of cases. Every effort was made to rig the elections. Against this backdrop, the 1990 election results did not come as much of a surprise. Elections have been stolen," a shocked Benazir said as the elections results were being announced on television. She was in tears.

That was darkest period for Benazir. She spent her time going from one court to another. It was, perhaps, the most testing of times for the former prime minister. Her demoralisation gripping her party. There was also a move to disqualify her from contesting the country. However, all that failed to break her determination.

Her triumphant return to power in November 1993 marked the culmination of another period of struggle. With a majority in the National Assembly and a president from her own party, she felt comfortable. She also seemed to have learnt from her past mistakes and was much more confident. She wanted to move forward and leave behind the treatment meted out to her.

There was a much better environment for her new government to function in. She was more familiar with the system of government. But the challenges were no less. Despite an ex-

remely favourable political situation, the second Benazir government started floundering midway through her term.

The fate of her fledgling government was sealed when her brother Murtaza Bhutto was killed in September 1996 at a police shootout outside his house. The tragedy shook Benazir. She believed that her brother's murder was the result of a larger conspiracy to destabilise her government.

It summarily brought to an end the three-year-long second Benazir Bhutto government. There was an elected de jure as an elected prime minister was sent back to court yet again. She was implicated once more in multiple cases and she left the country to escape persecution.

Benazir finally returned to Pakistan on Oct 18, 2007. As her period of suspension proceeded, steadily, in quick succession, two huge blasts struck her truck. Mayhem ensued, with mutilated bodies littering the street. It was the worst terrorist attack in the nation's history. Benazir survived. But the assassins pursued her. On Dec 27, 2007, a second attack on her truck in Rawalpindi succeeded. She became a victim of the same terrorism she had vowed to fight.

Pakistan is once again standing at a crossroads as it observes the 16th anniversary of her death today. It is a nation named, its very existence threatened by growing internal fissures and rising extremism. Social and cultural divides have become more pronounced, with growing economic disparity and increasing discontent in the ranks of the new underclass.

A major question before us now is whether the country can continue on a democratic path or whether it will be ruled by the forces of authoritarianism. The country needs political reconciliation. It needs another charter of democracy on the lines of the 2006 document that Benazir Bhutto signed with her father. She and another former minister Nawaz Sharif. There has to be a charter of reconciliation to take the country out of the present crisis as well as the new social contract between the state and its citizens. It needs to be a charter of rights of all nationalities in order to keep a federal system of the country united under a democratic system.

But the main question is whether such reconciliation is possible without widening the ethnic divide. The security establishment is now far more deeply entrenched in all aspects of the country's power structure, turning Pakistan into a quasi-military dictatorship.

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By Rafia Zakaria:

One of the most terrifying things about the Covid-19 pandemic was that the world was very unprepared for a global pandemic of its nature and scale.

While it is easy to scoff at such things, it bears mentioning that in the US, the National Security Council unit that oversees this sort of preparedness was disbanded by then president Donald Trump.

There was no international check point that could spur decision-makers to consider what would happen if the world suddenly had to be shut down for months on end.

In the Global South, the terror of the Covid-19 pandemic did not end even when a vaccine had been developed.

The mRNA vaccines, including Pfizer and Moderna, that led the charge were developed in the Global North where a few resource-rich governments had been funding such vaccine research for years.

Once the pandemic began and scores of people were dying in their laboratories, the US and New York, governments began to pour hundreds of millions of dollars into the exercise of speeding up vaccine development and then after that ensuring that their laboratories had the capacity to produce vaccines as fast as possible.

This was the reason

that people in the US were some of the first to receive the vaccine.

For many months, this was the status quo with no real plan of how the world would be saved.

One of the big problems was that the drug companies and governments that had funded the development of the mRNA vaccines were not particularly eager to share the data that would have allowed the same vaccine to be developed at a much cheaper cost and made available for the publics of the poorer countries.

This is why India itself a major producer of vaccines, saw the large number of casualties and became available to the ability of the vaccine in that country meant that the vast majority of the people who were able to get vaccinated against Covid-19 because the government had not been able to procure enough supplies for the population.

The consequence, which is still being felt today, is that even the creameriums could not keep up with the pace of death, is imprinted as an indelible catastrophe on the nation's psyche.

What Pakistan was relatively more fortunate in that there was never a mega surge of the same proportions, it is also

true that the country relied for quite a while on the supplies of Covid vaccines from wealthier countries.

Indeed, it was through the US that Pakistan was able to get the first Pfizer vaccine while China provided the first shipment of the (non-mRNA) vaccine. Other countries also sent vaccines to Pakistan.

The point of this is that most countries in the Global South had to rely on the goodwill of the richer countries.

Whether it is individually or through multilateral efforts, Pakistan must make it a priority to develop and publicise epidemic preparedness so that it has a better plan in place than relying on the goodwill of rich countries.

On the national level, an assessment needs to be carried out of the plans that are already in place, both in public and private institutions.

It is important to remember that some of the economic morass in which the country finds itself can be attributed to its unpredictability of closures, such as during the Covid-19 period.

Planning ahead to minimise the effects of any large-scale disease could ensure that Pakistan is better prepared and less vulnerable to a human and economic catastrophe when the next epidemic strikes.

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Remembering Benazir

By Furqan Hyder Shaikh:

PROSPERITY, development, and sustainability in Sindh are linked to the number of people casting their vote — hopefully for someone who has a vision, a plan, and an executable strategy to deal with problems. Socio-economic challenges, unfortunately, dominate the landscape, with poor education and health systems, water and food scarcity, and a dearth of livelihood opportunities.

This begs the question: is it our vote winners or our vote losers? In its scorched earth campaign alongside hospitals, homes and schools, I was reminded of Northern Ireland, where the British soldier and fighter Bobby Sands' prison diary entry shortly before he succumbed to the privations of a hunger strike:

A single vote

possess in order to ensure an effective governance once elected? The value of a vote is neither taught well, nor comprehended, with general elections scheduled for February, votes are needed to transform Sindh into a well-governed province by a qualified political leadership. Of course, it is the number of votes that decides who wins and who loses. But what criteria should be employed to assess the likelihood of a candidate in Sindh, the kind of leadership they can bring to the table, their possessions, and what constituency issues matter most to him or her? Undoubtedly, even a single vote has the po-

A single vote

tential to make a difference in the fortunes of a constituency? John F. Kennedy won the American presidential election of 1960 by the vote of a single person. Less than two-tenths of a percentage point. Democracy works only if people come out to show their concern by casting their vote. Sindh is a poverty-stricken province hit by myriad problems including the impact of climate change. If one were to think of a voting policy for Sindh, what criteria should the electorate use to make their choice? In fact, there are several elements informing well-thought-out voting choices. For instance, one could ask what sort

A single vote

of voters are influenced or made to cast their vote for a particular candidate? Sometimes, the carrot of Rs5,000 against the vote is dangled before them. If vote-seekers can 'organise' themselves to 'induce' voters to cast their ballot in their favour, why can't voters similarly prepare themselves to vote the best as those who would actually make a difference?

For prosperity in Sindh, voters from Karachi to Kashmir, Hyderabad, Sukkur, and all the parts that have to think of a 'voting policy', keeping in mind the challenges their respective constituencies face.

A single vote

possess in order to ensure an effective governance once elected? The value of a vote is neither taught well, nor comprehended, with general elections scheduled for February, votes are needed to transform Sindh into a well-governed province by a qualified political leadership. Of course, it is the number of votes that decides who wins and who loses. But what criteria should be employed to assess the likelihood of a candidate in Sindh, the kind of leadership they can bring to the table, their possessions, and what constituency issues matter most to him or her? Undoubtedly, even a single vote has the po-

tential to make a difference in the fortunes of a constituency? John F. Kennedy won the American presidential election of 1960 by the vote of a single person. Less than two-tenths of a percentage point. Democracy works only if people come out to show their concern by casting their vote. Sindh is a poverty-stricken province hit by myriad problems including the impact of climate change. If one were to think of a voting policy for Sindh, what criteria should the electorate use to make their choice? In fact, there are several elements informing well-thought-out voting choices. For instance, one could ask what sort

A single vote

of voters are influenced or made to cast their vote for a particular candidate? Sometimes, the carrot of Rs5,000 against the vote is dangled before them. If vote-seekers can 'organise' themselves to 'induce' voters to cast their ballot in their favour, why can't voters similarly prepare themselves to vote the best as those who would actually make a difference?

For prosperity in Sindh, voters from Karachi to Kashmir, Hyderabad, Sukkur, and all the parts that have to think of a 'voting policy', keeping in mind the challenges their respective constituencies face.

Punjab entering in 2024 with persistent smog

LAHORE (INP): As the New Year approaches, a thick blanket of smog continues to envelop Punjab, threatening public health and prompting experts to warn of a crisis spilling over into 2024.

national study to identify the root causes of the problem. Environmentalists lambaste the government's reliance on ad-hoc measures like road sprinkling and temporary school closures, emphasizing the urgent need for long-term planning and data-backed solutions.

Meanwhile, Dr. Imdad Ali Farooqi, a leading pulmonologist, paints a sobering picture of the health impact. He warns of visible symptoms like cough, sore throat, and eye irritation, while highlighting the invisible long-term dangers of lung damage and cancer.

bleak as experts unanimously call for decisive, long-term action. The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad proposes measures like real-time smog data, phasing out polluting fuels, promoting renewable energy, boosting electric and hybrid vehicles, improving mass transport, and raising awareness about air pollution.



TURBAT: Commissioner Makran Saeed Ahmed Umrani is presiding over the meeting regarding preparations for general elections in Makran division.

Indonesian workers protest after deadly blast at nickel plant

JAKARTA (INP): Hundreds of Indonesian workers protested Wednesday against conditions at a Chinese-funded nickel-processing plant where an explosion killed at least 18 people and injured dozens more over the weekend.

has stoked unrest over pay and working conditions. Demonstrators gave a list of 23 demands to management, according to a letter sent to police by unions representing the workers. The demands included that smelters be better maintained, health clinics be improved to deal with emergencies and Chinese workers be required to learn the Indonesian language.

"No production is worth a life!" protesters shouted through loudspeakers, video footage of the demonstration showed. Among those killed in the blast was Muhammad Taufik, a 40-year-old welder who left behind a wife and two children.

The family is grieving, he was the breadwinner," Taufik's cousin Parlin Hidayat told reporters adding that ITSS had given the family compensation worth 600 million rupiah (\$30,625) after the accident. "They hope there will be no more incidents like this in the future, let him be the last victim."

Interfaith unity celebrated on Christmas: Ashrafi acknowledges

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Muslim Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, on Wednesday, emphasized the spirit of unity and cooperation among all religious communities on the occasion of Christmas in the country.

the commitment of Pakistan as a nation that upholds the principles of the Constitution, emphasizing that everyone is bound by the rule of law. In a firm stance, Ashrafi stated, "Pakistan is a country that recognizes and respects all religions and sects. Our Constitution guarantees equal rights to all citizens, regardless of their faith."

collaborating with the Christian community, setting a remarkable example of interfaith harmony. He reiterated the importance of unity, diversity, and mutual respect in the fabric of Pakistani society. Expressing disappointment over the dissemination of misinformation, Ashrafi highlighted the Ministry of Religious Affairs' efforts in managing Hajj applications that exceeded the designated quota.

He announced the establishment of Pakistan Peace Councils nationwide. These councils would foster interfaith harmony and collaboration. He announced the establishment of Pakistan Peace Councils nationwide. These councils would foster interfaith harmony and collaboration.

He shed light on the nationwide manifestation of interfaith cohesion, exemplifying Pakistan as a country that embraces and respects all religions. He reiterated

ASISHTIYAH JANGH ANSADAN... (Arabic text block with religious and community announcements)

PRO No 1268/27-12-2023... (Official notice regarding public procurement)



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

IG NH&MP unveils initiative to reinforce road safety, well-being of commuters

ISLAMABAD (INP): Inspector General National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP), Sultan Ali Khawaja has unveiled a significant initiative approved by the Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of Communications to reinforce road safety and prioritize the well-being of commuters and their belongings.

government's commitment to curb serious violations of traffic laws, guided by the amended twelfth schedule of the National Highway Safety Ordinance 2000.

12th schedule will be increased from January 1st, 2024. Inspector General Sultan Ali Khawaja underscored that this revision was aimed to prioritize passenger safety and ensure the stringent implementation of traffic rules.

Encouraging a proactive approach, citizens are urged to adhere to traffic regulations diligently, thereby contributing to the creation of a safer and more secure journey for all.

To ensure the effective enforcement of traffic laws on the extensive network of National Highways, the NH&MP has taken proactive measures aimed to guarantee secure and safe road safety of the commuters as well as their property.

This comprehensive initiative is divided into two phases, with the first phase commencing on October 1st, 2023, on Motorways, Hazara and Swat Expressways, and specific fines were increased for cars and jeeps.

LTV drivers Rs 5000 and Public Service Vehicles (PSV) and Goods Vehicles (HTV) Rs 10,000. Overloading in cargo vehicles the fine amount will be Rs 10,000. Failure to Give Way to Emergency Vehicles Rs 5000 for all type of traffic.

Under the revised fine structure, the following penalties will be imposed for various traffic violations. Speed Limit Violations Motorcyclists Rs 1500, Cars Rs 2500, Public Service Vehicles (PSV) Rs 10,000 and Goods Vehicles, Rs 5000. Careless Driving Motorcycles, Cars and Light Transport Vehicle (LTV) Rs 1500 and for Heavy Transport Vehicle (HTV) Rs 5000.

MIRPUR (INP): In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the activists and the supporters of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Wednesday observed 16th martyrdom anniversary of former prime minister Shaheed Benazir Bhutto with due solemnity and reverence.

country. Activists of PPP, Peoples Youth Organization (PYO) and People Students Federation (PSF) from various parts of AJK, earlier led by Garhi Khuda Bukhs to participate in the march.

porters of PPP/AJK at all district and tehsil headquarters across Azad Jammu Kashmir to celebrate the death anniversary.

of BB were marked with rich tributes paid to late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and his late daughter and the party's martyred chairperson Benazir Bhutto coupled with the renewal of the pledge to continue the mission of departed leaders of the party including BB and ZAB. They also reposed full confidence in the leadership of Asif Ali Zardari.

AJK observes BB's 16th martyrdom anniversary with due solemnity and reverence:

Special gatherings of the workers and supporters of PPP/AJK at all district and tehsil headquarters across Azad Jammu Kashmir to celebrate the death anniversary.

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BEFORE THE JUDGE BENKING COURT BALOCHISTAN AT DISTRICT COURT/KACHEHRU SHARA-E-IQBOL QUETTA

Bank Alfalah Limited through Team Leader SME & Commercial, Main Branch M.A. Jinnah Road Quetta, Plaintiff versus Farrukh Ali son of Muhammad Aslam Resudent of Khokhar House, Street No. 2, Kakar Town, Sabzal Road Quetta. Cell # 030002404859

SUIT No. 72/2023... (Legal notice details regarding a suit against a defendant)

SUIT FOR RECOVERY OF RS. 265183/80 US 9 FOC THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION/RECOVERY OF FINANCES) ORDINANCE NO. XLVI OF 2001.

Notice to - The above noted defendant. WHEREAS the plaintiff has instituted a suit against you under section 9(5) of the Banking Companies Ordinance XLVI of 2001 for RS. 265183/80 balance of principal & interest/mark up/rent due to him of which copy can be obtained from this court, on or, hereby summoned to obtain leave from the court within 30 (thirty) days, from the service of this copy to appear and defend the suit, and within such time to cause an appearance to be entered for you.

Climatic disaster major challenge, research vital to tackle it: Solangi

LAHORE (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi has said that climatic disaster was among the major prevailing challenges faced by country and it can be tackled through promoting research-oriented knowledge.

This was stated by him while addressing the 4th convocation of Information Technology University (ITU) Punjab Lahore on Wednesday.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman, ITU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Adnan Noor Mian, vice chancellors (VCs) of various universities, ITU Deen Faculty of Sciences Prof. Dr. Arif Mehmood, Dean Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Dr. Yaqoob Bangash, Dean Faculty of Business and Management Sciences Dr. Sara Khawar, faculty mem-

bers and a large number of students and their parents attended the event.

Murtaza Solangi said, "We observe the negative effects of global warming and other climatic changes every day; therefore, we have to play our due role to protect the natural environment."

The minister said that Pakistan was facing challenges of economic depression, intolerance and violent behaviours also. Emphasizing the important role of students to overcome these challenges, he said that only those nations attain the uphill tasks of development and prosperity which face the challenges firmly, asserting that education was the most important tool to overcome these challenges. Pakistan could also fast progress and develop only through the acquisition and promotion of knowledge, he added.

He said humanity had been the characteristic of all religions and that very objective was of the education that people become better persons.

Solangi also stressed the need for tackling the negative propaganda, citing that unfortunately some people were spreading false and baseless news on social media to secure high ratings, which the government and patriotic people would have to fight out.

The minister said if research universities like the ITU maintain the very basis of their establishment, many of the problems would be solved automatically. In this regard, he referred to the well-known German dramatist's famous play "The Exception and the Rule". In the 4th convocation of the ITU, 524 students were awarded degrees including five with Ph.Ds and 16 with gold medals.



QUETTA: Labor leaders Haji Ramzan Achakzai, Abid Butt, Muhammad Alizai and others are meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir-Ali Mardan Khan Domki.

Important role of family physicians in primary healthcare: Governor Punjab

LAHORE (INP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman on Wednesday said that family physicians have an important role in primary healthcare.

This was stated by him while taking a delegation of Pakistan Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) led by President Tariq Mehmood Mian which called on him at Governor House Lahore.

Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that by strengthening the family medicine department, not only many diseases can be controlled, but patients' burden on hospitals can be reduced as well.

He appreciated the role of Pakistan Academy of Family Physi-

cians in strengthening the department of family medicine and also in training doctors to upgrade their professional skills and clinical knowledge. He said that special steps are being taken to promote the department family medicine in medical universities.

Governor Punjab said that the department of family medicine has been set up and made functional in Fatima Jinnah University under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Khalid Masood Gondal. He expressed hope that it would yield encouraging results. He said that the alarming increase in the rate of diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure in Pakistan is a

matter of grave concern.

He said that strengthening the family medicine and primary health sector would improve the health and well-being of patients by promoting preventive measures at the grass root level. He further stated that family physicians have rendered valuable services during earthquakes and floods, including Covid epidemic and dengue.

President PAFP, Tariq Mehmood Mian said that the aim of the Association of Family Physicians is to raise the quality of primary health care and equip family physicians with the best skills in medical practice.

Affordable credit vital for private sector to revive economy: President ICCI

ISLAMABAD (INP): President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the record high interest rate has made it very difficult for the private sector to get credit from banks for the expansion of existing businesses and make new investments due to which the business activities are suffering badly.

Addressing a meeting of business community on Wednesday, he stressed that the government should make a significant cut in the policy interest rate to provide affordable credit to the private sector that would accelerate the pace of business activities and help revive the economy.

Ahsan Zafar said that the bank advances to the private sector have declined to just Rs. 208 billion in the financial year 2023 compared to over Rs. 139 billion in the financial year 2022 due to which the GDP of the country has

contracted significantly. He said that this dangerous trend can only be reversed by providing enhanced credit at an affordable rate to the private sector.

Former President FPCCI and ICCI, Zubair Ahmed Malik said that the government has set an economic growth target of 2-3 percent, which can only be possible by providing an easy credit facility to the private sector. He said that the production of all major industries of large scale manufacturing sector including textile, paper board, iron and steel products, electrical equipment, automobiles, and furniture have shown a reduction of over 4 percent in October and if this trend continues, it would not be possible for the government to achieve its set growth target.

He said that the facilitation of the private sector is the best option for the government to improve the economic growth of the

country.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, Zafar Bakhtawari said that the World Bank has already cautioned Pakistan about the risks of reversals of critical policy reforms after the February elections due to the influence of some vested interests. He stressed that the incoming government should ensure policy consistency to improve the confidence of the private sector in making long-term business and investment plans for the country.

Former President ICCI Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, President Federation of Realtors Pakistan Sardar Tahir Mehmood, former Senior Vice President ICCI Muhammad Naveed Malik and others also spoke on the occasion and stressed that the government should promote ease of doing business to facilitate the growth of business and economic activities.



GWADAR: Deputy Commissioner Aurangzeb Badinis presiding over the meeting of District Education Group



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs the 5th meeting of the Board of Governors of Special Technology Zones Authority.

Bilawal unveils 10-point agenda as he launches campaign for upcoming elections

GARHI KHUDBAKHISH (INP): Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari revealed a comprehensive 10-point charter outlining the party's vision and commitment to addressing the nation's challenges ahead of the general elections.

Bilawal Bhutto said that the resolution to the country's issues lies in the manifesto of the people. He was addressing a large gathering held in connection with the death anniversary of his mother, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in Garhi Khuda Bakhs.

A core focus of the PPP's manifesto is the commitment to doubling the salaries of government employees within a five-year timeframe.

Bilawal emphasized the party's dedication to implementing top-notch education projects and alleviating the burden of inflation by providing free electricity to the underprivileged, with a

specific commitment of 300 units. In a strategic move towards sustainable energy, the PPP leader unveiled plans to establish green energy parks in every district, ensuring affordable electricity for all.

Bilawal expressed the party's stance that institutions like WAPDA and K-Electric are unnecessary, proposing a paradigm shift towards a more efficient healthcare system through public-private partnerships.

The PPP chairman pledged to provide housing for those affected by floods, ensuring the construction of 20 lakh houses.

Bilawal also highlighted key initiatives, including health and farmer cards, direct subsidies for small-scale farmers, and a comprehensive social security program for laborers. The introduction of

the Benazir Worker Card and a youth employment loan scheme were outlined as efforts to support workers and the younger population.

In addressing youth development, the PPP chairman announced plans to establish youth centers in every district, equipped with libraries, digital resources, and sports facilities.

Bilawal also emphasized that the PPP is unafraid of elections and is prepared to face them head-on. He urged a departure from divisive politics and stressed the importance of focusing on genuine issues that affect the people.

The PPP's competition, he declared, is not with any political party but with the pressing challenges of inflation, poverty, and unemployment. He called for a united and serious approach to tackle these issues, signaling a commitment to a progressive and prosperous Pakistan.

Promoting education top priority of govt: CM Arshad

MANSEHRA (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister, Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah has said that promotion of education is the top priority of the government for which all resources are being utilized.

Addressing a ceremony held in connection with distribution of laptops among students at Hazara University Mansehra under Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme, he said that it was need of the hour to harmonize the higher education sector with the modern requirements and to replace the traditional courses of the community with market courses, for which the

integrated efforts are inevitable.

CM Arshad Hussain said that a program was being launched for unemployed youth to send them abroad for employment and for this purpose special courses were being organized to prepare 500,000 youth keeping in view the demand of foreign markets.

He said that solid measures were being taken to help the universities of province getting rid of financial crisis in cooperation of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman HEC Dr Mukhtar Ahmed said that acquiring knowledge was first universal message

to Muslims and due to neglecting it, the Muslim Ummah was lagging in race of development and progress.

In order to join the ranks of developed countries, it was necessary for us to correct our direction and bring Pakistani youth forward in the field of higher education so that the dream of national development can be fulfilled, he added. The Chairman HEC further stated that Pakistani youths have excellent abilities and need only to provide proper guidance to young students so that they can play due role in the development of the country by utilizing their skills.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shaheed Qadir Khan is meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Pakistan-bound ship from Saudi Arabia attacked in Red Sea

RED SEA (INP): Yemen's Iran-based Houthi militia claimed responsibility for a missile attack on Tuesday on a Pakistan-bound container ship in the Red Sea and for an attempt to attack Israel with drones.

MSC Mediterranean Shipping said there were no injuries to its crew from the attack on its ship, the United VIII, en route from King Abdullah Port, Saudi Arabia to Karachi.

It said the ship had informed a nearby coalition naval warship that it had come under attack and had taken evasive manoeuvres.

Israel said separately that its aircraft had intercepted a hostile aerial target in the Red Sea area.

Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sareca in a televised address said the group had targeted the vessel, which he identified as the MSC United, after

the crew failed to respond to warnings.

He also said the Houthis had carried out a military operation targeting Eilat and other areas in Israel, which he referred to as occupied Palestine. He did not say whether any of the targets were successfully hit.

US fighter jets, a navy destroyer and other assets shot down in the Red Sea 12 drones, three anti-ship ballistic missiles, and two cruise missiles fired by the Houthis, US Central Command said. There was no damage to ships and no reported injuries. It wrote on social media platform X.

The Houthis, who control much of Yemen including the capital, have since October attacked commercial vessels in the Red Sea they say have Israeli links or are sailing to Israel, in solidarity with Palestineans in Gaza.

Britain's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Authority earlier reported two incidents of explosions in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen involving missiles and drones near a vessel. It also said there were no reported injuries. The reported incidents came a week after the United States announced a multinational maritime security initiative in the Red Sea in response to attacks on vessels by Yemen's Houthis. Several shipping lines have suspended operations through the Red Sea waterway in response to the attacks, instead taking the longer journey around Africa.

The Houthis have vowed to continue their attacks until Israel halts the conflict in Gaza, and warned that it would attack US warships if the militia group itself was targeted.