

Wisdom and Vision: Shaping Balochistan's Future in the 2024 Elections

Syed Ali Shah:



As the political landscape of Balochistan gears up for the upcoming general elections on February 8, 2024, the province finds itself at a crucial juncture, facing multifaceted challenges that demand careful consideration and thoughtful decision-making from its residents.

The list of candidates vying for leadership reflects the diverse voices and aspirations of the people, and voters must make wise and informed choices for the betterment of the province and the nation.

Maulana Fazal ur Rehman's decision to contest the elections in NA-265 comes at a time when the political dynamics in Dera Ismail Khan are undergoing significant changes, with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) gaining momentum.

The pressures and challenges in his home city have compelled the Chief of Jamiat ul Ulama e Islam (JUI) to step into the political arena, presenting a unique opportunity for voters to evaluate his vision for addressing the issues faced by the region.

Akhtar Mengal, Mehmoed Achakzai, Dr. Malik Baloch, Jam Kamal, Nawab Aslam Raisani Contesting Elections

Balochistan, with its vast and diverse population, is home to leaders with distinct political affiliations. Mehmoed Khan Achakzai of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP), Sardar

Akhtar Jan Mengal of Balochistan National Party (BNP),

Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch of National Party (NP), former Chief Ministers, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani, Jam Kamal Khan, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri, Sardar Saleh Bhootani, Khushal Khan Kakar of Pakhtunkhwa National Awami Party (PNAP), and Maulana Muhammad Khan Sherani of Jamiat ul Ulama e Islam Pakistan are among the prominent figures contesting in this crucial election.

The province, however, grapples with persistent challenges, ranging from backwardness and a sense of deprivation to issues related to education, health, and the impending threat of climate change.

The candidates must not only articulate their plans for tack-

ling these issues but also demonstrate a commitment to fostering unity and collaboration to bring about positive change.

The Elected Leaders Must Prioritize Inclusive Policies

Backwardness and a sense of deprivation have long plagued Balochistan, hindering its progress and development. The elected leaders must prioritize inclusive policies that bridge the gaps between urban and rural areas, ensuring equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

Education and health are fundamental pillars of societal development.

The candidates should present comprehensive plans for

improving the education system, ensuring access to quality healthcare, and addressing the specific needs of Balochistan's diverse population.

Looming Threat Of Climate Change Poses A Significant Threat To The Province

Furthermore, the looming threat of climate change poses a significant challenge to the province.

Leaders must advocate for sustainable policies that protect the environment, support local communities, and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on agriculture and livelihoods.

In this critical moment, voters hold the power to shape the

future of Balochistan and contribute to the progress of Pakistan as a whole.

It is incumbent upon them to carefully evaluate the candidates' platforms, assess their commitment to addressing the pressing issues, and choose leaders who can navigate the complexities of governance with vision and integrity.

The forthcoming elections provide an opportunity for Balochistan to rise above political divides and work towards a future that prioritizes the welfare of its people.

By making a wise decision at the ballot box, voters can contribute to building a stronger, more prosperous Balochistan that stands resilient in the face of challenges, united in its pursuit of progress and development.

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

Daily Quetta Voice Special Report:

Quetta: 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 Bhosa Mandi, where a house, torn apart by 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 Pose 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 efficacy 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 scars the collective psyche of the community. The urgency of 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 chilly 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 an-

nounce 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.

Qasim Sori Of PTI Submits Nomination Papers For NA 263

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: In a dramatic turn of events, Qasim Sori, the erstwhile deputy speaker of the national assembly, resurfaced on Sunday to submit his nomination papers for the crucial NA 263 Quetta constituency. A prominent member of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Mr. Sori's return to the political forefront signals a strategic move in the face of challenging circumstances.

Accompanied by members of the PTI lawyers wing and other party leaders, Mr. Sori undertook the submission of his nomination papers for NA 263. His presence, flanked by party loyalists, underscores the significance of this electoral bid.

Qasim Sori's recent return to the public eye follows a period of hiding, prompted by a nationwide crackdown against the PTI. The circumstances surrounding his re-appearance add an air of intrigue to the unfolding political landscape.

Notably, Mr. Sori is not only navigating the complexities of electoral politics but also grappling with legal concerns. He is cur-



rently wanted by the police for alleged involvement in causing damages to public and private properties on the eve of May 9.

The legal backdrop adds an extra

layer of complexity to his political journey.

As NA 263 becomes a focal point of political attention, the submission of Qasim Sori's nomi-

nation papers sets the stage for a closely watched electoral contest. Stay tuned for further developments as this high-stakes political narrative continues to unfold.

Protests In Balochistan Against Arrest Of Women In Islamabad

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA: Protest demonstrations were held in various parts of Balochistan in response to the arrest of Baloch women by Islamabad police. Balochistan National Party (BNP) Chief, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, led a demonstration in Khuzdar, demanding the immediate release of the detained women in the federal capital. Participants, including women and children, echoed the demands of the Baloch Yekjehti Committee (BYC) in Islamabad. Sardar Akhtar Mengal, addressing the protesters in Khuzdar, urged the authorities to heed their demands and release the Baloch women. The demonstrators, in solidarity with BYC, blocked the main Khuzdar Chowk. Similar protests unfolded in Awaran, Gwadar, Turbat, and other parts of Balochistan, with participants supporting the BYC's demands.

Governor Met Federal Ministers

Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar, engaged with



caretaker federal ministers, including Fawad Hassan Fawad, Murtaza Solangi, and Syed Jamal Shah, seeking intervention for the release of the Baloch women. The federal ministers assured that the government was actively investigating the incident, committing to exhaustive efforts to resolve the issue promptly. Governor Kakar's visit to the federal capital followed BNP Chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal's announcement that the Governor would meet the President and the caretaker prime minister to address the arrest of Baloch women. In a recent press conference in Quetta, Sardar Akhtar Mengal stated that the Governor would resign from his position if the government failed to secure the release of the Baloch women.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

SSGC: Why this discrimination with Balochistan ?

Editorial:

As the winter sets in, the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) comes into the limelight. Based on its track record, complaints regarding no gas pressure, and low gas pressure against the company are nothing new in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan.

Currently, Quetta, Kalat, Ziarat, Pishin, Mastung and other parts of Balochistan are under the grip of dry cold weather. However, most of the residents of these areas are deprived of a gas supply. In Quetta, the SSGC officials manage to make sure the provision of gas supply to posh and VIP areas, whereas, the poor and the marginalized neighborhoods remain deprived of the facility.

However, the situation turns from bad to worst in Ziarat, Kalat, Mastung and Pishin when it comes to the gas supply in chilly weather. Residents of these districts complain that SSGC has crossed QESCO in terms of unannounced and prolonged load shedding.

Last year BHC declares 'other charges' null and void

Consumers also complain about receiving increasing bills from the SSGC every winter. Thanks to the Balochistan High Court (BHC), which declared the company's 'other charges' in every bill a null and void last year.

Despite the court's clear instructions, the consumers have been getting high bills. A well-placed source in the company told this daily that more than 80 percent of gas meters are tampered with/ faulty. Now the question arises, meters tampered with without the knowledge of the company, or some black sheep inside the company are complicit in this regard?

SSGC has to put its own house in order

The answer is simple, the company has to put its own house in order prior to take action against the consumers stealing gas.

In this whole situation, when this daily tried to take an official version of the company. We were simply told the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the company is based in Karachi. Gas was explored from Balochistan's Sui tehsil of Dera Bugti in 1952. Industries and factories developed through the same supply over decades.

Balochistan is yet to get the position of PRO in the company. This step-motherly treatment of Balochistan must be stopped and consumers in this part of the country should be treated like consumers elsewhere.

Balochistan's Climate Crisis: Impact, Causes, and Solutions

Chandni Kakar:

Balochistan, a region of unique geological diversity and a long coastline is grappling with severe climate change challenges. This article delves into the causes and consequences of climate change in Balochistan, shedding light on its impact on agriculture, water resources, and the overall ecosystem. Additionally, it explores the global context of climate change, its implications on the region, and potential solutions to mitigate its effects. The Unique Ecosystem of Balochistan Balochistan's geological diversity, including rocky mountains and sandy plains, creates a distinct ecosystem. However, these unique features also make it vulnerable to climate change.

Deforestation and Standard Fuel:

Primary Causes Experts attribute large-scale climate change in Balochistan to deforestation, especially the cutting of juniper forests in Ziarat, and the use of

standard fuel in winter. These practices have increased carbon levels in the atmosphere and disrupted rainfall patterns.

Impact on Agriculture

Impact on Agriculture and Water Resources Climate change has negatively impacted agriculture, causing fruits and crops to suffer. Decreased rainfall and snowfall have led to a significant drop in the underground water level, affecting both farmers and the overall landscape.

Migration and Economic Consequences:

The scarcity of water and extreme heat have driven people to migrate to urban centers like Quetta in search of employment opportunities. Reduced agricultural income from fruit sales has further strained the region's economy.

Health Implications During Severe Droughts:

Past severe

droughts in Balochistan, such as the one from 1997 to 2002, resulted in widespread health issues, including diseases like Congo virus, famine, TB, malaria, and hepatitis, particularly affecting vulnerable populations, including infants and young children.

Overexploitation of Tubewells and Falling Water Levels:

Balochistan faces the challenge of over 50,000 legal and illegal tubewells extracting large quantities of groundwater daily, leading to a rapid decline in underground water levels, exacerbating the water crisis.

Global Climate Change and Balochistan's Rising Temperatures:

Provincial Secretary of Environment and Climate Change, Niaz Ahmed, emphasizes that climate change is a global problem. Balochistan is experiencing rising

temperatures, with Quetta reaching up to 41 degrees Celsius, highlighting the urgency of addressing climate change.

Pakistan's Role in the Global Climate Crisis:

While Pakistan's contribution to global climate change is minimal (less than one percent), it ranks high on the German Watch Index for countries severely affected by climate change.

Impact on Weather Systems and Melting Glaciers:

Climate change has disrupted weather patterns, affecting monsoon rains and westerlies in the region.

The rapid melting of glaciers, partly caused by a deadly heatwave, has further strained water resources.

Multiple Factors and the Way Forward:

Balochistan's cli-

mate crisis is a result of multiple factors, including infrastructure weaknesses, population growth, poverty, and political instability.

Addressing these challenges and implementing effective climate change mitigation strategies are crucial for the region's future.

Conclusion:

Balochistan's unique ecosystem and geographical characteristics have made it particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Deforestation, overexploitation of water resources, and rising temperatures are exacerbating the crisis. Recognizing the global nature of climate change and adopting effective mitigation measures are essential for safeguarding Balochistan's environment, agriculture, and overall well-being. The writer is a Balochistan-based journalist and can be contacted @kakarChand97707

Rehabilitating Nawaz

By Ahmed Bilal Mehboob:

SINCE PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan on Oct 21, the process of dispensing justice to him in the plethora of cases he became entangled in some years ago, has moved almost at the speed of light — by Pakistani standards that is. Around two months after he returned and presented himself before the courts, he was acquitted in both the Avenfield apartments case and the AlAzizia steel mill case, in which he was convicted about five years ago.

Although the process of institution of these cases against him, his conviction, disqualification as an elected public office holder and eventual imprisonment had also moved very fast — again by Pakistani standards — it had taken almost nine months to dethrone Nawaz Sharif. Is this really the end of Nawaz Sharif's legal problems?

Nawaz Sharif faced multiple legal challenges when he returned to Pakistan. He was convicted and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in the Avenfield apartments case on July 6, 2018, and was sent to prison along with his daughter Maryam Nawaz when they returned to Pakistan a week later from London where they were tending to a seriously ill Begum Kulsum Nawaz who later expired in London on Sept 11, 2018, while both her husband and daughter were serving their sentences in Rawalpindi's Adiala prison. On Sept 18, 2018, the Islamabad High Court suspended the verdict as, according to the presiding judge, Jus-

ice Athar Minallah, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) "was unable to prove a financial link between the former prime minister and the apartments in question". He was granted bail by court on Oct 26, 2019, on medical grounds when his health deteriorated. He flew to London for treatment on Nov 19, 2019.

The former prime minister was also convicted and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in the AlAzizia steel mill case on Dec 24, 2018. In another case related to Flagship Investments, he was, however, acquitted by the accountability court due to dearth of evidence. All the three references were filed by NAB in the accountability courts upon the direction of the Supreme Court which had also declared Nawaz Sharif guilty of not declaring in his statements of assets and liabilities, the receivable salary from his son's company where he was enlisted as its employee, on July 28, 2017, based on the report of a joint investigation team. The judgement, invoking Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution, disqualified Nawaz Sharif from holding a public office and he had to resign from the office of prime minister. Nawaz Sharif, on Aug 15, 2017, filed a review petition in the Supreme Court challenging his disqualification but the petition was dismissed exactly a month later.

Since Article 62(1)(f) does not specify the period of disqualification for persons found guilty under the provision, a separate five-member bench of the Supreme Court headed by chief justice Saqib

Nisar interpreted the Constitution and declared on April 13, 2018, that the disqualification under this specific article would be for life.

On Feb 21, 2018, yet another apex court bench comprising three judges and headed by the chief justice Saqib Nisar declared Nawaz Sharif ineligible to hold the position of president of his party PML-N following his disqualification to hold a public office under Article 62(1)(f).

Five years later, on June 26, 2023, parliament passed an amendment to Section 232 of the Elections Act, 2017, according to which the period of disqualification under Article 62(1)(f) was fixed at five years.

In view of the potential conflict between the amendment passed by parliament and the interpretation given earlier by the Supreme Court, a five-member bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, referred the matter on Dec 12, 2023, to the three-judge committee constituted under the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023. The committee will form a larger bench to determine once and for all the raging debate on whether aspirants disqualified under Article 62(1)(f) can contest polls in light of the amendments to Elections Act, 2017.

The yet-to-be-formed larger bench is scheduled to meet in January 2024 and it is hoped that it will decide the matter before polling day on Feb 8, 2024. It is also expected that, in the meantime, the candidates affected by the conflicting interpretation of the period of disqualification under Article 62(1)(f) will be able to file their nomi-

nation papers and these papers will be accepted subject to final adjudication by the Supreme Court.

This means that while almost all the hurdles in the way of Nawaz Sharif to contest election for public office have been successfully removed through the courts during the past two months, the question of the period of disqualification remains a sticking point. There are also some other cases like the one about illegally acquiring state gifts from the Toshakhana but the major challenges seem to have been addressed except for period of disqualification.

Some jurists argue that, by applying the amended Section 232 of the Elections Act, 2017, Nawaz Sharif's five-year period of disqualification expired in 2022 and therefore he is free to contest elections and, if elected, hold public office. According to another legal opinion, the Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 62(1)(f), which declared the period of disqualification for life, has attained the level of a constitutional provision and can, therefore, only be undone or amended through a constitutional amendment and not by ordinary law as has been done by amending Elections Act, 2017.

Thus it appears that Nawaz Sharif will have to wait until January 2024 when the Supreme Court is expected to conclusively pronounce on the period of disqualification under Article 62(1)(f) before he can be considered fully rehabilitated after a six-year-long arduous legal and political struggle.

Gender and population

By Nida Kirmani:

ACCORDING to Pakistan's 2023 census, our country's population has officially surpassed the 240 million mark — an increase of 33.8m people since the previous census in 2017. The growth rate jumped from 2.4 per cent in 2017 to 2.55pc in 2023, which is a worrying reversal of what was an otherwise downward trend.

Over two decades ago, Pakistan committed to reaching replacement-level population growth rates (2.1pc) by 2020. However, the recent census figures indicate that we are even further from reaching this goal than we were six years ago; this is a clear indication of decades of failed policies and a lack of commitment on the part of the government to reaching this goal.

If we continue at this rate, Pakistan will move from being the sixth most populous country in the world to the fifth — a race we do not want to be winning. For anyone concerned about the well-being of those living in this country, particularly the well-being of its women, this should be serious cause for concern.

Pakistan's population growth rate stands in stark contrast to other countries in our region. India's growth rate in 2023 was 1.10pc, Nepal's 1.25pc, Bangladesh 1.26pc, and Sri Lanka a mere 0.83pc.

While economically advanced countries, such as Japan and South Korea, are worrying about an aging population, for developing countries like our own, such a high growth rate is unsustainable and will inevitably lead to a host of environmental and

social problems.

One consequence that we are currently facing is the increasing youth bulge, with millions of frustrated young women and men who are unable to be absorbed into the economy.

High population growth is a symptom of poverty and a lack of human development in general. Hence, the most underdeveloped province, Balochistan, also has the highest growth rate in the country (3.2pc). Consequently, Balochistan also has the highest maternal mortality rate of any of the provinces (298 per 100,000 births), which is by far the highest in the region.

Persistent poverty is one of the major factors behind the high growth rate. Contrary to the popular belief that poor people have more children because they are ignorant, having more kids for those lacking productive assets is actually a very rational decision. The more children one has, the more people there are to contribute to the family income. If the cost of having a child outweighs the benefits in terms of income, then families are likely to have fewer children. But this is only a small part of the story.

Many women end up having more children not because they want to but simply because they do not have access to contraceptive methods or control over their health-related decision-making.

Des-pite decades of population planning and technological advances in reproductive health, according to the UNFPA, 5.5m women in Pakistan had an unmet need for contraceptives

in 2020 resulting in millions of unwanted pregnancies.

For this reason, Pakistan also has one of the highest abortion rates in the world — 50 per 1,000 pregnancies according to a study published by the Population Council in 2012. It can be assumed that this number has only increased given the current rise in the population growth rate overall.

Most of these abortions are conducted under the table by untrained providers, often resulting in the death of the mother, thus contributing to higher maternal mortality rates overall. Countless women die silently every year due to unsafe abortions.

This is a tragedy that could easily be averted if only there was political will.

High population growth rates are both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. Despite Pakistan committing to meeting SDG-5, the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, little concrete action has been taken.

In 2023, Pakistan ranked 142 out of 146 in the Global Gender Equality Index. Low rates of female education, labour force participation, early marriages, a lack of decision-making power within the household, and a lack of access to healthcare (including contraceptives) all contribute to higher birth rates.

According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2017-2018), only 7pc of currently married women of reproductive age were able to make decisions regarding their contra-

ceptive use. Rather than treating women as fully productive members of society, they are too often treated as vessels to produce more children, whether they like it or not.

Large family sizes with inadequate spacing are harmful to women's physical and mental health and hinder their full economic, social and political participation. Furthermore, discrimination against women and girls also leads to the practice of son preference; many families have more children in the hopes of producing more sons. It is a vicious cycle.

Until and unless gender equality is placed at the centre of the political agenda, and women and girls are valued for their full human potential, our population growth rates are unlikely to decrease. And until and unless the population growth rate starts to decline, the achievement of gender equality in Pakistan will remain a distant dream.

Even though it is women who bear the burden of childbearing and child-rearing, and despite the heaps of research pointing to the connection between women's empowerment and lower fertility rates, discussions of population planning, if they happen at all, rarely make any mention of women's rights. Rather, the focus is generally on 'family planning', which involves meeting blunt targets with regards to contraception.

While even this would be a welcome step given the government's poor track record over the past decades, a holistic approach focused on poverty reduction.

Back to square one again?

By Abbas Nasir:

THE caretaker government has made a hash of dealing with the Baloch protesters, led by the passionate advocate Mahrang Baloch who is emulating Sammi Baloch. It allowed the police to ride roughshod over the demonstrators who came to the federal capital to agitate against the enforced disappearance and killing of their kith and kin.

The police action ordered by the government or, perhaps more accurately, its powerful backers, underlined the irony for those who, though termed separat-

ists, still seemed to display faith in the federation and came to the capital, the seat of the federal government, to press for their political rights and freedoms.

How else would you interpret the motives of the marchers, dozens of women among them, other than as an expression of faith in the federation, despite their broken hearts at having seen the tormented bodies of their loved ones? Or worse — having no clue about their disappeared family and friends?

I know my words will add up to nought but

I still feel duty-bound to say that the guardians of our security need to look at the experience of how countries much more prosperous and powerful than us have dealt with the 'separatist' challenge.

It isn't within the scope of this piece to delve into the details of such accords but those dealing with the security challenges posed by the Baloch 'separatists' need only look into peace agreements concluded between the ETA and Spain on the one hand and the UK and IRA on the other.

Both groups waged

bloody campaigns over decades before sitting down for negotiations and agreeing to abandon violence as a means of achieving their goals. They were convinced through dialogue that armed resistance had only brought blood, gore and misery, and the cause of their political and economic rights had not been furthered.

Needless to say, it takes a visionary leadership to reach out to groups responsible for inflicting pain on the state. Even with both sides having drawn blood over and over again, it isn't always

possible to see that continuing to be caught up in the vortex of violence can deliver nothing in the end to either side.

Tragically, as we speak, the state and the separatists are both pursuing a single-dimensional strategy that has only brought pain and anguish to both. Surely, at some point they will have to sit down to negotiate, because endless violence and pain can't be a long-term goal.

The caretaker cabinet committee set up to address Baloch grievances will be able to deliver nothing because it could not even protect

the protesters from police brutality, including beatings, and water cannons deployed in freezing temperatures.

The members may be well-meaning but that's about it. It is clear that this cabinet and its 'middle-class' boy wonders have no leeway beyond being their master's voice. In any case, the caretaker cabinet is in place to ensure the conduct of elections and that is their entire mandate.

Look at the role of 'democratic' parties, which have long been in electoral politics. They seem to have been indifferent at best towards

the plight of the Baloch, in all probability out of fear of upsetting their benefactors who have promised them a 'reset to 2016' scenario.

There can be no doubt that when in power, PTI leader Imran Khan shunned any dialogue with other political parties, including those represented in parliament, and called them names ad nauseam and ordered their persecution. However, now that the shoe is on the other foot, and the PTI is at the receiving end of the state's wrath, the so-called democrats, pretty much without exception,

are looking the other way and pretending all is well. With incredibly robust backers, many of these 'democrats' must be self-assured about their prospects in next February's election, but having become a party to undermining, even demeaning, the democratic process, will they have the credibility or moral authority to bring in change?

Meaningful change that can address the concerns of the multitudes of the shirtless Pakistanis and the country's federating units and guarantee them their rights?.

Daily Quetta Voice

Promotes Views and Vision Of The Founding Father Of The Nation



BABAR KHAN
Secretary Finance

Embark on a Financial Renaissance:

Celebrate the Finance Department in Balochistan as the torchbearer of progressive change in public fund management. Marvel at the visionary leadership, orchestrating a symphony of innovative revenue enhancements and efficient expenditure reforms, orchestrating a transformative era in financial processes.



Transparency Redefined: A Tech Marvel:

Witness the Finance Department's commitment to transparency through cutting-edge initiatives like the Alternate Delivery Channel and the revolutionary e-stamping system. Behold the birth of a new era where technology not only brings online payment convenience but acts as a vigilant guardian against fake receipts, creating a crystal-clear financial landscape.

Inclusivity Unleashed:

Step into the heart of the participatory budget-making revolution! Unveil the Finance Department's dedication to inclusivity through the dissemination of budget ceilings, dynamic Citizen Budget Seminars, and the creation of engaging Citizen Budget Books. Experience firsthand the empowering impact of citizen engagement in sculpting pivotal budgetary areas.

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Witness Balochistan taking the lead in revolutionizing procurement. Explore the province's collaboration with the Federal Government to implement a state-of-the-art e-procurement and e-bidding system. Delve into a world where transparency and equal opportunities for service providers are not just ideals but the cornerstone of public procurement practices.



Milestone in Legislation:

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Public Finance Management Act, 2020, and upholding fiscal responsibility in



Technological Marvels for Fiscal Integrity:



Delve deeper into the technological wonders safeguarding fiscal integrity. Uncover how Balochistan's Finance Department employs cutting-edge tools, from the Alternate Delivery Channel to the e-stamping system, ensuring not just efficiency but a fortress against financial malpractice. Immerse yourself in a world where technology becomes the guardian of fiscal probity. People-Powered

Governance:

Experience the paradigm shift towards people-powered governance. Explore how the Finance Department's commitment to inclusivity extends beyond budgets, fostering citizen engagement through innovative approaches. Unveil the strategies that empower the public, making them active participants in the governance process, and shaping a future where everyone's voice matters.



Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Birth Anniversary Being Observed Today

Sailing Towards Prosperity:

Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Ali Mardan Domki and Secretary Fisheries Imran Gichki Chart the Course for Balochistan's Fisheries Renaissance



Mir. Imran Gichki
Secretary Fisheries



In the coastal realm of Gwadar,

where the Arabian Sea whispers tales of resilience and opportunity, Ali Mardan Domki, the visionary caretaker Chief Minister of Balochistan, stands as a beacon of leadership. Alongside him, Secretary Imran Gichki of the Fisheries & Coastal Development Department has been instrumental in orchestrating a transformative journey for the region. Together, they are at the helm of the Gwadar Lasbela Livelihood Support Project Phase 2 (GLLSP-II), a venture that promises to redefine the narrative of Balochistan's fisheries sector.

Setting Sail with Vision:

Ali Mardan Domki's Leadership Caretaker Chief Minister Ali Mardan Domki's vision transcends the political horizon, extending to the blue waters that embrace the coastal expanse of Gwadar. Recognizing the untapped potential within the fisheries sector, Domki has spearheaded initiatives that envision a future where sustainable practices harmonize with economic

Prosperity.

Under Domki's stewardship, the Fisheries Department has undergone a renaissance, shifting from tradition to innovation. His commitment to fostering a resilient and thriving fisheries sector sets the stage for a prosperous maritime future. The GLLSP-II is not merely a project; it is an embodiment of Domki's vision for a Balochistan where the sea is not just a source of livelihood but a testament to sustainable progress. Navigating Waters of

Change:

Imran Gichki's Strategic Leadership In the heart of this maritime transformation stands Secretary Imran Gichki, a strategic leader steering the Fisheries & Coastal Development Department toward a new era. Gichki's approach is rooted in the belief that effective policy formulation should reflect indigenous views, ensuring that the community's needs are at the forefront of development.



Dr. Kanwar Muhammad Javed Iqbal, FAO's Senior

Policy Specialist, highlighted the progress and future plans for GLLSP-II Outcome-2 on policy and legal frameworks. An upcoming provincial stakeholder consultation workshop in Gwadar promises to be a testament to FAO's commitment to incorporating local voices into the development agenda. Empowering the Seafarers: Fishermen of Gwadar Take Center Stage At the heart of this maritime saga are the unsung heroes of Gwadar – the fishermen. The GLLSP-II not only recognizes their crucial role but also seeks to empower them through initiatives like the Training of Trainers program for climate-resilient agriculture and livestock. Rizwan Hayat Khan, FAO's Project Manager for GLLSP-II, highlighted these initiatives, underlining the commitment to skill development and capacity building for the fishing community. Representatives

from fisherfolk, female groups, private sectors, and civil society voiced their perspectives during the inception ceremony, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts. The Fisheries Department's pivotal role in providing jobs and generating revenue was lauded, setting the stage for a harmonious partnership between the public and private sectors. Towards a Maritime Symphony: The Future Unveiled As the tides of change sweep through Gwadar, the collaboration between the visionary leadership of Ali Mardan Domki, Imran Gichki, and the support of FAO is creating a symphony of progress. Balochistan's fisheries sector, once overshadowed, is now emerging as a model for sustainable practices, economic growth, and community empowerment. Together, they are not just rewriting the **Narrative**: they are composing a new melody for Gwadar's waters – a melody of prosperity, sustainability, and a vibrant maritime future.



Tragedy Strikes Thrice in Quetta: 15 Injured in Series of Gas Explosions

Staff Reporter :

QUETTA: In a harrowing series of incidents, three separate explosions rocked different areas of Quetta, leaving a trail of devastation and 15 individuals with severe burn injuries.

The calamitous events unfolded in Eastern Bypass, Nawan Kali, and Kuchlak, shattering the lives of multiple families.

The most tragic incident occurred near Quetta East Bypass Bhosa Mandi, where a house became the epicenter of a massive explosion due to gas leakage. A husband, wife, and five innocent children bore the brunt of the blast, suffering severe burns in the process. The intensity of the explosion not only damaged the house but also sent shockwaves through the community, leaving bystanders in shock and horror.

4 Suffered Burn Injuries in Kuchlak

In another incident, four individuals from the same household were injured in a separate gas explosion, adding to the growing toll of casualties.

The blast, which occurred in Kuchlak, involved a husband and wife among the victims.

The force of the explosion left the victims with significant burn injuries, prompting emergency services to swiftly intervene.

All the injured were promptly transported to the burn ward of



Civil Hospital in Quetta, where medical professionals are tirelessly working to provide the necessary care and treatment. Among the victims, children are particularly affected, emphasizing the devastating impact of the explosions on innocent lives.

Quetta Has Been Grappling With A Series Of Gas-Related Incidents

Quetta has been grappling with a series of gas-related incidents in recent times, raising concerns about the safety of residential areas.

Past incidents have under-

scored the urgency of addressing gas leakages and implementing stringent safety measures. Authorities are now facing mounting pressure to investigate the root causes of these explosions and take proactive steps to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

The community is left mourning, and questions linger about the adequacy of safety protocols and the maintenance of gas infrastructure in the region.

As the injured continue their battle for recovery in the burn ward, the broader community awaits comprehensive actions to ensure the safety and well-being of Quetta residents in their homes.

Balochistan: Over 2,000 Nomination Papers Filed as Elections Heat Up!

Manan Mandokhail:

QUETTA: In the heart of Balochistan, the political arena is abuzz as 2,049 nomination papers pour in, signaling a monumental stride toward democratic engagement.

The National Assembly anticipates intense competition with 511 nominations for 16 seats, while the Provincial Assembly witnesses an even more spirited participation, boasting a staggering 1,387 nominations for 51 seats.

511 Candidates For 16 NA Seats, 1387 Candidates For 51 PA Seats

Election Commission Chief, Ejaz Anwar Chauhan, illuminates the democratic spirit transcending traditional boundaries, spotlighting ongoing submissions for women and minorities' reserved seats.

A commitment to diversity is evident in 17 nominations for women's reserved seats in the National Assembly and a surge in interest in the Provincial Assem-



bly with 54 submissions for women's reserved seats.

28 Minorities In The Run

Active minority participation is showcased by 28 nominations for reserved seats in the provincial assembly. Chauhan under-

scores the significance of this inclusive approach for a truly representative and vibrant democracy. With 151 nominations for reserved seats, a growing societal awareness unfolds. Balochistan braces for elections, witnessing a diverse and enthusiastic nomination process that foretells a promising democratic future.

Killa Saif Ullah Mine Emergency: PDMA Mobilizes Rescue Force for Trapped Miner

Abdul Nafi Kakar:

KILLA SAIFULLAH: In a critical turn of events, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority Balochistan (PDMA Bln) has been alerted to a mine collapse in District Killa Saif Ullah. Initial reports indicate that one miner has been successfully rescued, but another remains trapped inside the precarious mine.

Responding promptly to the urgent plea from the District Administration, the PDMA Rescue Force has been swiftly mobilized.

Acting under the direct orders of the Director-General of PDMA, the highly trained rescue force is currently en route to the incident site.

They are armed with essential rescue gear and state-of-the-art equipment crucial for the success of the mission.

The Provincial Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) at PDMA is closely and vigilantly monitoring the evolving situation.

As the nerve center of emergency management, PEOC PDMA assures the public that every resource and effort is being deployed to ensure a swift and effective rescue operation.

"We understand the gravity of the situation in District Killa Saif Ullah, and our dedicated rescue teams are working tirelessly to reach the trapped miner.

Our thoughts are with the affected individuals and their



families, and we remain committed to utilizing every available resource for a successful

outcome," stated [DG's Name], Director-General of PDMA.



HYDERABAD: Leader of PTI Rehan Khan poses for a group photo with supporters after submitting his nomination papers for the seat of Provincial Assembly.

Solid measures needed to boost foreign remittances: Chairman PIAF

LAHORE (INP): Chairman Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF), Faheemur Rehman Saigol has said that foreign remittances flows are crucial which can support the country's account balance amidst low volumes of foreign direct investment (FDI) and nominal growth of exports. In a statement issued on Sunday, he said that overseas Pakistanis living in Gulf should further be motivated to maintain an upward momentum in remittances, as they contributed more than 60 percent of the total inflows during last couple of months.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that remittances can help not only in financing the deficit in import payments but also in foreign debt repayments, suggesting the government to focus on structural reforms, which can revive Pakistan's economic growth with major focus on incentives for overseas Pakistanis workers.

He said that Pakistan has been witnessing a significant decline in workers' remittances on a year-on-year basis, however it surged by 5.34% on a month-on-month basis, reaching a total of \$2.21 billion, owing to several positive factors, including improved transparency and the implementation of stringent measures against dollar smuggling. These initiatives have helped create a more secure and regulated environment for remittance transactions. The PIAF Chairman said that remittances for Sept came in at \$2.21 billion, according to data shared by the State Bank of Pakistan. This figure, while an improvement from last month's \$2.09 billion, was significantly lower than market expectations of

\$2.4-2.5 billion. On a month-on-month basis, remittances rose by 5.3%. However, they declined by 11.24% compared to last year, when remittances stood at \$2.49 billion.

He asked the government to announce attractive package for overseas Pakistanis to enhance the volume of foreign inflows because this is the only hope which can support the country's account balance, as the remittances have started declining, showing a huge fall during last month.

If government supports overseas Pakistanis and provides them incentives, they can play a vital role in boosting Pakistan's economy through their remittances and investments for high economic growth. If the falling trend persists in the remaining months of this fiscal year, it could pose serious problems for the economic managers as the govt heavily relies on remittances, which are much higher than the country's total export proceeds. If government supports overseas Pakistanis and provides them incentives, they can play a vital role in boosting Pakistan's economy through their remittances and investments for high economic growth. If the falling trend persists in the remaining months of this fiscal year, it could pose serious problems for the economic managers as the government heavily relies on remittances, which are much higher than the country's total export proceeds. The BMP chairman observed that the development comes at a crucial time for Pakistan, which has seen its foreign exchange reserves deplete due to external debt servicing and lower inflow of dollars.

Mian Anjum Nisar appreciated the SBP, which under its home remittances promotion measures, allowed exchange companies to maintain separate foreign currency accounts for each money transfer operator. The State Bank of Pakistan and the Arab Monetary Fund have signed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate remittances from Arab countries with official channels.

The government and the SBP have been trying to stop remittances through illegal channels, which not only destabilises the exchange rate but also reduces inflows. He believes that the MoU with the AMF would help Pakistan bring most of the inflows through the banking channels. Arab countries contribute about 55 percent of the total remittances. In FY23, Pakistan received \$27.3 billion in remittances compared to \$31.2 billion in FY22, showing a shortfall of \$4.2 billion. This shortfall was a cause for concern as the country faced a default-like situation at the beginning of the current fiscal year FY24. It is believed that this \$4.2 billion was either sold in Dubai at much higher rates or sent home through illegal channels. In the first week of September, the government initiated a crackdown against illegal currency businesses and dollar smuggling, which produced positive results, and the rupee started appreciating.

However, the latest move to sign an MoU with the AMF is expected to be helpful for the country in receiving maximum remittances through official channels. Linking RAST with Buna will facilitate Pakistanis to remit money in real time.



QUETTA: PTI leader Shoaib Khan Domar is submitting nomination papers for the Seat of Provincial Assembly PB-38.

Peshawar: Tiktoker Sandal Khattak files nomination papers on women's reserved seat

PESHAWAR (INP): TikTok sensation Sandal Khattak also jumped into politics and submitted nomination papers for reserved seats for women from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Sandal did not reveal her political affiliation with the political party.

Tiktoker said she stepped forward into politics to solve problems in her native area.

"Empowering women will be my goal," Sandal said.

A transgender Sobia Khan has approached the Peshawar High Court (PHC), highlighting the issue of the non-allocation of seats for transgender individuals in elections.

Sobia Khan is running for PK-81. Sobia Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's first

transgender radio jockey, runs as an independent candidate, stressing her dedication to advocating for women's and children's rights.

While another transgender Nayab Ali has been contesting NA-47 Islamabad.

It is pertinent to note that in the 2018 elections, Maria—transgender candidate—ran independently in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, securing 536 votes and surpassing the vote counts of female candidates.

Sobia Khan, advocating for the rights of transgender, has submitted candidacy papers as an independent candidate from constituency PK-81.

The petition argued that since transgender have the right to vote, it is imperative

that they also have the right to contest elections.

She argued the importance of transgender representation in the Assembly, the petition underscores the need for reserved seats for this community, akin to the provisions made for minorities and women.

The plea sought to address the current gap in political representation and aims to ensure that the transgender community has a platform to actively participate in the democratic process.

As the issue is brought before the Peshawar High Court, it signals a potential milestone in advocating for the political rights and inclusion of transgender in electoral processes.



Bolan University of Medical And Health Sciences (BUMHS), Quetta

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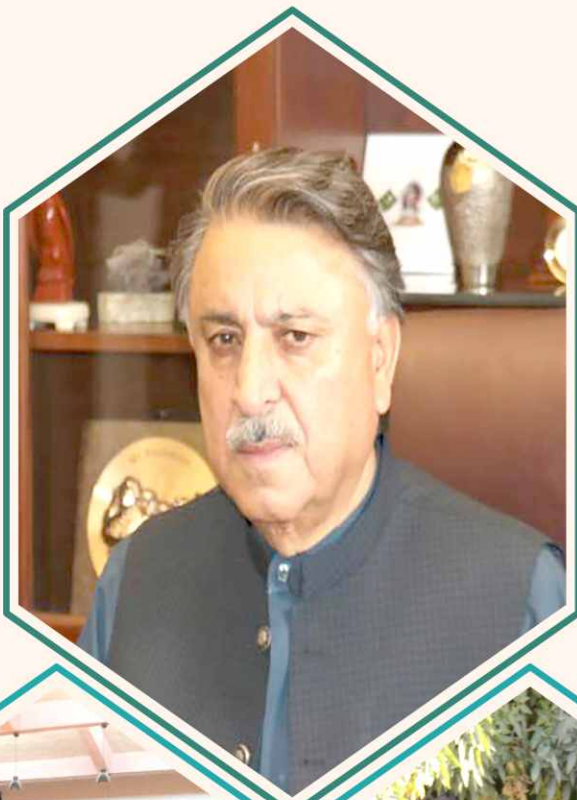
MSCAT-2023

Leading the Renaissance:

Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar and VC Dr. Shabir Lehri Transform Medical Education in Balochistan”



Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar and VC Dr. Shabir Lehri: Pioneers of Excellence in Balochistan's Medical Landscape



Under the dynamic leadership of Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Shabir Ahmed Lehri, Bolan University of Medical and Health Sciences (BUMHS) proudly emerges as the epicenter of transformative medical education in Balochistan.

MDCAT Triumph: Navigating Challenges with Visionary Guidance

In the aftermath of the MDCAT examination, Governor Kakar and VC Dr. Lehri spearheaded a meticulous post-analysis meeting, ensuring transparency, fairness, and continuous improvement. Acknowledging out-of-syllabus questions, the duo directed swift actions, guaranteeing a level playing field for all aspiring healthcare professionals.

Unprecedented Success: BUMHS Shines Amidst Challenges

While challenges were addressed, BUMHS reported flawless exam conduct, earning accolades for efficient arrangements. President PM&DC commended the proactive Vice Chancellors, laying the groundwork for a bright future. Federal Minister's Seal of Approval: Dr. Nadeem Jan Hails Excellence

Federal Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan

applauded the MDCAT examination's success and recommended futuristic approaches. His endorsement signifies the commitment to quality and transparency in medical education. **Balochistan's MDCAT Triumph: VC Lehri's Leadership in Focus**



VC Dr. Shabir Lehri revealed an impressive 98.35% attendance, emphasizing the institution's commitment to producing high-caliber healthcare professionals. With 87% scoring the highest, BUMHS sets the standard.

BUMHS Visionaries: Building a Legacy in Medical Education

Established in 2017, BUMHS, guided by Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar and VC Dr. Shabir Lehri, aspires to be a global hub for medical education. Their vision ensures adherence to international standards, making Balochistan a beacon for medical excellence.

**Conclusion:
Join the Journey to
Excellence at BUMHS**

In conclusion, Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar

and VC Dr. Shabir Lehri lead BUMHS in pioneering a renaissance in medical education. Join the journey towards excellence, where transformative leadership shapes the future of healthcare professionals in Balochistan. Discover a world-class institution committed to your success at BUMHS – Your Gateway to Medical Excellence.