

QUETTA VOICE

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Quetta Safe City Project Nears Completion: A Milestone in Ensuring Public Safety

Quetta Voice Special Report:

Quetta: In a noteworthy initiative led by the Caretaker Provincial Government under the leadership of Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardaan Khan Domki, the Quetta Safe City Project is on the brink of completion, marking a significant stride towards bolstering public safety in the capital city.

The Quetta Safe City Project, overseen by the Chief Minister's Media Cell, has reached its final stages, with more than 1400 cutting-edge IP cameras strategically placed at 255 key locations across Quetta City. This extensive surveillance system is set to play a pivotal role in enhancing security measures for the residents.

State-of-the-Art Infrastructure

According to reports from the Department of Science and Information Technology, the project boasts a state-of-the-art command and control center. This center is not only equipped with the latest technology but also houses a team of skilled human resources. Remarkably, the entire system has been locally designed, showcasing the province's commitment to self-reliance in technological advancements.



Paving the Way for Innovation

The Quetta Safe City Project is slated to be Pakistan's first operational plan that has been meticulously coordinated with various law enforcement agencies. This collaboration aims to create a customized response and immediate action mechanism, enhancing the city's overall security infrastructure.

Launch Date Revealed

Officials have confirmed that the Quetta Safe City Project has already taken its final form and is set to be officially launched at the end of this month. This long-awaited development is expected to revolutionize the approach to public safety in Quetta, providing residents with a heightened sense of security and contributing to the overall well-being of the community.

As the project enters its final phase, anticipation is building for the official unveiling, where the Quetta Safe City Project will stand as a testament to the Caretaker Provincial Government's commitment to innovation, safety, and the well-being of its citizens.

PML-N and National Party Forge Alliance, Strategize for Upcoming Elections

Dawood Ahmed:

ISLAMABAD: In a significant political development, leaders from the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) and the National Party gathered at Jati Umrah in Lahore to discuss the country's political landscape and formulate a collaborative strategy for the upcoming elections. The meeting, attended by PML-N leader Mian Nawaz Sharif, President of PML-N Mian Shehbaz Sharif, and a delegation from the National Party led by Central President Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, addressed crucial aspects of the national and provincial political scenario.

Election Strategy Takes Center Stage

The primary focus of the meeting was a comprehensive discussion of the political situation in the country and a detailed analysis of the recently held elections. Key decisions were made during the deliberations, shaping the election strategy for both the PML-N and the National Party across National and Provincial Assemblies constituencies.

Leaders Discuss Vision for Transparent Elections

Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, representing the National Party, presented his vision to the central leadership of the PML-N. He underscored the importance of ensuring a clean and transparent election process in the country.



Dr. Baloch emphasized the need to strengthen the ties between the National Party and the PML-N for the betterment of the democratic process.

Strategic Coordination Emphasized

Mian Nawaz Sharif, the leader of the PML-N, directed the leadership of the Muslim League in Balochistan to devise a strategic plan aimed at achieving favorable results in the upcoming elections. He stressed the significance of maintaining robust communication and collaboration with the

Key Attendees and Participants

The meeting witnessed the presence of prominent leaders, including National Party Central Secretary General John Muhammad Baloch, Central Senior Vice President Mir Kabir Muhammad Shahi, Central Vice President Sardar Kamal Khan Bengali, Center Mir Fahir Khan Bizenjo, NP Punjab President Ayub Malik, Muslim

League's Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, and Muslim League Balochistan President Jafar Khan Mandukhel. Also in attendance were Maryam Aurangzeb and other influential leaders from both parties.

The collaboration between the PML-N and the National Party is poised to have a significant impact on the upcoming elections, with leaders expressing their commitment to a fair and transparent electoral process.

This strategic alliance aims to strengthen the democratic foundation of the country and enhance representation for the people

'Terrorist' party cannot be allotted electoral symbol, says Maryam as PML-N finally kicks off campaign

OKARA: In an apparent reference to the PTI, PML-N Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz on Monday said a "terrorist party" could not be allotted an electoral symbol as her party kicked off its poll campaign in Okara.

After much delay, the PML-N is finally set to unveil its manifesto for the February 8 general elections. For the last two months, the party's over 30 different sub-committees have been sitting together to prepare its poll manifesto.

PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif had been perturbed by his party being labelled as the 'favourite' of the establishment, an impression he desperately wanted to dispel during the election campaign, an insider had told Dawn earlier.

Further, the delay in the launch of the polls campaign was primarily caused by the PML-N's long deliberations in ticket distribution and seat adjustment with the Itehad-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and PML-Q.

Addressing party supporters in Okara today, Maryam — without mentioning the PTI — said: "Sher [tiger] can be allotted sher, but a terrorist party cannot be allotted an election symbol like other political parties."

"You say your electoral symbol was 'bat', no, it was the danda [baton] that you had in your hand. The danda that you used against the state of Pakistan and the public," Maryam claimed.



Her remarks come just days after the PTI was stripped of its iconic electoral symbol 'bat'. After marathon hearings over the weekend, the Supreme Court had on Saturday upheld the Election Commission of Pakistan's decision to revoke the party's electoral symbol and reject its internal election just a few days before polls.

"Today, what is happening to the PTI is a result of their own actions," Maryam said of the recent "hue and cry" over the electoral symbol.

"There was a danda, not a bat, in your hands and the entire nation saw how you attacked military installations [...] now say, what is your electoral symbol? It should have been the watch that you stole or the petrol bomb that you used against the police," she claimed.

The PML-N leader asserted that the nation would not allow a political party to manipulate its internal elections and "escape without any consequences".

"It is not his fault, he was used to being a kadda [blue-eyed]," Maryam claimed, referring to Imran Khan. However, she did not take any names. **News Desk**

Balochistan's Population Growth Challenges: A Call for Comprehensive Strategies

Muhammad Asghar Harifal:

Recently, Balochistan held its 2nd Task Force meeting on population growth, a critical issue identified by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. This intervention in 2018 led to the formation of Task Forces at national and provincial levels, focusing on key areas such as legislation, financial resources, advocacy, family planning services, contraceptive security, and the support of ulema.

Effectiveness of Task Forces: The Task Forces, comprising various stakeholders, have proven to be effective tools in addressing urgent and complex issues. These bodies, meeting every three months, bring together departments like Population Welfare, Planning and Development, Health, Education, Social Welfare, Women Welfare, donor partners, and activists. This collaborative approach is crucial, considering the limited attention and funding typically allocated to social well-

being agencies in the public sector.

Lessons from China and Regional Disparities: Examining successful models like China's one-child policy, it becomes evident that population control is intertwined with economic growth. China's shift from the most populous country to the highest-growing economy highlights the correlation.

Unfortunately, the success factors in birth control models are lacking on a national scale, especially in Balochistan, where the population growth rate is 3.37% higher than the national average of 2.55%. Balochistan's Unique Challenges: Compared to other provinces, Balochistan faces similar issues but with heightened severity. The province's population growth rate is alarming, estimated to reach 24 million by 2050 if the current trend persists. Institutional crises, coupled with re-



source limitations, pose a significant hurdle to effective population management.

Institutional Effectiveness and Political Processes: The quality of political processes directly impacts institutional effectiveness.

Political appointments compromising specialization have weakened public institutions, creating a detrimental environment for addressing population-related challenges.

and public outreach.

The rise of social media offers a potential platform for disseminating information and engaging with the public, but significant public sector investment is lacking. Resource Allocation and National Finance Commission: Balochistan's discontent with the National Finance Commission's resource distribution, particularly concerning population weightage, is a point of contention. The province advocates for a formula considering factors beyond population due to its high poverty rates, vast area, low literacy, and health indicators. Population growth and its consequences remain inadequately addressed in the national narrative, despite being a critical challenge. Balochistan, with its low literacy, women exclusion, widespread poverty, scattered population, and traditional values, needs increased investment in advocacy and comprehensive strategies.

Editorial

Editor: Asim Khan

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

In the bustling city of Quetta, where the echoes of development are becoming increasingly audible, the people and business leaders of Balochistan extend a heartfelt appeal to the German Consulate in Karachi. Today, as we reflect on the dynamic friendship between Pakistan and Germany, we take a moment to express our gratitude to the German government for its sponsorship of various development projects that have notably enhanced the socio-economic conditions of our province.

Balochistan, with its vast untapped potential, stands as a reservoir of economic opportunities awaiting exploration through international partnerships. Recognizing this significant potential for collaboration, we underscore the crucial role that the German Consulate can play in promoting economic growth, facilitating trade, and attracting investments to our resource-rich region.

The spirit of our appeal lies in a call for enhanced cooperation, urging the German Consulate to initiate dialogues and engagement sessions with local entrepreneurs, industrialists, and investors. This collaborative approach promises not only to benefit the business community but also to contribute significantly to the overall economic development of Balochistan.

Our province boasts unique offerings in sectors such as minerals, agriculture, and fisheries, aligning harmoniously with Germany's interests and expertise. By actively involving the business community, the German Consulate has the opportunity to identify mutually beneficial opportunities and contribute to the prosperity of both regions.

While expressing our appreciation for the appointment of a focal person for the business community of Sindh and Balochistan, we humbly stress the importance of broad-based consultations with stakeholders in Balochistan. We believe that inclusive decision-making will undoubtedly enhance the success of such initiatives.

We are optimistic that, under its current leadership, the German Consulate will not only recognize the significance of Balochistan's economic landscape but also take proactive steps to strengthen economic ties. Our people and business leaders eagerly anticipate constructive engagement that fosters a lasting partnership between the German Consulate Karachi and our province.

Together, as equal partners, Pakistan and Germany can unlock the full potential of economic collaboration and contribute to the shared prosperity of our regions. Balochistan, with its rich tapestry of opportunities, should not be overlooked in development and key appointments. We trust that our collective vision for a brighter future for all, as reflected in this newspaper, we remain committed to facilitating this collaborative journey toward progress and prosperity.

Autism care

By Ali Burhan Mustafa:

A MOTHER, visibly upset, sought my advice regarding her son's teachers recommending his enrolment in a Special Education School. The school did not provide a formal assessment. In my report, yet they cited his difficulties with math, limited eye contact, social communication challenges, and sporadic behavioural issues, such as tantrums, as reasons. I suggested she request an official evaluation from the school, which, unfortunately, was not provided. In my experience as a psychiatrist in Pakistan, the absence of detailed school assessments is a recurring problem. In the last three years alone, I have diagnosed 329 cases of autism, and not one was accompanied by a detailed referral or report from their educational institution. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), initially identified by Leo Kanner in 1943, features social communication challenges and repetitive behaviours. Common symptoms include delayed speech, limited eye contact, interest in peers, avoidance of eye contact, selective responsiveness, and repetitive activities like hand-flapping. These traits typically surface by age three, with a higher prevalence in males. Diagnosis relies on clinical observations, and results from a combination of genetic,

environmental, and prenatal factors. In countries like Pakistan, where ASD is underreported, a lack of awareness and resources hinders care. In Pakistan, tackling mental health issues presents significant challenges. Despite some progress in healthcare, these areas are largely overlooked, with child mental health not receiving dedicated budgetary support. The country allocates only about three per cent of its national budget to health, limiting psychiatric services in teaching hospitals and private clinics. Of the approximately 550 psychiatrists in Pakistan, only a small number specialise in child psychiatry. In Pakistan, the Autism Society's estimate exceeds 350,000 children living with ASD, and this number keeps growing. Diagnosis can be harder for behaviour-based clinical assessments. There is a notable lack of understanding for planning, healthcare professionals, leading to ineffective management. Despite a study tracking approximately 0.9 per 1,000 in the developing world, with many cases in rural areas, Pakistan struggles with a significant awareness gap among both the public and medical experts. This gap results in delayed diagnoses, hindering the well-being of children with ASD.

Effective impulse management is key for those with ASD. Innovators with ASD, like Sourav Sarkar, use their unique perspectives to excel. Advocate Nidhi Goyal, also from India, champions disability rights with a focus on autism. Icons including Temple Grandin, Albert Einstein, Sir Isaac Newton, and Elon Musk — all associated with ASD — highlight the importance of early intervention in unlocking extraordinary potential. People with ASD may show increased impulsivity often due to challenges in sensory processing and executive functioning. This can significantly affect daily life and safety. For those with ASD, impulsive behaviours and emotions can be harder to control. Impulse control issues are caused by approaches to local governance. As general elections approach, the political considerations, which shape their approaches to local governance. A review of some manifestos reveals inconsistent approaches to local governance. The PML-N, while promising development and financial autonomy, focuses on party-aligned initiatives. The PTI manifesto touches upon citizen participation and local development but lacks concrete mechanisms for implementation. The PPP emphasises that rural development aligns with local governance potential, but the required details remain vague.

By Zarrar Khuhro:

WHY South Africa? Of all the 195 countries that make up this world, why was it this nation that took Israel to court for its genocide of the Palestinian people? Unlike the Muslim and Arab countries, South Africa has no real ethnic, cultural or religious affinity with Palestine and — unlike the Arab states — is located over 7,000km from Gaza. Why then did South Africa take on the Zionist state when those much closer — in all senses — to Palestine have chosen to remain silent spectators to mass murder? The answer lies in history and in the shared experience of brutalisation by a white supremacist settler regime that tried itself on apartheid and bloody repression. Israel was created in 1948, the same year that apartheid regime came into force in South Africa. This coincidence was not lost on those who recognised that their status as white settler colonies established at the expense of local populations made them brothers in arms. This unlikely alliance officially began in 1953 when Daniel Malan, the prime minister of apartheid South Africa, conducted an official tour of Israel, which marked the beginning of a very close alliance. In years to come, the alliance grew strong-

er with both apartheid and Israeli regimes, each supporting each other in repressing their respective native populations. Palestinian population was cut off from each other in much the same way as South Africa created a 'bantustan' for powerless black African statelets meant to ensure the exclusion of blacks just like the apartheid political system. The similarity was acknowledged and celebrated at the highest levels, with South African PM Hendrick Verwoerd, known as the architect of the Bantustan project, himself saying 'The Jews took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs had lived there for thousands of years. Israel, like South

By Malecha Lodhi:

WHILE engagement continues between Pakistani officials and Taliban authorities the core issue at the heart of tensions between the two countries is no where near resolution. Over the past year, relations have become increasingly strained as Pakistan's security concerns about the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), based in Afghanistan, have not elicited a meaningful response from Kabul. Pakistan's repeated public warnings to the Taliban about the consequences of TTP's cross-border attacks seemed to have little effect.

When the Taliban returned to power in August 2021, Islamabad hoped this would help Pakistan secure its western border. But this expectation was not met. Instead, there was a marked escalation in border tensions and terrorist attacks targeting Pakistan's security forces. Successive reports by the UN Security Council's Analytical Support and Sanctions

Monitoring Team found that the TTP benefited the most of all the foreign extremist groups in Afghanistan from the government in November 2022. The short-lived ceasefire was itself a misguided and futile attempt by the Pakistani authorities to end the armed group's 14-year war on Pakistan. A wave of violence followed. In one of the worst incidents of terrorism, the TTP attacked a mosque in Peshawar, killing police lives in January 2023, which claimed nearly a hundred lives and shook the country. Then too dire warnings were issued by Pakistani officials to the Taliban authorities. But to little avail.

Several rounds of talks and multiple inter-acts were held, but no outcome. In these talks Taliban leaders offered assurances about restraining the TTP but asked for time to accomplish this. They also argued that containing TTP was a question of their capacity and not commitment. But Islamabad's patience

was beginning to wear thin. A high-level delegation was dispatched to Kabul in February 2023 to convey Pakistan's red line on terror attacks from Afghan soil and secure a firm commitment from Kabul to rein in TTP and deny it the sanctuary its fighters enjoy there. In these talks, the Taliban reportedly asked for financial help, ostensibly to disarm and resettle TTP fighters, estimated to be around 5,000, away from the border with Pakistan. All this amounted to nothing especially as this was accompanied by Taliban leaders' advice that Pakistan should revive negotiations with the TTP. This in fact proved to be a turning point urging Islamabad to rethink its Afghan policy.

Against this backdrop Pakistani authorities began to shift course and adopted a tougher policy towards Kabul. Any talks with TTP were firmly rejected. A number of actions followed, designed to mount pressure on the Taliban leadership and

restrain the TTP but asked for time to accomplish this. They also argued that containing TTP was a question of their capacity and not commitment. But Islamabad's patience

Empowering local governance

By Abdullah Khalid:

As the promise of elections looms, manifests take centre stage, promising reform and progress. In our volatile context, empowering local governments is a crucial, yet often overlooked pathway towards a more responsive and resilient democracy. Despite constitutional provisions for local governance, the system remains hampered by a plethora of challenges. Over-centralisation, inadequate financial resources, weak institutional capacities and limited citizen participation have plagued this tier of government.

Though varying in detail, existing Local Government Acts share the common flaw of inadequate devolution and excessive provincial control. As general elections approach, the political considerations, which shape their approaches to local governance. A review of some manifestos reveals inconsistent approaches to local governance. The PML-N, while promising development and financial autonomy, focuses on party-aligned initiatives. The PTI manifesto touches upon citizen participation and local development but lacks concrete mechanisms for implementation. The PPP emphasises that rural development aligns with local governance potential, but the required details remain vague.

The PML-Q focuses on administrative reforms and overlooks the need for structural changes like fiscal devolution. The ANP manifesto primarily addresses Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's specific needs but merely offers insights into a broader vision for local governance. The JUI focuses on religious values and social conservatism but doesn't adequately address the systemic issues hindering local governance. The MQM's urban-centric approach highlights the need for tailored solutions for diverse local contexts but lacks comprehensiveness.

The pathway to democratic empowerment lies not in limited to genuine empowerment of local governments. This demands action on multiple fronts, particularly on the legislative side. There is a dire need for a constitutional amendment to dedicate a chapter to local government, outlining its autonomy, functions, and financial resources. Another important factor is an independent election commission. Establishing an independent body to oversee local elections, prevent manipulation, and ensure transparency is crucial and pivotal for the empowerment and accountability of local governments. Grants also need to be tied to service delivery indicators. Most experts may not be of this opinion, but by extending RTI laws to local governments, transparency and

citizen oversight can be ensured. The policy landscape presents a curious paradox. On one hand, the National Finance Commission's (NFC) Award and the 18th Amendment stand as cornerstones of devolution, transferring significant financial and administrative responsibilities to local governments.

The NFC Award, in particular, mandates a minimum of 57.5 per cent of divisible federal resources to be distributed to local governments, with a further 10pc earmarked for local governments. The 18th Amendment, for its part, devolved 26 subjects, including education, health, and sanitation, to local bodies. Despite these seemingly progressive framework, the ground reality paints a different picture. Local governments remain shackled by a lack of autonomy, resource constraints, and weak institutional capacities. Provincial governments often wield the power of veto, undermining the democratic spirit of elected local councils.

This disconnect between intent and implementation, resulting in a chasm between the needs of the people and the services delivered. While the NFC Award and 18th Amendment provided a necessary framework for empowering local governments, they are not a panacea. The devil, as they say, lies in the details. The allocation of resources often falls short

of the promised 10pc, with provincial governments diverting funds for their priorities. Additionally, the devolution of responsibilities has not been matched by commensurate transfer of financial resources and capacity-building initiatives. This has left local governments grappling with limited budgets and a shortage of skilled personnel. The local government Act 2013, similar to Punjab's 2013, mandates a minimum of 57.5 per cent of divisible federal resources to be distributed to local governments, with a further 10pc earmarked for local governments.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act 2019 commits to strengthen local autonomy and accountability. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act 2019 commits to strengthen local autonomy and accountability. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act 2019 commits to strengthen local autonomy and accountability. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act 2019 commits to strengthen local autonomy and accountability.

Local governments can be more than just service providers. They can become catalysts for progress in diverse areas such as ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance), Corporate Social Responsibility, and Disaster Risk Management. Local governments can

raise the costs of its non-cooperation on TTP.

They included the decision to deport tens of thousands of undocumented Afghans from the country and substantial change in regulations governing import trade. Imposition of a ban on many import items from Pakistan (which led to thousands of stranded containers that were prevented from going to Afghanistan.) Islamabad also intensified public criticism of Kabul, accusing it of harbouring Pakistan's enemies. All this showed that Islamabad was prepared to deploy several levers to pressure the Taliban.

In response, Kabul indicated its keenness to mend ties with Islamabad while urging it to desist from its anti-terrorism and desist from forcing it to take actions under pressure. The recent visit of an Afghan delegation to Pakistan marked an effort to engage on issues of priority for both sides at a time when a regular meeting of the joint coordination committee was also due.

Against this backdrop Pakistani authorities began to shift course and adopted a tougher policy towards Kabul. Any talks with TTP were firmly rejected. A number of actions followed, designed to mount pressure on the Taliban leadership and

promote environmental sustainability through waste management, renewable energy projects, and green infrastructure development. Additionally, they can champion community-based initiatives like women's empowerment, youth development, and minority inclusion. Local governments can foster partnerships with businesses and civil society organisations to address pressing issues like poverty, illiteracy, and healthcare access.

This can create a collaborative ecosystem for social good and shared responsibility. Local governments can also be pivotal in disaster preparedness and response, leading community-based initiatives for early warning systems, evacuation plans, and post-disaster rebuilding efforts. Pakistan's political manifestos must transcend rhetoric and translate into genuine commitment to local government empowerment.

A comprehensive vision is needed, encompassing legislative reforms, capacity building, financial independence, and citizen participation. Only then can local governments become the engines of development, democracy, and social justice Pakistan desperately needs.

The upcoming elections present a critical opportunity for parties to break free from political expediency and embrace a transformative vision for local governance. The future of Pakistan's democracy hangs in the balance.

Southern promises

Africa, is an apartheid state. And while Israel would loudly condemn apartheid on international platforms, the apartheid regime was cut off from each other in much the same way as South Africa created a 'bantustan' for powerless black African statelets meant to ensure the exclusion of blacks just like the apartheid political system. The similarity was acknowledged and celebrated at the highest levels, with South African PM Hendrick Verwoerd, known as the architect of the Bantustan project, himself saying 'The Jews took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs had lived there for thousands of years. Israel, like South

propaganda and psychological warfare' as part of a well-funded bilateral campaign to rehabilitate South Africa's international image. But every action has a reaction, and as Israel cosied up to apartheid South Africa, the powerful Palestine Liberation Organisation deepened its ties with Nelson Mandela. F.W. de Klerk abandoned the nuclear programme in an effort to rehabilitate South Africa's global image. Speaking of image, Israel often ran interference for South Africa in an effort to neutralise the ally from foreign pressure, setting up a 'Joint Secretariat for Political and Psychological Warfare' in 1975 to conduct

remained a lifelong supporter of the Palestinian cause and famously remarked that 'Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.' It was no empty slogan, throughout his tenure as ANC secretary, he referred to the moral and material support, help and solidarity that the ANC and the Palestinian populations, historically extended to the freedom struggle of black South Africa. As a result, the powerful Israeli lobby sp-a-red no effort when it came to demonising Mandela and the ANC. With the Israeli-backed anti-Defamation League condemning the ANC as 'totalitarian, anti-human, anti-democratic, anti-Israel and anti-American.' Israel's greatest ally and partner in crime, the US, played a malign role in this strategic alliance, evidence indicating that the CIA played a part in tracking Mandela's movements for parties that information to the apartheid regime, leading to his 27-year-long incarceration. Mandela himself remained on the USA's terrorist watchlist till 2008. Today, we see the same pattern, with the sons and daughters of those who struggled against oppression and injustice in South Africa seeking to free their Palestinian brothers and sisters from the shackles of a murderous regime.

North Korea says it test-fired hypersonic missile

PYONGYANG (INP): North Korea said Monday it had successfully test-fired a new ballistic missile tipped with a hypersonic manoeuvrable warhead, the latest breakthrough in its pursuit of advanced weaponry to threaten South Korea and US targets.

The launch, Pyongyang's first known weapons test this year and its first ever test of a solid-fuel hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), was detected by Seoul's military Sunday afternoon. A short report in the official Korean Central News Agency said that the solid-fuel IRBM was "loaded with a hypersonic manoeuvrable controlled warhead".

The test was meant to verify "the gliding and manoeuvring characteristics" of the warhead and the "reliability of newly developed multi-stage high-thrust solid-fuel engines", KCNA said.

KCNA said that Sunday's launch "never affected the security of any neighbouring country and had nothing to do with the regional situation".

But it came just days after Pyongyang staged live-fire exercises near the country's tense maritime border with South Korea, which prompted counter-exercises and evacuation orders for some South Korean border islands. It also comes after Kim last week branded Southis

"principal enemy" and warned he would not hesitate to annihilate South Korea, as he toured major weapons factories.

Seoul's defence ministry condemned the launch, saying it would carry out an "overwhelming response" if North Korea conducted "a direct provocation" against the South. "This behaviour by North Korea is a clear provocation that violates UN Security Council resolutions banning the use of ballistic missile technology, and we issue a stern warning and strongly urge it to stop immediately," it added in a statement. Solid-fuel missiles are easier to hide and quicker to fire, and hypersonic

missiles typically allow the user to manoeuvre them in flight to better hit targets. Both technologies have long been on Kim's list of objectives. "North Korea appears to be pursuing the development of hypersonic missiles and IRBMs using solid-fuel rocket boosters at the same time," said Chang Young-keun, a missile expert at the Korea Research Institute for National Strategy. "Mid-to-long-range hypersonic missiles will be particularly useful in striking Guam while evading the US missile defence system," he added. North Korea's last missile test was of a Hwasong-18 solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on December 18.



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Aviation, Air Marshal (ret'd) Farhat Hussain Khan meets with Ambassador of Iraq in Pakistan Hamid Abbas Lafta to discuss issues of mutual interest at Embassy of Iraq.

Real Madrid defeat Barcelona by 4-1 with Vinicius' first-half hat-trick

RIYADH (INP): Real Madrid defeated Barcelona in Spanish Super Cup played in Saudi Arabia with thumping 4-1 win after Cristiano Ronaldo struck a first-half hat-trick.

R o b e r t Lewandowski scored for Barcelona, who had defender Ronald Araujo sent off in the second half on what coach Xavi Hernandez described as the team's "worst" night.

Rodrygo rounded off Real Madrid's rout as they won the competition for the 12th time, avenging last year's final defeat by record 14-time winners Barcelona.

"(V i n i c i u s) needed two or three games to get back to his best level, and he's back to it," said Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti.

The Italian has now gone level with Zinedine Zidane on 11 trophies won at the helm of Los Blancos, behind only Miguel Munoz on 14.

"I'm happy, but now we've got to go for the 12th," Ancelotti told Real Madrid TV. Spanish champions Barcelona were

hoping a victory could kick-start their season, as it did last year, but were left soundly beaten after Vinicius netted two early goals.

"(I'm) disappointed, sad... this is football and today we have to deal with the bitter side of the game," Xavi told Movistar.

"We had a lot of hope and excitement going into the final and we've had our worst game of all of them," Xavi turned to a four-man midfield to try and keep the ball to reduce Madrid's opportunities to counter-attack with flying wingers Vinicius and Rodrygo — it didn't work.

Spain international Pedri started in place of winger Raphinha, who suffered a hamstring injury in the semi-final win over Osasuna.

Ancelotti brought in midfielder Toni Kroos, who like in the thrilling semi-final derby win over Atletico Madrid, was jeered by spectators at the Al-Awwal Park stadium in Riyadh, for criticising players moving to the Saudi league from Europe.

One of the first

was Cristiano Ronaldo and Vinicius' celebration brought him to mind after opening the scoring in the seventh minute.

The Brazilian, recently back after injury, was sent through by a perfect pass by Jude Bellingham and he slickly rounded Inaki Pena before slotting home.

Vinicius imitated Ronaldo's classic jump and spin celebration in homage to Madrid's all-time top goalscorer.

Three minutes later, Vinicius pounced again, this time set up by Rodrygo who exploited Barcelona's high line and cut the ball across for his compatriot to slide in.

Xavi's side scrambled furiously for a response and Ferran Torres hit the crossbar before Andriy Lunin tipped Lewandowski's follow-up over.

The Ukrainian goalkeeper could do nothing, however, to keep Lewandowski's vicious volley out in the 33rd minute, hammered in hard and low from the edge of the box. However, instead of fighting back, Araujo swiftly gifted

Vinicius a chance to complete his hat-trick from the penalty spot by tugging back the forward in the box.

Vinicius drilled his penalty into the bottom left corner for his first Clasico hat-trick to double his goal tally against Barcelona — he had previously scored only three in 15 games.

Xavi rolled the dice in the second half with an attacking lineup substitution but Madrid soon had their fourth.

Araujo completed a dismal night by earning a red card as he hucked Vinicius in frustration.

Rodrygo was in the right place at the right time to convert after Jules Kounde blocked a Vinicius cut-back searching for Bellingham.

Kounde cleared a low effort from England international Bellingham off the line as Madrid sought another to rub salt in their rivals' wounds late on.

"We need to reset ourselves and fight for the three trophies we have left," added Xavi. "Football is a game of errors and we did not minimise ours of fighting back, and we maximised Madrid's strengths."



QUETTA: Traders along with hotel and restaurant hold protest outside Sui Gas office against extra charges in Sui Gas bill.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar is presiding over the review meeting of Balochistan Sports Board

Business community calls for maximum cooperation with China in agriculture sector

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan can strengthen agricultural and food cooperation with China to maximize its export contribution. These collaborations can focus on niche products, partner on climate-resilient crops and drought-resistant technology, agrirourism, private FPCO collaboration, which will deepen ties, diversify exports, and ensure long-term food security for both nations.

This was stated by Rafique Suleman, Convener FPCO Rice Export Committee 2022-2023 and Ex Chairman, Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan.

In an exclusive interview with Gwadar Pro recently, Rafique Suleman pointed out that China and Pakistan boast of strong cooperation in agriculture and food, focusing on technology transfer, joint ventures, market access, knowledge sharing, which has helped strengthen Pakistan's agricultural and food capacity and expand its exports.

The agriculture and food exports in Pakistan jumped by 64 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24). Commenting on the surge in Pakistan's food exports including rice, Rafique Suleman lauded the outstanding performance of rice exports in the first half of this year, making it one of the top earners of the country.

He explained that long grain basmati and non-basmati rice of Pakistan is highly preferred by rice buying countries.

Further, the prices in Pakistan are cost effective compared to other competitors.

Rafique Suleman added that by ensuring long-term soil health and resource management, investing in quality, technology, and marketing to stay ahead, Pakistan can maximize its potential, achieve sustainable export growth and solidify its position as a major rice exporter.

Pakistan's rice and other agricultural exports to China are also promising, as China is a major food importer and offers great opportunity for diversified exports beyond rice, noted him.

He pointed out several agricultural and food products hold promising export potential for Pakistan besides rice.

Al-Shifa Trust committed to combat diseases leading to blindness: Rehmat Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Al-Shifa Trust, Major General (Retd) Rehmat Khan has said that the Trust was committed to extend its reach to the nation's outlying regions to combat the rising prevalence of eye diseases, many of which lead to irreversible blindness. During a media briefing here on Monday, he said that in the past year, the Trust has set up 500 camps in remote areas of the nation, a thirty per cent rise over the same period the year before.

Major General (Retd) Rehmat Khan said there had been 400 general eye screening camps, 40 school screening camps, and 55 surgical eye camps all over Pakistan during the outgoing year.

The primary sponsors of these camps included Qatar Charity, OGDCL, PPL, AFPA, and the Pakistan Army, while the Rupani Foundation has also funded two eye camps, he added.

The President Al-Shifa Trust said that the trust was conducting the largest outreach programme in the country, reaching out to the far-flung regions of Gwadar and Fanni as well as the impoverished districts of Gilgit-Baltistan.

He said that over a year, 550,000 patients were treated in these camps, and thousands of the poor had their vision restored. A sizable number of these patients lacked the means to reach a hospital for treatment, he added.

Rehmat Khan noted that the Army's cooperation with the trust was highly commendable; in numerous regions of South and North Waziristan, they established food and lodging facilities and provided other essentials, enabling the locals to receive general eye care and surgical facilities.

He stressed that the trust was dedicated to battling blindness even though establishing surgical eye camps in certain rural places was a tough job due to a range of issues.

Major General (Retd) Rehmat Khan informed that more than 125,000 schoolchildren had their eyes screened for various eye conditions, and 6,000 of them received free glasses and that we consider a thirty per cent rise in the number of eye camps a great success.



QUETTA: Major General (Retd) Rehmat Khan is addressing a meeting of the Executive Engineer (E) of the GWP&H Department, District, Quetta.

ECP says 'no' to postponement of general elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday expressed its inability to accept the Senate resolution seeking postponement of February 08 general elections.

The election commission in a letter to the Senate Secretariat wrote that the electoral body would not put off general house resolution in a session.

"The ECP had fixed Feb 08 date for polling after consultation with the President," letter read. "Caretaker governments have been issued instructions to ensure law and order," ECP said.

"The election commission has completed all preparations for holding general elections," according to the letter.

"General elections as well as local council elections used to happen in the past in winter. The ECP has also assured the Supreme Court of holding elections on Feb 08," letter read.

"It will be inappropriate for election commission to put off general elections at this stage".

Earlier today, Senator Dilawar Khan in a letter addressed to Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani pointed out instructions to the election commission over the house's resolution passed on January 05, seeking postponement of the election. "As the

custodian of the house, you must ensure to seek compliance of the resolution and postponement of Feb 08 elections," the letter further read.

It is mentioned here that another resolution seeking delay in the February 08 polls were moved in the Senate on last Sunday.

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NOTICE

It has come to our attention that multiple projects under various contractor's purview remain incomplete, despite repeated notices. This is a formal warning notice to emphasize the necessity of immediate action to fulfill contractual obligations. Non-compliance within 07 days will result in legal consequences, potential contract termination.

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| S.R. Name of Work | Contractor Company Name |
| 1. POLICE LINE HARNAL | M/S. MUHAMMAD NAZIR & DROTHERS GOVT |
| DPO OFFICE/REGIDENCE | CONTRACTOR |
| FSPNO.3847 (22015.0820) | M/S. HAJI ABDUL LAQ |
| 2. COURT OF DISTRICT | GOVT CONTRACTOR |
| ACCOUNTS OFFICES | |
| RESIDENCES IN DIST. HARNAL | |

Executive Engineer (B)
CWP&H Department/District,
Harnal

China's reopening border reflection of Pakistan's good economy: Experts

ISLAMABAD (INP): China's reopening its border reflection of Pakistan's good economy.

Looking back on the past year, one of the good things for Pakistan's economy was that China reopened its border, which is good not only for Pakistan's economy, but also for the global economy.

This was stated by Dr. Abid Qayyum Suleri, executive director of Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan and member of the Pakistan Climate Change Council said in an exclusive interview with China Economic Net (CEN).

"Take Pakistan as an example, as a close trade partner of China, Pakistan was able to increase its exports to China", he added.

In the 1st half of FY 2023-24 (July-December), Pakistan's exports to China surged by 66%, reaching US\$ 54.58 billion, attesting to the tremendous potential of China as the sec-

ond largest consumer market in the world.

"I'm quite optimistic about China's economy. The way it handles the risks in real estate has shown resilience. And the demand is there.

As the Chinese economy is taking up, Pakistan, as with many other countries that are economically interrelated with China, would be able to get the benefit of it", Dr. Abid Qayyum Suleri told CEN.

In his opinion, technological advancement, innovation, and the booming service sector are driving China's economy and shaping its bright prospects.

"If we look at the electric vehicles, Chinese automakers have been able to supply more energy vehicles than Tesla", he exemplified, adding that Pakistan can benefit from China's renewable energy experience, by setting up joint ventures for example, to transition from a traditional economy to a climate-friendly and green

economy. "For long, it was seen that going green would have a negative impact on growth. That hypothesis is no longer valid. Now, countries, aware that the cost of protection is high, have to go green", he observed.

"But the cost of transition is high. So at the multilateral level, we should keep talking about climate justice and the historical responsibility of advanced economies", he suggested. At the bilateral level, he said Pakistan needs to strengthen its technological and financial cooperation with China to benefit from China's experience in areas like climate-smart agriculture, digital technologies, big data and other smart practices. "By harmonizing standards on both sides, crossing language barriers, facilitating government operations, promoting business-to-business context and people-to-people relationship, bilateral exchanges can be further promoted", he added.



QUETTA: Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) President Shahzain Bugti addressing a press conference.

'Mohsin Speed' at its peak as CM Naqvi visits six projects in six hours

LAHORE (INP): Despite severe cold and fog, Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi is showing no sign of tiredness as he, accompanied by provincial ministers, visited the sites of six projects in Lahore last night in only six hours.

The CM went to see the work underway at the sites of Shahdara flyover project, Imamia Colony flyover project, Controlled Access Corridor Bund Road project, Mayo Hospital upgradation project and Bibi Pak Daman's renovation and expansion project.

He also went to Qurban Lines to review progress on the construction of apartments for the police personnel.

Later talking to the media at the site of Bund Road project, the chief minister said that the construction and repair of roads around Shahdara Chowk was 100 percent complete.

He, along with his cabinet members, viewed the beautification work underway in and around the chowk and the Shahdara flyover.

He was pleased to find that the construction of the flyover was complete, and applauded the masons and contractors for working round the clock.

He informed that the Bund Road project needed two years for its completion, and that it was difficult to complete it only in 120 days.

"However, teams of the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) and Planning & Development and other departments are working 24/7 to complete it at the earliest", he added.

He informed that on his instructions, Provincial Minister Azfar Ali Nasir had moved to a container at the site of the project so that he could keep an eye on

the work. "Similarly, another Provincial Minister Bilal Afzal is monitoring the progress on the Gujranwala Expressway and SL-III," he said, and expressed the hope that construction of the expressway would be completed before the deadline.

He told newsmen that the Sahiwal Bridge had been built, while work was underway on Abdullah Pur Bridge in Faisalabad and Shujaabad Bridge.

"Upgradation of the Lahore Zoo and Safari Zoo will soon be completed," he said, adding, "The Punjab government has made an effort to complete development schemes at the earliest, without creating any inconvenience for the people."

Not only that, the CM added, he had assigned every minister in his cabinet the duty to monitor work on the upgradation of hospitals. "The upgradation of 100 hospitals will be completed by January 31," the chief minister said.

By the grace of The Almighty Allah, the chief minister said, these projects are less costly, and the government had managed to save a lot of money.

He prayed to The Almighty Allah to give the next government the determination to serve the masses and provide them maximum relief.

He said not only model police stations would be built in Lahore but also in other cities of Punjab.

He said that the Imamia Colony flyover project would be inaugurated at the end of January.

The CM said that the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman would be opened for devotees in the next few days.

The CM said he had a lot of respect for the former Punjab chief minister Shehbaz Sharif, and he was no match for the 'Shehbaz Speed'. "Shehbaz remained the province's chief minister for 10 years. He is ahead of me in terms of the number of projects he launched and the speed at which these were completed," he concluded.

The chief minister also visited Mayo Hospital's Emergency Ward and reviewed progress on its upgradation.

He went to the ground, first and second floors of the building and checked the quality of tiles.

He also visited the hospital's operation theaters.

The secretary briefed the CM and members of his team on the project.

The chief minister made it clear to the contractor that there would be no compromise on the quality of the work, adding, "The upgraded portion of the Mayo Hospital would be opened for patients within seven days."

CM Naqvi also visited Qurban Lines and inspected the construction of apartments for the police personnel there.

He expressed the hope that the construction of these apartments would be completed in a few days. He went round different portions of the apartments such as rooms, washrooms and kitchens. The chief minister also checked the quality of material being used in the construction of building.



QUETTA: Secretary for Minority Affairs Mohammad Dawood Bazai, is meeting Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Mohammad Khan Jozgizi.



QUETTA: IG Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh is meeting Provincial Election Commissioner Balochistan Ejaz Anwar Chauhan.

Senator Dilawar Khan writes to Senate chairman for polls delay

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Dilawar Khan, head of Independent Parliamentary Group, has expressed concern that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has so far taken no step to postpone the general elections scheduled to be held on February 8, 2024 as demanded by the upper House of the parliament through its resolution dated January 5, 2024, it emerged on Monday.

In a letter to the Senate chairman, Dilawar has stressed the need for address-

ing the concerns raised in the resolution.

He has further said it appears that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) by not addressing these concerns is in a mood to make a compromise on holding free and fair elections.

"It must be ensured that the elections are postponed," reads the letter.

On Friday, a fresh resolution was submitted to the Senate Secretariat, seeking a three-month delay in the polls.

Prior to that, on January 5, a thinly attended session of the Senate had become the talk of the town after it passed a resolution, seeking the postponement of the elections over security and bad weather concerns.

The resolution, which was not initially scheduled for discussion, was introduced by Senator Dilawar Khan, and received support primarily from the senators belonging to Balochistan Awami Party (BAP).

Despite immense pressure stand firm with Imran Khan: Asad Qaiser

SWABI (INP): In a resolute statement during a corner meeting in his constituency, Asad Qaiser, the leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Speaker of the National Assembly, revealed that he faced considerable pressure to leave the party.

However, Qaiser asserted that the unwavering respect shown to him by Imran Khan has compelled him to stay loyal, stating, "I received attractive offers and encountered immense pressure to depart from PTI, but as a Swabi Pakhtun, I cannot abandon Imran Khan. I live and die with him."

Addressing the crowd, Qaiser emphasized the power of the vote and the importance of decisions resting with the people. He stressed that the ultimate verdict would be made through the democratic process of voting, reaffirming his

commitment to the party and its leader.

In the backdrop of political developments, the Election Commission has allocated various symbols to key PTI candidates for the upcoming elections. Notable symbols include a 'wheelchair' for Imran Khan, a 'racket' for Salman Akram Raja, and a 'cricket stump' for Mian Azhar from NA-129.

Other symbols assigned include a 'bottle' for Shahryar Afridi, a 'piala' for Shandana Gulzar, and a 'chamta' for Mehr Banu Qureshi. Shaukat Yousofzai received the symbol of a 'racket', Zain Qureshi got 'shoes', and Dr. Riaz Long obtained the 'rocket' symbol. Additionally, various candidates were assigned symbols such as 'dice', 'letterbox', and 'fridge'.

The Election Commission also disclosed symbols for PTI candidates in specific constituencies, with Meher Riaz Fatima from NA-107 receiving a 'chair', Ashfa Riaz Fatima and Syeda Sonia Ali Raza Shah from PP-123 and PP-124 respectively being allotted the 'bowl' symbol. Azhar Siddique from NA-122 secured the 'medal', Latif Khosa received the 'alphabet (K)', and Afzal Azim Pabat was assigned 'radio' from NA-123. Sardar Azimullah from NA-124 obtained 'ghari', while Zameer Ahmed received the symbol of a 'dolphin', and Jameel Asghar Bhatti from NA-125 got the symbol of 'dhool'.

As Pakistan gears up for the upcoming elections, these developments underscore the significance of party loyalty, individual choices, and the diverse symbols that will represent candidates in their electoral campaigns.



QUETTA: Former Provincial Minister and candidate of PB 37 Nawab Muhammad Khan Shahwani addressing a press conference.

'Thank you very much': PTI withdraws SC petition for level playing field

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has withdrawn its petition from the Supreme Court (SC) seeking a level playing field in the upcoming general elections.

As the hearing of the PTI's appeal began in the Supreme Court on Monday, Counsel Latif Khosa said the party would like to go to the people's court for the survival of democracy. "We want to go to the court of 250 million people," he asserted, and told the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP): "Thank you very much." CJP Qazi Faez Isa asked: "Do you want to pursue the case or not?"

Khosa replied that he had been instructed to withdraw the application. "We came to you for a level playing field for

fair and transparent elections," he remarked, adding that people had been allotted symbols like glass, bowl etc. "We have been humiliated," the lawyer said.

In response, CJP Isa said whether they wanted to accept the court's decision or not was their choice, adding that the judges should not be blamed for the court's verdict.

CJP Qazi Faez Isa asked: "Do you want to pursue the case or not?"

The PTI lawyer replied that he had been instructed to withdraw the application. "We came to you for a level playing field for

"We have been humiliated," the lawyer said, adding ECP can only take back the electoral symbol of the party, but here, a political party is being kept out from Parliamentary politics.

In response, CJP Isa said whether they wanted to accept the court's decision or not was their choice, adding that the judges should not be blamed for the court's verdict.

CJP Qazi Faez Isa asked: "Do you want to pursue the case or not?"

The PTI lawyer replied that he had been instructed to withdraw the application. "We came to you for a level playing field for

A decision has been already given in the level playing field case, the court can give orders but cannot act as government, CJP Isa told Khosa.