

QUETTA VOICE

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Rising Polio Cases in Balochistan: A Call for Urgent Action and Accountability

Syed Ali Shah Analysis:

The resurgence of polio in Balochistan, with the latest case reported from Killa Abdullah district, is a critical wake-up call for both policymakers and the public.

Historically, Balochistan has been a hotspot for polio, particularly in the districts of Killa Abdullah, Quetta, Pishin, and Chaman.

The recurrence of cases in these areas points to systemic failures within government departments tasked with eradicating the virus.

It also reflects the inefficacy of international donors' efforts, which, despite their good intentions, have not produced the desired outcomes.

A significant part of the problem lies in the outdated strategies still being employed. It's clear that these old methods are no longer effective. What is needed is a fresh, indigenous strategy tailored to the unique challenges of Balochistan.

This strategy should focus on innovative and context-specific solutions rather than relying on the same approaches that have repeatedly failed.

EOC Position Must Be On Merit

The dedication of polio volunteers, police, levies, and frontier corps personnel, who have sacrificed their lives to protect children from the virus, is commendable. Their commitment underscores the importance of having equally dedicated leadership.

This role is vital in coordinating and leading polio eradication efforts, and its vacancy at such a crucial time is unacceptable.

The EOC Chief's position must be filled immediately with a competent and dedicated individual.

This is not the time for nepotism or favoritism; the



lives of thousands of children are at stake. The appointment should be based on merit and commitment to the cause, not on political connections or personal favoritism.

Moreover, there needs to be greater accountability and transparency within the government departments responsible for health.

The failure to address the resurgence of polio effectively suggests a lack of proper oversight and management. International donors and local authorities must work together more

cohesively, ensuring that funds are utilized effectively and that there is a clear strategy in place.

Polio A Matter Of National Importance

Polio eradication is not just a health issue; it is a matter of national importance.

The resurgence of this virus in Balochistan threatens to undermine years of progress and poses a significant risk to the broader region. It is imperative that immediate, decisive action is taken to address this alarming

situation. In conclusion, the resurgence of polio cases in Balochistan are a stark reminder of the ongoing challenges in public health management.

Filling the EOC Chief's position with a qualified and dedicated individual is a critical first step. It's time for policymakers to wake up to the urgency of the situation and for the government to implement a robust, innovative strategy to finally rid Balochistan of this devastating virus.

The future health of thousands of children depends on it.

JUI Leader Muhammad Aslam Khan Umrani Killed in Tribal Clash Over Water Dispute

Naseer Mastoi:

DERA MURAD JAMALI:

In a tragic turn of events, Muhammad Aslam Khan Umrani, the leader of the Jamiat ul Ulema e Islam (JUI), was killed in a firing incident that erupted during a clash between two tribal groups over an agricultural water dispute.

The violent confrontation occurred within the jurisdiction of Mongoli police station, leading to immediate action by local authorities.

The incident began when tensions between the Umrani and Hijwani tribes escalated over access to water for their agricultural lands. The situation quickly spiraled out of control, resulting in an exchange of gunfire that left one person dead and another slightly injured.

Upon receiving information about the clash, SSP Naseerabad Fahad Khan Khosa, along with his police party, promptly arrived at the scene. Their swift intervention managed to bring the situation under control, forcing the armed men from both tribes to retreat. In the process, police seized weapons, motorcycles, and other items used in the ongoing conflict.

Maulana Wasey, the Balochistan Chief of JUI,



expressed his deep sorrow and outrage over the incident. He strongly condemned the attack and called on the government to arrest and prosecute those responsible for the murder of Muhammad Aslam Khan Umrani. "This senseless violence must end, and the perpetrators must face justice," said Wasey.

SSP Fahad Khan Khosa assured the public that the rule of law will be upheld. "No one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands," he stated. "We are committed to maintaining peace and order, and the arrests of those involved in this tragic incident will be carried out swiftly."

The Naseerabad police remain vigilant and alert to prevent any further incidents and ensure the safety and security of the community. The investigation into the incident is ongoing, and authorities are determined to bring the culprits to justice.

ECP asked to justify PTI's exclusion from polls

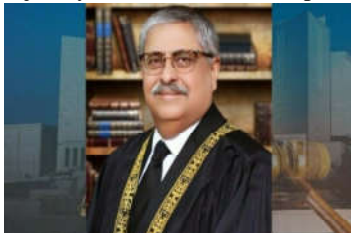
ISLAMABAD: Justice Athar Minallah has asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to satisfy the Supreme Court that the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) was excluded from the electoral process legitimately, thereby forfeiting its claim to reserved seats.

As a member of the full-court bench of the Supreme Court hearing the Sunni Itehad Council's (SIC) appeal against the denial of reserved seats for women and minorities,

Justice Minallah directed the ECP to satisfy the court that a level playing field was provided to all political parties, including PTI, before, during, and after the February 8 general elections.

The SC will resume hearing the appeal on Monday. In a four-page-to-him, the justice Minallah observed that petitions pending before the SC raising questions about the integrity of the Feb 8 polls should be heard alongside the SIC petitions. He directed the ECP to place on record the nature of complaints received prior to, during, and after the general elections and satisfy the apex court that each political party was treated in accordance with the Constitution's command, providing a level playing field to all.

SIC tells top court BAP was allocated reserved seats in 2019 even though it didn't



contest elections from KP Justice Minallah said the question of reserved seats could not be decided in isolation or based on technicalities and pleadings. According to him, the larger issue involves the fundamental democratic and constitutional right of the real stakeholders — the voters. As they are not before the bench and as the highest court rested with jurisdictions under articles 184(3) and 187 of the Constitution, the approach ought to be inquisitorial. He said the Supreme Court was the custodian of the rights of people and the right to vote was one of the most important fundamental rights.

All other rights become illusory and the Constitution is gravely violated when voters are disenfranchised, if the

ECP fails in its duty to conduct the elections in accordance with the mandate of the Constitution, according to him.

The Constitution has vested the exclusive extraordinary jurisdiction under Article 184(3) in addition to doing complete justice in the exercise of the duty conferred under Article 187.

Justice Minallah said, adding that the apex court could not be a slave to technicalities in a matter of such public importance that affects every citizen and the future of the country.

As petitions were pending before the SC challenging the integrity of the electoral process during the general elections and the alleged violation of the fundamental rights of voters and political workers, the court could not turn a blind eye by ignoring such matter, he noted.

The SC could not and must not be seen as ignoring the elephant in the room, Justice Minallah observed, adding that it could not be perceived as being complicit in the alleged failures of the ECP to conduct credible elections as mandated under the Constitution. NEWS DESK.

BHC orders re-election on 39 polling stations of PB-21

QUETTA: A division bench of the Balochistan High Court (BHC) has ordered re-election in 39 polling stations of the provincial assembly's PB-21 constituency. The bench comprising Justice Muhammad Kamran Mullahkhalil and Muhammad Iqbal Kasi issued the order Saturday on the petition filed by Sardar Muhammad Saleh Bhootani. Mr Bhootani contested and won the election from the seat in Huh, Lasbela in the general elections on Feb 8. He had challenged the Election Commission of Pakistan's decision to recount votes cast in 39 out of the total 123 polling stations on the application of PPI candidate Mir Ali Hassan



Zehri, who came in third in the final result. The electoral watchdog now has three weeks to conduct re-polling in the 39 polling

stations of Dureji and Huh Tehsil and on-other 21 days to announce the results. Mr Bhootani, who had won the election with a lead of over 16,000 votes, pleaded that his votes were rejected. NEWS DESK.

Advertisement for '955 Billion' (955 ارب روپے کا) featuring a bar chart and various statistics related to economic growth and development. Includes text like 'وزیراعلیٰ بلوچستان میرسر فراز یگنی کی زور قیادت' and 'عوامی فلاح اور ترقی و خوشحالی کا عزم'.

EDITORIAL VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Balochistan Needs Action, Not Another Failed Polio Campaign

The news of a children in Chaman and Dera Bugti contracting polio, in Balochistan after three years, is a damning indictment of the provincial health department and donor agencies entrusted with this critical public health mission.

Imported Solutions Don't Work For far too long, a top-down approach relying on imported solutions has dominated our fight against polio. We, the people of Balochistan, have the indigenous knowledge and cultural understanding necessary to effectively combat this disease.

The presence of poliovirus in environmental samples since last August is a glaring failure of our health department. This isn't just a recent oversight; it exposes a systemic weakness in surveillance and outreach programs.

Donor agencies must also shoulder some of the blame Have they critically evaluated the effectiveness of their funding, or have they simply perpetuated a cycle of dependence on external solutions? We urge them to invest in building the capacity of our local healthcare system and empower Balochistans to take charge of their health outcomes.

The upcoming vaccination campaign is crucial, but it cannot be a one-off effort. We need a sustained, multi-pronged approach that integrates local knowledge, strengthens healthcare infrastructure, and prioritizes community engagement.

This is a wake-up call. Let Balochistan not be known for this resurgence of a preventable disease. Let's work together, with our own solutions at the forefront, to banish polio for good.

Economic revival

By Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry:

In 1992, Bill Clinton ran his campaign for US president on three slogans, one of which was 'It's the economy, stupid'. In the backdrop of the economic downturn of the early 1990s, Clinton's focus on economic revival resonated well with his voters, and within three years, economic growth picked up.

Ever since, the phrase 'It's the economy, stupid' has been used extensively to emphasise the pivotal role of economic management in a nation's prosperity.

In Pakistan today, the imperative of economic revival can hardly be overemphasised. For decades, we have been living beyond our means, collecting a mountain of debt along the way. Interest payments consume the bulk of our revenues, and perpetual loans are sought to run the government. Effectively, that means much of what the government does is with borrowed money.

This is unsustainable; either we increase our revenues, or reduce our outgoings — preferably both. Pursuant to the agreement with the IMF, the government plans to tax the retail sector as part of its efforts to document the informal economy. This would certainly

help broaden the tax base. Opposite my house is a supermarket frequented by so many customers that it rarely sees the cashier desk without a queue before it. Yet, when it comes to paying taxes, this shop, like many retailers, is reluctant to enter the tax net.

Our people need to realise that the roads we travel on, the public services we avail of, and the higher quality of life we desire can only be available if we pay taxes. An argument often made in response to the topic of increasing the tax net is that the revenue collected from the common man's taxes is used by high officials of the government to finance their over-extended lifestyles. It is, therefore, important that while broadening the tax base, the government make an equally robust and visible effort to cut wasteful public expense.

Let us, however, we have yet to see any concrete step being taken to give credence to the government's claims of belt-tightening.

For instance, when the government announced cost cuts on international travel, one saw a long list of the categories of public office holders who would be entitled to travel business class.

Ghulam Ali Baloch:

In the landscape of Balochistan's higher education, several challenges have emerged, casting shadows over the educational prospects of its youth. These challenges, if not addressed promptly, could impede the region's progress and development.

1. Imbalance in Staffing Ratios: Investigations into the staffing for sponsoring higher education initiatives in Balochistan. Major investors and entities have made negligible contributions towards the advancement of higher education, posing a significant hurdle to educational progress.

2. Disbalance in Budget Allocation: The proliferation of new departments and the consequent construction of buildings have led to a disbalance in budget allocation within the higher education sector.

3. Lack of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Funds: Contrary to global best practices, there is a notable absence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund management for sponsoring higher education initiatives in Balochistan.

4. Inadequate Research Management Skills: Despite possessing substantial business potential, universities management in Balochistan lacks the necessary skills to generate and manage resources effectively.

5. Absence of Internal Consultation: Lack of internal consultation exacerbates the mismanagement of resources, leading to wasteful expenditures and the illogical establishment of new campuses and departments.

6. Irrational Construction Projects: The High Education Department's inclination towards constructing

large buildings for Research Centers (BRCs) and Cadet Colleges at exorbitant costs further strains the funds allocated for higher education. These expenditures compete with essential agricultural lands under-utilized by the sector's overall progress.

7. Need for Institutional Re-alignment: Several institutions under the Higher Education umbrella require realignment to improve the quality of both school and college education.

8. Modernization of Curriculum and Institutions: Many colleges struggle to adapt to the new curriculum introduced under the BS program, leading to redundancy and inefficiency.

Transforming these colleges into centers for skill development or upgrading them to universities could better serve the educational needs of Balochistan's youth.

In conclusion, Balochistan's higher education sector faces multifaceted challenges that demand immediate attention and reform. By addressing staffing issues, reallocating budgets effectively, fostering corporate partnerships, enhancing resource management skills, promoting internal collaboration, rationalizing construction projects, realigning institutions, and modernizing curriculum and institutions, Balochistan can pave the way for a brighter educational future for its youth.

The author is a senior bureaucrat in the government of Balochistan

Targeting Chinese nationals

By Muhammad Amir Rana:

The Shingla terrorist attack on the Chinese engineers' vehicle is having consequences for the region.

The same is the case for the recent Shingla attack. The names of all three groups involved in the attack after the attack. The TTP has been projected as the prime suspect, as it has issued a challenge to the state.

The attack has caused significant alarm. Apart from disrupting these vital infrastructure projects, it has shaken the confidence of Chinese nationals working in Pakistan. Reports indicate some are considering leaving the country due to safety concerns.

The Pakistani government has repeatedly pledged to bring the perpetrators to justice. However, the recent incident has eroded trust. Chinese social media reflects growing anxiety, with calls for stricter security measures to protect Chinese lives.

Whenever a major terrorist incident occurs in the country, the media, security experts, and even state institutions start to make sweeping generalisations about the event, the culprits, their motives, and the terrorist groups that could have been involved in such incidents.

The first and most well-known excuse cited is foreign involvement in the attacks, especially those targeting Chinese nationals or CPEC-related projects. Three names of terrorist groups spring to mind: Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Balochistan Liberation Army, and the Islamic State-Khorasan. They guess a specific group's involvement de-

pend on the region; these three groups have specific operational bases. The same is the case for the recent Shingla attack. The names of all three groups involved in the attack after the attack. The TTP has been projected as the prime suspect, as it has issued a challenge to the state.

Extremist tendencies in the region are stronger than those in the neighbouring areas. Anti-Shia sentiment, blood feuds in the countryside, and ethnic superiority are ingrained.

The region has always been difficult to govern. Security institutions, bureaucracy, and the area's political leadership have tried to run the administration — while compromising on laws and rules. Even in the case of major disputes, the administration tries to resolve them through local jirgas and by involving religious scholars. This can result in leniency towards criminals, with many extremists taking the law into their own hands.

The Mujahideen Gilgit-Baltistan and Kohistan (MGB) are a prime example. The group claimed responsibility for several killings, burning of girls' schools, and the killing of Shia travellers. Recently, it has gained notoriety for attacks on Chinese workers involved in development projects in the area.

involved in the 2013 terrorist attack on the Nanga Parbat base camp targeting foreign climbers — and an end to women's sporting activities in GB for the minister's release. They agreed to a 2019 agreement, and issued a demand for the government to meet their demands.

Although a prominent resource, it is not the only one in the region. The MGB and other local militant groups reportedly maintain close links with the TTP and sectarian outfits based in Punjab. These external groups appear to support local militants, as evidenced by the TTP's involvement in the 2022 Bhabar Pass blockade. The state's history of compromise with militant groups has emboldened them. For instance, in the kidnapping incident, the administration agreed to ban girls' sports in the region. Similarly, a 2019 agreement had reportedly allowed for implementation of some Islamic laws that the militants had demanded. The state's intransigence on religious scholars for mediation in crises can be problematic. Local accounts suggest that some scholars may be sympathetic to the militants' demands, leading to partial concessions that create a perception of a 'win-win' scenario for militants and religious figures. But the question is why are an increasing number of Chinese nationals being targeted in these areas, which are seemingly benefiting from the development

chapter. While anti-development sentiments are not that high in the area, and wider roads will trigger urbanisation, women's emancipation, and modernisation, which they perceive as threats to their religion and culture. The dominant group suggests that most people are happy with the compensation money and employment prospects.

However, this doesn't diminish the level of religious extremism present. Some residents may sympathise with the Uighur community in Xinjiang, and others may dislike the presence of foreigners on their land. These factors could be nurturing negative perceptions about Chinese nationals in the region.

One possible excuse is the local dynamics is seen in the blasphemy accusation against a Chinese official in Islamabad last year. The incident highlighted that tensions could erupt.

While local groups may lack the capability to carry out large-scale attacks independently, the presence of Shia passengers and the attack on tourists at Nanga Parbat demonstrate their capacity for violence. Their ability is amplified by support from like-minded groups within Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The government's strategy of outsourcing the means of enforcement to local and external religious figures needs to be revised to address these sentiments. A more comprehensive approach is needed to calm tensions.

Sustainability of digital trade

By Hassan Nawaz Sheikh:

Pakistan's ailing economy is undergoing a process of revival. The economic wizards have placed a lot of bets on IT in the hope that the enormous potential of this sector can help alleviate our economic woes. There have been claims by former federal IT ministers that Pakistan's IT exports would reach between \$10 billion to \$20bn from the existing mark of \$2.6bn within the next few years. The premise on which these claims are being made is that the IT sector has been recording consistent upward growth since the last few years.

The IT industry has gained further focus when it was picked up by the newly christened Special Investment Facilitation Council as one

of the five core areas on which Pakistan's economic revival is predicated. Under the auspices of SITZs, investment opportunities are available for setting up special technology zones (STZs) at seven prime locations including Lahore, Peshawar, Swat, Abbottabad, Haripur, Islamabad and Karachi. The Ministry of Information Technology & Tele-communication also has a program for the establishment of 25 software technology parks (STPs) through Pakistan by converting public/private owned dilapidated or non-operational office buildings/retail spaces or by providing IT-enabled offices within these zones to IT enabled offices. The STPs are also being converted to IT-enabled offices within these zones to avail tax benefits. However, these are just infrastructural develop-

ments at best, whereby, a conducive environment for setting up businesses is being provided. The term 'digital trade' has no clear definition, yet it is believed to refer to 'commerce and services' through digital means in both goods and services'. The Digital Trade Principles, as proposed by the WTO, cover five areas: (1) open digital markets; (2) data flow with trust; (3) safety and security for consumers, and businesses; (4) digital trading systems; and (5) fair and equitable digital governance. While there is no clear measurement of this sector, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development estimates it to constitute approximately 25 per cent of the entire world trade. How-

ever, given how quickly this sector is expanding, the domestic regulatory environment will become increasingly complex, making it more difficult for consumers and businesses to seize some of the emerging opportunities. How are these problems to be tackled? How would a new agreement not be hampered by such problems? How will our domestic businesses survive in the conventional FTA model? The regulatory requirements as violations thereof might restrict their ability to compete with their customers? For all these key problems and other related issues, our country needs to have a robust and dynamic digital trade policy for sustainable growth in this sector. Digital economy trade agree-

ments: While digital trade policy would bring a holistic and competitive edge to our IT entrepreneurs so that they're able to compete at the international stage, digital trade agreements would create both bilateral and preferential market access. FTAs are just a niche market for free trade agreements. Whilst Pakistan is struggling to gain benefit from the European Union's trade policy, every modern trade agreement that EU has concluded contains a dedicated digital trade

Parliamentary system crucial pillar for Pakistan's democratic future: Jamal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani, Secretary General of the National Assembly Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF), emphasized the importance of the parliamentary system, stating that it strengthens democracy. He highlighted that this system allows people to participate in government through their elected representatives.

Raisani urged the youth to actively engage in politics to fortify parliamentarism in Pakistan. He pointed out that 64% of Pakistan's population is comprised of young people, who represent the golden future of the country.

Resistant to the golden future of the country. Educating the youth about the democratic system and involving them in the parliamentary process is essential, he stressed.

He mentioned that Pakistan's parliamentary history began with its independence in 1947. Raisani acknowledged that the parliamentary system in Pakistan has faced various challenges, including martial law, military dictatorships, and political instability. However, the system has also achieved significant successes.

Raisani noted that the implementation of the 1973 Constitution and the establishment of democratic governments are notable achievements of the parliamentary system. He further added that the events of Pakistan's independence in 1947, the establishment of the Constituent Assembly, the enactment of the first constitution in 1956, and Benazir Bhutto's electoral victory in 1988, making her the first female Prime Minister in the Muslim world, are significant milestones in the history of parliamentarism. He emphasized that the parliamentary system is a crucial pillar for Pakistan's democratic future and needs to be further strengthened.

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ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Chairs the meeting of the committee for Development and Management of Hazrat Bari Imam Shrine Complex.

Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) predicts rain in Punjab, KP and Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast warm weather for most parts of the country, with rain expected in Punjab, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Kashmir.

The PMD has predicted warm weather in Islamabad and its surrounding areas. Kashmir is expected to experience rain in some areas accompanied by strong winds, while Gilgit-Baltistan will likely have partly cloudy skies.

Most districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are expected to experience warm weather, with a chance of thunderstorms in Balakot, Manshera, Abbottabad, and Swat.

Sindh is expected to experience warm and humid weather in most districts, while Punjab is expected to have warm weather with a chance of rain in Murree, Galiyat, Gujranwala, and Sialkot.

Heavy rainfall and landslides have occurred in the Sulaiman Range, causing several vehicles to get stuck.

The death toll from these incidents has risen to six.

Most districts of Balochistan are expected to experience warm weather, with thunderstorms in Khuzdar, Awaran, and Lasbela.

Yesterday, temperatures reached 47 degrees Celsius in Nokundi, 46 degrees Celsius in Bahawalpur and Dabband, and 45 degrees Celsius in Sibi, Dadu, Bhakkar, and Jacobabad.

The sky over Lahore is currently overcast with a high probability of rain. The weather is expected to be pleasant throughout the day. The morning has seen cloudy skies and a cool breeze, making the atmosphere comfortable.

The weather in Karachi is expected to be warm and humid today. The current temperature in the city is 35 degrees Celsius. According to Director General of the Meteorological Department, Sardar Sarifaz, the Air Quality Index is 63, and the temperature could reach 38 degrees Celsius.

The wind is currently blowing from the southwest at a speed of 11 kilometers per hour.

Most areas of Balochistan, including Quetta, are expected to experience warm weather. However, there is a chance of rain in Zhob, Barkhan, Khuzdar, and surrounding areas. The maximum temperature recorded in Quetta was 38 degrees Celsius, 33 degrees Celsius in Kalat, 25 degrees Celsius in Ziarat, 36 degrees Celsius in Zhob, and 34 degrees Celsius in Tarnool.

Weather forecasters have reported that the highest temperature in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was recorded in Bannu and D.I. Khan at 42 degrees Celsius. The lowest temperature was recorded in Malam Jabba at 13 degrees Celsius.

According to the PMD, there is a chance of rain in some areas of Nowshera, Khyber, Kurram, Kohat, Karak, and Bannu. There is also a possibility of rain in some areas of Lakki Marwat, Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, and Waziristan.

There is a chance of scattered rain in Chitral, Dir, Buner, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, and Charsadda. Most areas of Abbottabad, Manshera, Torgar, Batagram, Swat, Shangha, and Buner are likely to experience rain.

PTI forms 19-member central committee for Islamabad rally amid venue dispute

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Barrister Gohar Khan has announced the formation of a 19-member central committee to oversee the upcoming Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) rally scheduled for July 6 in Islamabad. The decision comes amidst ongoing legal proceedings regarding the rally's venue.

The committee, headed by Barrister Gohar Khan and convened by Islamabad President Amir Mughal, includes prominent figures such as Umar Ayub, Shibli Faraz, Rauf Hassan, and Asad Qaiser.

Notably, Shoaib Shaheen, Ali Bukhari, Khalid Khurshid, and Malik Taimur will handle administrative matters related to the rally.

In light of the absence of a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the rally at Tarnool Chowk, advocates Shoaib Shaheen, Ali Bukhari, and Niazullah Niazi will pursue the case in the High Court to secure necessary permissions.

Following directives from the Islamabad High Court, discussions between PTI representatives and the district administration led to the selection of Tarnool Chowk as the rally venue.

The decision was finalized after consultations with DC Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon.

PTI Islamabad President Amir Mughal has instructed party workers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad to prepare extensively for the event, anticipating a massive turnout of supporters.

The PTI rally is poised to feature addresses from central leadership, aiming to mobilize significant public participation amid ongoing logistical and administrative preparations.

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ISTANBUL: Renowned Turkish actor Abdul Rahman Ghazi interaction with Pakistan journalist alongside Shabana Ayaz Chairperson of the Turk-pak women Forum.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding winding up of Pakistan Public Works Department (PWD).

Rain and landsliding wreak havoc in Koh-e-Sulaiman, 6 dead

QUETTA (INP): Heavy rains in the Koh-e-Sulaiman range of eastern Balochistan have triggered landslides, blocking major highways and stranding numerous vehicles. The death toll from five days of continuous rainfall in the province has risen to six, with 25 others injured.

"The landslides occurred near the Dana Sar range on the Quetta-Chaman-Zhob-Mughalkot section, blocking the Quetta-Dera Ismail Khan highway, which connects Balochistan to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa."

"The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has advised vehicles from Peshawar, Swat, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi to stop at Dera Ismail Khan. Transport heading towards Zhob and Qila Saifullah has also been halted.

"Rescue and relief teams have been dispatched to assist stranded passengers, and efforts are underway to clear the debris."

"Landslide blocks highway connecting Balochistan, Punjab"

"At least 25 killed in Afghanistan landslide caused by snowfall"

"Four of a family die as landslide destroys vehicle in Skardu"

"The heavy rains have also caused flooding in Awaran district, cutting off the district from Jhoo."

The Awaran-Turbat road has also been closed due to flooding in the Wahli River.

"Meanwhile, in Lahore, temperatures dropped after rainfall, bringing relief to residents. Strong winds are also being experienced in the city."

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has predicted more rain for today.

Six children were injured in Kot Lakhpur due to an electric shock, while one person was killed and three others injured by lightning in Badin.

"The PMD has forecast hot weather for most parts of the country."

"However, there is a possibility of rain with thunderstorms in parts of upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, north-eastern Punjab, upper Sindh, and Kashmir."

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"The heavy rains have also caused flooding in Awaran district, cutting off the district from Jhoo."

The Awaran-Turbat road has also been closed due to flooding in the Wahli River.

"Meanwhile, in Lahore, temperatures dropped after rainfall, bringing relief to residents. Strong winds are also being experienced in the city."

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has predicted more rain for today.

Six children were injured in Kot Lakhpur due to an electric shock, while one person was killed and three others injured by lightning in Badin.

"The PMD has forecast hot weather for most parts of the country."

"However, there is a possibility of rain with thunderstorms in parts of upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, north-eastern Punjab, upper Sindh, and Kashmir."

Nationwide protests erupt over power outages, overbilling issues

KARACHI (INP): Citizens across various cities in Pakistan, including Karachi, have taken to the streets in protest against prolonged power outages and erroneous billing practices. Despite sweltering temperatures, residents express frustration over receiving exorbitant electricity bills despite enduring extensive periods without electricity.

Ending 14 to 16 hours of load shedding daily, citizens lament the unpredictable nature of power cuts, which disrupt daily life multiple times a day.

They criticize utility providers for sending bills despite irregular power supply, highlighting widespread dissatisfaction with the current administration's energy policies.

Sindh Energy Minister Nasir Shah has assured that measures to reduce load shedding will be implemented within the next 3 to 4 days, offering a glimmer of hope amid widespread discontent.

Karachi continues to face extreme heat waves, with temperatures soaring to 42 degrees Celsius and humidity levels peaking at 70%. The Meteorological Department predicts relief with the onset of sea breeze in the evening.

From Karachi to Lahore and Swabi, protests escalate against costly electricity and irregular power supply, highlighting widespread dissatisfaction with the current administration's energy policies.

Jamaat-e-Islami's Ahmed Salman Baloch criticizes the government for burdening citizens with high electricity bills amid economic challenges, warning of further inflationary pressures.

As protests intensify, citizens and organizations demand immediate government action to alleviate power shortages and address billing discrepancies, urging sustainable solutions to stabilize the electricity supply nationwide.

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ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rama Tanveer Hussain chairs a review meeting on fertilizer industry.

Telecom companies may face hefty fines for failing to block SIMs of non-filers

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Board of Revenue (FBR) has issued income tax orders to the concerned mobile phone companies, mandating the blocking of non-filers' SIMs. A notification of the penalty imposition is required within 15 days of issuing the orders.

This move follows recommendations from the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, chaired by Salim Mandiwala, which urged the FBR to reconsider penalizing telecom companies. During the committee meeting, concerns about the tax proposals for the telecom sector were discussed.

A representative of the telecom industry highlighted the challenges faced by the sector, citing conflicting laws and failed policies. Despite being the largest investor and highest tax-paying industry in the country, the telecom sector is struggling with heavy taxation and operational burdens.

The representative emphasized the critical role of the internet and the disproportionate 75% tax imposed on non-filers, which significantly reduces revenue for telecom companies.

The telecom industry is urging the government to review these tax proposals and recognize the sector's contribution to the country's digital future.

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