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Pervez Khattak mulls joining politics again

Simultaneously Publishing from Islamabad, Sargodha and Karachi

Aseefa Bhutto's victory in NA-207 challenged in SHC



Soon Times Correspondent KARACHI
Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Aseefa Bhutto's victory in the National Assembly's by-election has been challenged in the Sindh High Court (SHC). Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate Ghulam Mustafa Rind has filed the petition in the SHC, challenging Aseefa Bhutto's victory from NA-207 Nawabshah.

The petitioner has requested the court to declare Aseefa Bhutto's victory null and void and conduct re-election by April 22.

Probe suggests Indian hand found in attack on Amir Tamba: Mohsin Naqvi

Police are investigating firing incident. Says India was involved in four other murder incidents.



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE:
Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday said India was suspected to be behind attack on Amir Sarfraz Tamba who allegedly tortured to death an Indian terrorist Sarabjit Singh in jail in 2013.

The interior minister said India was involved in four other murders as well prior to Tamba's killing.

"Police are investigating the firing on Amir Tamba and so far, they suspect India is behind it. India was involved in four other murder incidents on a similar pattern as well. However, it will not be suitable to say anything until the investigation is complete," he said addressing the media at the

Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) office in Lahore.

Police on Sunday said two motorcycle riders fatally shot Tamba in the limits of Islamabad police station. The victim was shifted to hospital but he succumbed to his wounds, they said.

Police registered a case against the unidentified bikers on the complaint of Tamba's brother Junaid Sarfraz, cordoned off the area and started searching for the shooters with the help of CCTV footage.

In April 2013, Tamba and Mudaris Rind allegedly attacked Sarabjit Singh with bricks and iron rods in Kot Lakhpat jail. Singh was sentenced to death for a series of bomb attacks that killed 14

people in Lahore and Faisalabad in 1990.

On December 14, 2018, a sessions court in Lahore acquitted Tamba and Munir of the charge of killing Singh and ordered their release after all witnesses retracted their statements.

Tamba, 45, was unmarried and lived with his brothers in a five-marla house in Islamabad. He was a spice dealer.

India admits to orchestrating killings in Pakistan

During a televised interview on April 5, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh admitted to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's policy of orchestrating killings in Pakistan.

PTI challenges polls result of Islamabad's three constituencies in election tribunal



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has challenged alleged rigging in three constituencies of Islamabad in the election tribunal.

PTI-backed independent candidate Amir Mughal has challenged the poll results of Islamabad constituency NA-146. PTI-backed candidate Shoaib Shaheen has challenged NA-47 results.

PTI-backed independent candidate Ali Bukhari has challenged the poll results of Islamabad's constituency NA-48 in the election tribunal.

The three candidates have filed petitions stating that the Feb 8 poll results were rigged and forged.

The petition requested to de-notify the victorious Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) MNAs in the three constituencies of Islamabad.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to reach Pakistan on April 22



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD:
Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi is set to visit Pakistan on April 22, sources told Geo News on Monday, as regional tensions surge after Iran's unprecedented drone and missile strikes on Israeli territory on Sunday.

As per sources, Islamabad and Tehran have agreed upon the matters pertaining to President Raisi's visit who will be accompanied by a high-level delegation and will hold meetings with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari and the military leadership.

His visit comes after Tehran launched more than 300 drones and missiles at Israel in retaliation to the Israeli airstrike on its Damascus consulate that killed several people including Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) senior commanders Mohammed Reza Zahedi and senior commander Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi.

Apart from this, the visit is part of ongoing efforts by the two countries to deepen their cooperation which received a temporary setback earlier this year.

In January, relations between the two countries had turned sour after Pakistan, in retaliation to Iran's cross-border strikes, carried out precision strikes using killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions and stand-off weapons to target terrorists inside Iranian territory.

Pakistan had even withdrawn its ambassador from Iran and announced that it would not allow the Iranian envoy visiting his home country at that time to return as a gesture of protest against the breach of its sovereignty by Iran.

The diplomatic ties, however, were soon restored with the ambassadors of the two countries returning to their respective posts.

PTI demands formation of independent commission to probe May 9 incidents



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) General Secretary Omar Ayub has demanded an independent commission for a fair investigation of the May 9 incident.

Speaking to media in Islamabad, Ayub asserted that the cases against the PTI founder and other leaders including Shah Mahmood Qureshi were baseless.

He claimed that the prosecution was avoiding the Nikkah during Iddat case by postponing the case hearing twice today, as the case was bogus.

The opposition leader said he had been demanding formation of an independent commission for investigation and the release of CCTV footage of the May 9 riots incident.

He said the cipher case was bogus and the government must acknowledge its retaliation against the PTI founder.

Regarding the letter written by eight Islamabad High Court judges alleging interference in judicial matters, he stated that the letter was a charge-sheet on the system. Referring to the movement with



MQM-P warns of taking to streets if crimes in Karachi not stopped

Soon Times Correspondent KARACHI
Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has warned of taking to the streets if the government fails to curb the rampant scourge of street crimes in Karachi.

"We would raise our voice [on the issue] in the Sindh Assembly and in the National Assembly [...], and would protest on the streets if our concerns are not addressed," MQM-P's Ali Khurshidi said while addressing a press conference in Karachi.

His remarks come as Karachi has witnessed a significant surge in street crimes in dozens of months which have resulted in recent

injuries and fatalities.

Since January 1, at least 59 people have lost their lives while 200 were injured due to resisting robbery this year so far in the metropolis.

According to Geo News, as many as 6,780 crimes were committed in Karachi in the holy month of Ramadan alone in which 20 vehicles were snatched and more than 130 others stolen.

Moreover, 830 motorcycles were also snatched with 4,200 others stolen in the same month. Meanwhile, 19 people lost their lives in Ramadan while 55 were injured.

The two parties, both of whom are key allies

of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) government in the Centre, have been engaged in a verbal spat in recent weeks over the issue of street crimes in the city.

Last month, Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar termed crime a "part of a daily life" saying that the issue of the law-and-order situation in Karachi was being "exaggerated".

The remarks drew fire from various sections of society and political parties, most notably the MQM-P which has even called for the country's financial hub to be handed over to the Pakistan Army for three months. Flanked by Nasreen Jalil and others, Khurshidi lamented police's failure saying,

PTI founder, Bushra Bibi marriage case hearing adjourned after heated debate between lawyers



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
A sessions court on Monday adjourned hearing of appeals against the conviction of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi on irregular marriage for April 24 after a heated debate between advocates Rizwan Abbasi and Salman Akram Raja.

Advocate Abbasi was granted

before the court, he started reading the decision of trial court. PTI founder's lawyer Salman Raja stopped him and asked him to argue the case. He told the court that Advocate Abbasi was employing delaying tactics.

The judge asked Advocate Abbasi how much time he needed to argue the case. The lawyer replied he needed about five hours. He requested the court to adjourn the hearing till May. However, the judge turned down his request and adjourned the case till April 24.

Earlier, the court took a break till 11:30am when Khawar Manika's lawyer Abbasi failed to reach in time. When he finally appeared

Fawad Chaudhry gets extension in interim bail in four cases



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
An anti-terrorism court of Lahore on Monday extended till April 20 interim bail of former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry in four cases relating to May 9 events.

Fawad Chaudhry had filed application for interim bail in four cases pertaining to May 9 events in the anti-terrorism court. Chaudhry appeared in Lahore court along with his wife Hiba Fawad.

Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Arshad Javed heard the bail application. The court granted interim bail to the former federal minister till April 20 and stopped police from arresting him.

The court also sought record of the cases from police on the next hearing.

Chaudhry had filed a bail application in cases registered with the Gulberg, Naserabad and Model Town police stations.

Speaking to journalists outside court, Fawad Chaudhry said every person in Pakistan was at risk of arrest.

He added that he had managed to have his release from jail four times and 'Allah will bless me again'.

PHC'S acting Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim takes oath



Soon Times Correspondent PESHAWAR
Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim on Monday took oath as Acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court.

Second most senior judge, Justice Ijaz Anwar administered the oath to acting CJ Ishtiaq Ibrahim. Judges, lawyers, and other officials attended the oath taking ceremony.

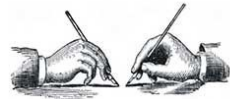
Chief Justice Ibrahim Khan retired on attaining the age of superannuation on April 14.

The ministry of law and justice issued a notification on Friday regarding his appointment as the acting chief justice by President Asif Ali Zardari until his confirmation as regular chief justice by the

parliamentary committee for the appointment of judges.

On March 30, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan recommended his appointment as chief justice.

Acting Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim belongs from Peshawar. He did law graduation (LL.B) from Khyber Law College Peshawar in 1992. He had served as assistant advocate general from 1999-2000. He remained additional advocate general of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from 2008-2010.



Renewable energy utilization

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday, emphasising the improvement of power transmission network, directed the Ministry of Energy to maximize the utilization of renewable energy resources to reduce the country's oil import bill by billions of dollars. "Ultimately, we have to move to renewable energy. The oil import worth billions dollars can be controlled by using alternative resources like solar, wind and hydel. Make cold calculations and I believe, you will be the winner in long term," he

remarked addressing a meeting, he chaired to review the power sector's performance. The prime minister said utilizing renewable energy resources would also ensure riddance from the crude oil tanker mafia acting as parasites and eating up the national funds. He pointed out that the country currently imports oil worth \$27 billion to meet its power and transportation requirements, and the figure could be significantly reduced by transitioning to alternative energy sources. Discussing the ongoing drive against power theft, he

lauded the performance of the Punjab government and expressed the hope that the other provinces would also follow the suit to overcome the challenge. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that strengthening the country's power transmission system required utmost efforts and investment, otherwise the power production and investments in the sector would go down the drain, unless the flaws in the transmission network were removed. He asked the Ministry of Energy to engage world-class consultants to suggest

the government ways forward to boost the country's power transmission system. Additionally, the prime minister mentioned the heavy rains affecting parts of the country and expressed condolences for the lost lives. Prime Minister Shehbaz told the participants that he had asked the Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to coordinate with the provinces and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities to dispatch relief items to the affected areas.

The Dual Role of Authors: Writing for Social Change vs. Entertainment

By Zainab Mustafa

In the realm of literature, authors often find themselves at a crossroads: should they use their platform to advocate for social change or focus solely on entertaining their audience? This debate has raged on for years, with passionate arguments on both sides. However, the truth is that the role of authors is not mutually exclusive; they can and should strive to achieve both objectives simultaneously. Firstly, let's explore the importance of writing for social change. Literature has historically served as a powerful tool for sparking societal transformation. Authors such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" played a significant role in advancing the abolitionist cause, demonstrate the profound impact literature can have on shaping public opinion and catalyzing change. Through their writing, authors can shed light on pressing social issues, challenge the status quo, and inspire readers to take action. Whether it's advocating for

gender equality, environmental sustainability, or racial justice, authors have a unique opportunity to leverage their creativity to effect positive change in the world. On the other hand, the importance of entertainment in literature cannot be overstated. Stories have the power to captivate, transport, and enchant audiences, providing much-needed escapism from the trials and tribulations of daily life. In an increasingly busy and chaotic world, the value of entertainment should not be underestimated. Authors who master the art of storytelling not only entertain their readers but also leave a lasting impression, fostering a love of reading that can endure a lifetime. Moreover, entertainment can serve as a gateway to deeper themes and ideas, allowing authors to subtly weave messages of social change into their narratives without sacrificing engagement or enjoyment. So, should authors prioritize writing for social change or entertainment? The answer lies in striking a delicate balance between the two. By infusing their stories with

thought-provoking themes and messages, authors can entertain while simultaneously challenging their readers to reflect on important societal issues. Consider, for example, the dystopian novels of George Orwell or Margaret Atwood, which combine gripping narratives with powerful social commentary. These works demonstrate that literature can be both entertaining and socially relevant, appealing to a wide audience while also sparking meaningful dialogue and reflection. Ultimately, the role of authors extends far beyond mere entertainment or advocacy; it encompasses a multifaceted responsibility to engage, enlighten, and inspire. Whether they choose to tackle pressing social issues head-on or weave them into the fabric of their storytelling, authors have the power to shape hearts, minds, and societies. As stewards of the written word, they must embrace this responsibility with courage, creativity, and compassion, recognizing that their words have the potential to change the world for the better.

Golden Sentence from the Book "Helping Teachers Learn by Eleanor Drago Severson"



Mushtaque Ahmed Rahu.

"Nothing within a school has more impact on students in their skill development, self-confidence or classroom behaviour than the Personal and Professional growth of teachers".

The quote given above encapsulates a profound truth about education, the personal and professional growth of teachers is the cornerstone of student development. In Eleanor Drago-Severson's book, "Helping Teachers Learn," this idea is explored in depth, emphasizing the transformative power of teacher growth on students' skill development, self-confidence, and classroom behavior.

At the heart of effective teaching lies the continuous growth and development of educators themselves. Teachers who are committed to their learning journey, who seek out opportunities for professional development, and who reflect critically on their practice are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Skill development is a direct outcome of teachers honing their craft through ongoing learning experiences. As educators acquire new knowledge, strategies, and pedagogical approaches, they are better able to design engaging lessons, differentiate instruction, and scaffold learning effectively. This, in turn, enhances students' acquisition of knowledge and skills, fostering academic success and achievement.

Furthermore, the personal growth of teachers influences their classroom demeanor and interactions with students.

When educators feel confident in their abilities, when they have a strong sense of self-efficacy, and when they prioritize their well-being, they create a positive classroom environment characterized by warmth, support, and

encouragement. Students thrive in such environments, feeling valued, motivated, and empowered to take ownership of their learning journey.

Beyond skill development and classroom behavior, the personal and professional growth of teachers profoundly impacts students' self-confidence. Teachers who model lifelong learning, resilience, and a growth mindset inspire students to embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, and believe in their ability to succeed. Through mentorship, guidance, and positive role modeling, educators empower students to cultivate self-confidence, resilience, and a sense of agency in their academic and personal lives.

In essence, the growth of teachers is intricately intertwined with the growth of their students. By investing in the professional development, well-being, and continuous learning of educators, schools cultivate an environment where both teachers and students thrive. Eleanor Drago-Severson's insights remind us of the profound impact that teachers have on shaping the lives of their students and underscore the importance of supporting teachers in their journey of growth and development.

Few Reviews of authors:

"Drago-Severson has created an indispensable resource for anyone who wants to learn how to be a school's 'principal adult educator.'" [Author: Robert Kegan, Meehan Professor of Adult Learning and Professional Development, Harvard University Graduate School of Education.]

"Helping Teachers Learn is a remarkably ambitious and comprehensive work that describes how principals may effectively exercise leadership in support of teacher learning within schools. The book is an extraordinary treasure chest of real-world examples, insights, and uncommon sense." [Author: Richard H. Ackerman.]

"Helping Teachers Learn addresses an extremely important theme--the developmental aspects of teacher learning and how principals can support them. The framework is new and generative." [Author: Andy Hargreaves, Thomas More

Brennan Chair, Lynch School of Education.]

"Teaching can be a very isolating profession. In the many constraints and pressures inherent in education today, there exist some distinctive messages of hope. Helping Teachers Learn focuses on some of the best practices found in a broad spectrum of schools public, independent, and parochial. Drago Severson's important research points the way to greater reflective practice, personal growth, and professional satisfaction." [Author: Joe Marchese, Dean of Faculty]

"Drago-Severson masterfully weaves voices of experience with practical strategies and theoretical underpinnings to illustrate the viability and necessity of adult learning in schools. As an novice principal in a low-resource urban charter school, I have a renewed hope that this work is indeed possible." [Author: Jed F. Lippard, Director]

"Strategies and case studies combine to provide principals with a leadership model to help enhance teacher development." [Author: Educational Research Services' ERS Bulletin, June 2004]

Concepts covered in *Helping Teachers Learn* include:

- A new model of learning-oriented leadership that can be tailored to particular settings or individuals
- Adult learning principles that inform teacher growth and development, and why they are essential to effective teacher development programs

- The Four Pillars: teaming, providing leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring

- Real-world examples of principals sharing leadership, building community, and managing change

Publisher of the book is *isp*: Corwin; 1st edition (March 12, 2004). Language: *y* English. Paperback *p*: 248 pages. [I wrote this article by excerpting from a clip from a live Session by Mr. Abbas Husain (Managing Director of Teachers Development Center, Educator, Scholar, Mentor & Trainer) on Achieving Teaching Excellence for Educationists of Pakistanin May 2020].

Anti-state elements circulating videos to malign state institutions, says ASF

Soon Times Correspondent

KARACHI

The Airport Security Force (ASF) has refuted claims made against it in circulating social media videos.

A spokesperson for ASF clarified that two older videos depicting alleged misconduct by ASF personnel were being shared with the intent to incite and misinform, as part of a planned conspiracy.

Two videos of ASF were circulated on social media, one depicted a security person allegedly misbehaving with a minor girl, while the other showed a security person involved in a scuffle with an enraged mob.

According to ASF, the videos in question showed incidents that had already been addressed through strict disciplinary actions. Those involved faced penalties in



accordance with the law, including suspension from service through court martial proceedings.

The spokesperson emphasised that the ASF operated under the Pakistan Army Act, with a robust system of accountability in place. They reiterated ASF's commitment to a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of undisciplined behaviour, noting that stringent actions were taken against individuals found guilty

of misconduct.

The spokesperson attributed the circulation of these videos to anti-state elements aiming to malign state institutions and the Pakistan Armed Forces.

They highlighted ASF's unwavering dedication to its duty of serving the nation and ensuring the highest standards of discipline and professionalism. Individual involved in any misconduct were given exemplary penalties.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level review meeting regarding power sector in Islamabad on 15th of April, 2024.

People demand action against Exxon Highway & SDO:

Soon Times Correspondent
Sargodha:

Overcharging on Jhelum Bridge is on the rise with the collaboration of Exxon Highway Khushab and SDO Highway. The people have been suffering but the administration has become a silent

spectator. The contractor is busy in overcharging. Despite repeated complaints to the administration, the administration is not taking any action. There is an atmosphere of intense anger in public social circles. People have demanded strong action from Chief

Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz and Commissioner Sargodha. The public has demanded that legal action against all involved including the contractor, Exxon Highway involved in serious crimes like looting, overcharging and abuse.

Chief Editor Daily Nawai Sadaat demands recovery of his stolen goods worth 80 lakhs



Soon Times Correspondent
Islamabad:

Resident of Rawalpindi and chief editor of Daily Nawai Sadaat Islamabad Pir Syed Riaz Ali Shah has alleged that his sister-in-law and nephew along with their brothers stole household goods worth 80 lakhs from his house. He has been implicated in a

false and fake case. He said, CPO Rawalpindi should conduct a transparent inquiry and protect us from the accused so that the real truth can come out. Addressing a press conference at the National Press Club Islamabad, Pir Syed Riaz Ali Shah said that he is a resident of B113, Lane No. 5, Sher Zaman Colony, Tulsia Road, Rawalpindi and has been

living in a three storied house built by him since 1985. While his late elder brother Azhar Ali Shah's wife lives with her daughters and others on the first floor of this house. His sister-in-law tried to grab the said house B-113, on which the petitioner took a stay order from the court against the widow sister-in-law Rubina Azhar. His case is pending in court. The said sister-in-law Rubina Azhar, with the help of her brothers Nasir Jamal, Zahid Kamal and brother-in-law Talat, fabricated and registered a false case against him on 22-02-2024. This minor dispute was made into a high profile case and used as a news item against the petitioner. He has given a written request dated 31-03-2024 to Tariqabad Chowki, while the incident was also reported on 15th, but even after a week has passed, no legal action has been taken yet. Syed Riaz Ali Shah has demanded from the CPO Rawalpindi to order an inquiry into the case number 452 and recover his stolen valuables.

Under construction bridge stalled due to non-availability of funds troubles citizens:

Soon Times Correspondent
Sargodha:

The under construction bridge project at the Sargodha Qenchi Mor 47 bridge site has become a trouble for the citizens. It has become normal for the internal and external traffic to be jammed for hours in

the city. Common citizens including students, passengers and patients are stuck in traffic. The under-construction bridge project has been stalled due to non-availability of funds. The heavy machinery ordered by the company for the construction of the bridge has also

been withdrawn. The local administration has become a silent spectator. Due to this, accidents have become common. Deep potholes on the under-construction road have become a threat to human lives due to heavy rains.

CJP to hear various cases at SC Lahore registry from today

Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa will hear multiple cases of public interest at Lahore registry of the Supreme Court from today (Monday), Dunya News reported. According to the details, Chief Justice Qazi

Faez Isa is present in Lahore to hear the cases. Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah will also hear the cases. Two benches have been constituted in this regard. A three-member bench headed by Chief

Justice Qazi Faez Isa has been formed which includes Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail. The second bench is headed by Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah while Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Athar Minallah are part of it.



Finance Minister Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb met with US Pakistan Business Council @ USPBC delegation in Washington D.C. Highlighted gov't commitment to improving business climate & attracting foreign & domestic investments in key sectors including agriculture, IT, mining, & energy.

PTI founder's interim bail extended in three cases



Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE

An anti-terrorism court of Lahore on Monday extended interim bail of PTI founder in three different cases. The anti-terrorism court judge Arshad Javed conducted hearing of interim bail pleas of PTI founder in Jinnah House. Askari Tower attacks and torching of Shadman police station cases. The court extended the interim bail of the former prime minister for one day in all three cases. The ATC judge also ordered authorities

concerned to ensure video link attendance of the accused from Adiala Jail.

A couple of weeks ago, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Azam Swati had surrendered before the court. Azam Swati, accompanied by his counsels Ali Bukhari and Murtaza Toon, appeared before the special judge central Islamabad's court. On duty, Judge Rakhshanda Shaheen presided over the case. Azam Swati also filed a petition seeking pre-arrest bail, which the court approved, granting him interim bail until April 20.

PM Shehbaz Sharif to preside over sessions of various ministries today



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reached at Islamabad from Lahore. As per sources, PM Shehbaz Sharif will preside over the sessions of various ministries today (Monday).

Read more: Punjab CM felicitates PM Shehbaz over improving economic indicators
PM Shehbaz Sharif will be briefed about the achievement of targeted goals assigned to ministries, according to sources.

Roti, naan prices slashed in Islamabad



Soon Times Correspondent
LAHORE

The federal government on Monday reduced the price of roti (chapatti) by Rs4 for the capital city, a day after the Punjab government announced reducing the price to Rs16 from Rs20. According to a notification issued by the district administration in Islamabad, the price of roti has been fixed at Rs16 and that of naan at Rs20.

The price control magistrates and assistant commissioners have been instructed by the Islamabad deputy commissioner to ensure the implementation of the new prices of roti and naan.

Met Office predicts more rains in country from April 16 to 19



Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD

The Meteorological Department has predicted more rains in the country from Tuesday. According to the Meteorological Department, the westerly wave will enter the upper regions of the country on Tuesday, causing intermittent rains from April 16 to 19.

It says there is a possibility of heavy rains and hailstorm at some places from April 17 to 21 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Heavy rain and snowfall on mountains are expected in Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan. The Met Department also predicted intermittent rains in Islamabad, Murree, Gulyat, Attock and Chakwal. Several cities of Punjab including Lahore, Faisalabad, Sargodha and Sialkot are likely to receive showers.

Rains are also expected in parts of Balochistan from April 16 to 19. The Met Office said Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Jacobabad were expected to receive showers from April 17 to 19. There is a possibility of a drop in temperatures due to rain. However, heavy showers can cause urban flooding in Dir, Swat, Chitral, Kohistan and the adjoining areas of Kabul River during April 17-18.

Landslides may occur in Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir, Murree and Gilgit-Baltistan. Monday's temperatures

Temperatures of major cities recorded on Monday morning: Islamabad 17 degrees Celsius, Lahore 20, Karachi 24, Peshawar 16, Quetta 10, Gilgit 13, Murree 07 and Muzaffarabad 14 degree Celsius. According to weather forecast for the occupied Jammu and Kashmir, cloudy weather and intermittent rain with wind and thunderstorm are expected in Srinagar, Jammu, Pulwama, Anantnag, Shopian and Baramulla.

Seven die in rain-related incidents in KP In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, seven persons have died and 10 others injured due to heavy rains during the past two days.

According to the latest PDMA report, a total of 84 houses were damaged due to collapse of walls and roofs in several districts, in which 15 houses were completely damaged and 69 houses were partially damaged.

Meanwhile, on directives of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the district administrations and institutions are providing immediate assistance to the affected families and ensuring provision of best medical facilities to the injured.



In Modi's India, opponents and journalists feel the squeeze ahead of election



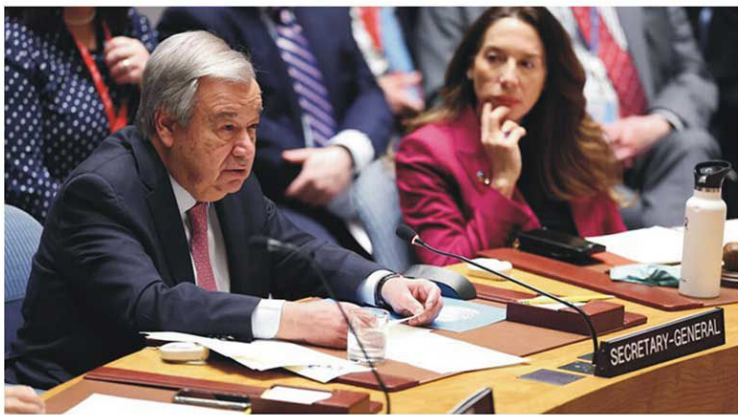
NEWDELHI

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government are increasingly wielding strong-arm tactics to subdue political opponents and critics of the ruling Hindu-nationalist party ahead of the nationwide elections that begin this week.

A decade into power, and on the cusp of securing five more years, the Modi government is reversing India's decades-long commitment to multiparty democracy and secularism. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has brought corruption charges against many officials from its main rival, the Congress Party, but few convictions. Dozens of politicians from other opposition parties are under investigation or in jail. And just last month, Modi's government froze the Congress party's bank accounts for what it said was non-payment of taxes. The Modi administration says the country's investigating agencies are independent and that its democratic institutions are robust, pointing to high voter turnout in recent elections that have delivered Modi's party a clear mandate.

Yet civil liberties are under attack. Peaceful protests have been crushed with force. A once free and diverse press is threatened. Violence is on the rise against the Muslim minority. And the country's judiciary increasingly aligns with the executive branch.

To better understand how Modi is reshaping India and what is at stake in an election that begins Friday and runs through June 1, The Associated Press spoke with a lawyer, a journalist, and an opposition politician.



Israel continues air strikes on Gaza after Iran attack as UN chief calls for 'maximum restraint'

Palestinian Territories

Israel launched dozens of air strikes on Gaza overnight, Hamas said Monday, as the Israeli army said it will not be distracted from the war after Iran's unprecedented attack heightened fears of wider conflict.

"Even while under attack from Iran, we have not lost sight, not for one moment, of our critical mission in Gaza to rescue our hostages from the hands of Iran's proxy, Hamas," Israeli military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said late Sunday.

As mediators attempt to reach a deal to halt the fighting in Gaza, fears grew over Israeli plans to send troops into Rafah, the far-southern city where the majority of the Palestinian territory's 2.4 million people have taken refuge.

The Hamas government media office said Israeli aircraft launched "dozens" of strikes overnight on central Gaza. Meanwhile, Israeli army opened fire on civilians who were trying to cross to the north to reunite with family members, witnesses Rumours of a reopened Israeli checkpoint on the coastal road from the besieged enclave's south to Gaza City in the north sent thousands of Palestinians heading north over the weekend, despite Israel denying it was open. "Cannot afford more war"

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned the international community on Sunday against deeper descent into conflict, addressing the Security Council during a meeting over Iran's weekend attack on Israel. "Neither the region nor the world can afford more war," Guterres said. "The Middle East is on the brink," he told the Security Council.

Europe joins US in urging restraint by Israel after Iranian attack

JERUSALEM

(Reuters)

European allies urged it on Monday to show restraint over Iran's weekend missile and drone attack, calling on Israeli leaders to step away from "the edge of the cliff" of escalation in the Middle East.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war cabinet, which is empowered to decide on the country's response, was set to convene on Monday afternoon, a government source said.

Israeli officials said the war cabinet, which also met on Sunday, favoured retaliation but was divided over the timing and scale of any such response.

With the danger of open warfare erupting between Israel and Iran, and tension high over the war in Gaza, President Joe Biden has told Netanyahu the United States will not participate in any Israeli counter-offensive against Iran, US officials said.



Philippines' Marcos has no plans to grant US access to more bases

MANILA

The Philippines has no plans to grant the United States access to more military bases, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said on Monday, after nearly doubling the number last year under a joint defence pact. Beijing has previously accused the Philippines of "stoking the fire" when it increased the number of bases the US military could use to nine from five, with the new sites located close to potential flashpoints.

"The answer to that is no," Marcos said in response to a query whether the Philippines would allow the US access to more bases. "The Philippines has no plan to create any more bases or give access to any more bases," he told a forum with foreign correspondents.

Last year Washington and Manila discussed further expanding the number of bases US forces could access under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) from nine.

Three of the four sites faced north towards Taiwan and one was near the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, where Manila and Beijing have had frequent maritime run-ins that included China's use of water cannon and collision tactics.



Pakistan's first training session cancelled due to rain ahead of NZ series

RAWALPINDI

The first training session of Pakistan cricket team was called off due to rain in Rawalpindi ahead of T20I home series against New Zealand.

Pakistan players gathered at the Rawalpindi cricket stadium for practice for the first time since the completed their training in Kakul under the supervision of military instructor. However, rain forced them to halt the practice session. Pakistan will take on New Zealand in the first game of the five match T20I series in Rawalpindi on Thursday.

Rawalpindi will host first three matches of the series while remaining two matches will be played in Lahore. The New Zealand team landed in the capital on Sunday to play the series against Pakistan.



Messi's son goes viral after scoring five goals in one game

FLORIDA

Lionel Messi's son Mateo's remarkable five-goal display for Inter Miami's Under-9s team, coupled with his emulation of his father's iconic celebration, highlights the bright future of the Messi football dynasty.

Lionel Messi's son Mateo showcased his talent by scoring five goals for Inter Miami's Under-9s team. The young prodigy not only displayed his skill on the pitch but also emulated one of his father's iconic celebrations, capturing the attention of fans worldwide. Mateo's exceptional performance for Inter Miami's Under-9s team has garnered significant attention.

Footage emerged of the youngster running rampant in the kids' game in the United States. As well as scoring a fine free-kick for the Florida club, he went on to net four more times in an excellent individual display for his team.

He even copied one of his dad's most famous celebrations for one of his goals by blowing a kiss. Among his noteworthy goals was a well-executed free-kick, showcasing a glimpse of his inherited football prowess. The Messi family's footballing legacy continues to shine brightly with Mateo and his elder brother Thiago showcasing their skills on the field.

Israel says it shot down Iranian salvo 'shoulder-to-shoulder' with US



JERUSALEM

Israel's repelling of a massive Iranian drone and missile salvo was fully coordinated with the Pentagon, which had a US operational liaison officer in the control room of the Arrow ballistic air defence system, a senior Israeli

official said. The United States, along with Britain, France and Jordan, helped Israel intercept the bulk of the weekend barrage and potentially stave off escalation between the regional enemies. At least half of the hundreds of

missiles and surface-to-surface missiles, which Israel said carried a total of 60 tonnes of explosives, were shot down by Israeli warplanes and aerial shields, according to local media.

Israeli officials said much of the work was done by their Arrow 2 and Arrow 3 high-altitude defence systems, which were developed jointly with the Pentagon and Boeing Co.

Arrow's interceptor missiles cost between \$2 million and \$3.5 million a piece, according to Israeli industry sources.

Moshé Patel, director of missile defence at Israel's Defence Ministry, said Arrow and lower-altitude interceptors were synced with counterpart US systems in the region.

Sudan's uprooted millions pay price for year-long war

CAIRO PORT SUDAN

After fleeing from the war in Sudan to Egypt, Mohamed Ismail says his ambitions are limited to putting food in the mouths of his five children from a meagre monthly salary of about \$100 earned at a paper factory in Giza.

One seven-year-old son sleeps in his arms because of the trauma of hearing explosions before they fled from the outskirts of the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, in January. A year of war between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has driven more than 8.5 million people from their homes, creating the world's largest displacement crisis and uprooting families multiple times as people struggle to escape to neighbouring countries with economic and security problems of their own.

Financial challenges have led some to return to the war-stricken capital. "Being safe somewhere is the most important thing," said Ismail, 42. "We're not even thinking about education because the economic situation doesn't allow that. As a parent that really impacts you, but we are helpless."

Sudan's war erupted on April 15, 2023, over a planned political transition under which the army, led by Abdel Fattah el-Burhan, and the RSF, led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, were competing to protect their interests.

Fighting tore through the capital and unleashed waves of ethnically-driven violence in the western region of Darfur, before spreading to other areas including Gezira state, an important farming region that became an aid hub where many had sought refuge. When the RSF entered the state's main city Wad



Madani in December, looting and occupying neighbourhoods for which they had done in the capital, many were uprooted for a second time.

"LOST EVERYTHING" Ahmed, 50, who had fled with his wife and four children from the capital when the war began, said RSF troops pulled them from a car as they tried to escape Wad Madani in order to seize the vehicle.

They headed east to al-Gedafra, where his 75-year-old mother-in-law died after the arduous, three-day journey. They then paid smugglers to come to Egypt, which suspended visa-free entry for women, children, and men over 50, as Sudanese poured across the border last year.

"Because of Al-Burhan and Hemedti, our lives were completely shattered. We lost everything we owned," said Ahmed, speaking by phone from Cairo. He asked to be identified by his first name to avoid problems with Egyptian authorities. Within Sudan, more than three million were already homeless from previous conflicts before the current war, mostly in Darfur, where the RSF and its allies have been accused of widespread abuses violence over the past 12 months that they have blamed on their rivals.



Lawmakers brawl as Georgian parliament considers 'foreign agent' bill

TBILISI

Georgian lawmakers came to blows in parliament on Monday as ruling party legislators looked set to advance a controversial bill on "foreign agents" that has been criticised by Western countries and sparked protests at home.

Footage broadcast on Georgian television showed Mamuka Mdinaradze, leader of the ruling Georgian Dream party's parliamentary faction and a driving force behind the bill, being punched in the face by opposition MP Aleko Elisashvili while speaking from the despatch box.

The incident prompted a wider brawl between several lawmakers, an occasional occurrence in Georgia's often raucous parliament. Footage showed Elisashvili being greeted with cheers by protesters outside the parliament building.

Georgian Dream said earlier this month it would reintroduce legislation requiring organisations that accept funds from abroad to register as foreign agents or face fines, 13 months after protests forced it to shelve the plan.

The bill has strained relations with European countries and the United States, who have said they oppose its passage. The European Union, which gave Georgia candidate status in December, has said the move is incompatible with the bloc's values. Georgian Dream says it wants the country to join the EU and NATO, even as it has deepened ties with Russia and faced accusations of authoritarianism at home. It says the

bill is necessary to combat what it calls "pseudo-liberal values" imposed by foreigners, and to promote transparency. Georgia's government said Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze held a meeting on Monday with the EU, British and US ambassadors at which they had discussed the bill.

In a statement, Kobakhidze defended the draft law as promoting accountability, and said it was "not clear" why Western countries opposed it.

Georgian critics have labelled the bill "the Russian law", comparing it to similar legislation used by the Kremlin to crack down on dissent in Russia.

Russia is widely unpopular in Georgia, due to Moscow's support for the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia defeated Georgia in a short war in 2008.

Several hundred demonstrators gathered outside the parliament building ahead of a mass protest that civil society organisations have called for Monday evening. Once approved by members of the legislature's legal affairs committee, which is controlled by Georgian Dream and its allies, the foreign agent bill can proceed to a first reading in parliament. Georgia is due to hold elections by October. Opinion polls show that Georgian Dream remains the most popular party, but has lost ground since 2020, when it won a narrow majority.