

Sania Mirza enjoys leisure time with son Izzaan

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PM calls into question Rs 417 bln security funding to KP after fresh terror wave

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday raised serious concern over the resurfacing of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying that the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) failed to maintain security despite the availability of special funds.

He said that PTI was in rule in the province for the last 10 years and was responsible to ensure the safety of the lives of innocent people that suffered a new spate of terrorist incidents.

In his initial remarks at the meeting of the federal cabinet, the prime minister mentioned that Rs 47 billion were provided to KP since the year 2010 under the National Finance Commission Award.

The funding was supposed to be

used for the capacity-building of KP Police and security forces, he said.

"Where this money was spent despite the establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD)," he questioned.

He said the nation wanted the ruling KP government to be held accountable for the rise of terrorism in the province.

"Who regarded the terrorist as 'jihad' and let them return," he said, pointing out the lenient approach that led to the re-emergence of terrorism in the province.

Shehbaz Sharif lauded the courage and resilience of the people of KP for bearing the brunt of terrorism.

He said several members of the

political families in KP and also the former prime minister Benazir Bhutto lost their life in the wake of terrorist incidents.

"These invaluable sacrifices cannot be forgotten," he said, adding, it was painful that even minor children were among the dead in the recent suicide blast at a Peshawar mosque.

The prime minister warned that if urgent measures were not taken to control terrorism, it could spread to the rest of the country.

He vowed to "unitedly" fight the scourge and ensure peace in the country.

He also put aside the routine agenda of the cabinet meeting saying the issue of terrorism, routing that an in-camera session could be held for further deliberations.

Peshawar blast: US Centcom chief calls COAS Asim Munir for condolence

Imran Khan's corruption degraded Pakistan's ranking in overall corruption index: Sherry Rehman

SAMRA ATHAR

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: US Centcom Commander Gen Michael "Erik" Kurilla rang up Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Asim Munir to express his condolences following a brazen attack in Peshawar, which has claimed more than 100 lives. A statement issued by the US Central Command on Twitter said: "Today, General Kurilla, CENTCOM commander, called Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff, General Asim Munir, to express his condolences to the people of Peshawar, Pakistan following Monday's terrorist attack." The leaders spoke about counterterrorism and border security, it added. On Monday, a suicide bomber blew himself up at a mosque in the Peshawar Police Lines during Zuhr prayers.

The blast was so powerful that the roof of the worship place collapsed, trapping several people under the rubble. Senior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Tuesday told the National Assembly that the rescue operation had been completed.

Peshawar blast: Justice Isa questions policy of talks with terrorists

IRFAN SADOZAI

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court Justice Justice Qazi Faez Isa, while reacting to blast in Peshawar, remarked that why negotiations were being held with terrorists.

During the hearing of a case, Justice Isa remarked that how long we would be afraid of terrorists. "Today the terrorists will kill two people and tomorrow they will kill five people," he warned.

"I don't know what kind of society we are living in. A judge issued an order on a terrorist incident but it was thrown in the trash," he added.

On Monday, a suicide attack on a mosque in the Peshawar area. Zuhr prayers were being offered in the mosque, blew himself up.

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index Report 2022 was the last nail in the coffin of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's narrative as it revealed the country's degrading ranking in overall corruption index during Imran Khan's tenure.

In a flurry of tweets, the minister slammed the PTI leadership and said Imran Khan and PTI's narrative regarding corruption was limited to



speeches and publicity only.

"During his four-year rule, corruption did not decrease but continued to increase. Before the PTI government, Pakistan was ranked 17th in the Corruption Perception Index. During Imran Khan's rule, Pakistan rose to 120th in 2019, 124th in 2020 and 140th in 2021."

The minister alleged that Pakistan had reached the 140th position in the ranking due to worst tenure of PTI, adding, "Clean and transparent corruption remained rampant in his tenure."

Senator Rehman said because of his (Imran Khan's) corruption, Pakistan went up 23 places in the corruption index overall. "He created false cases against his opponents while he himself was involved in mega corruption scandals," Sherry Rehman added.

She said, "Now Imran Khan claims that no corruption scandal has surfaced during his tenure."

Imran Khan submits reply on disqualification plea

IQRA ZAHOR ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Wednesday submitted his reply on the disqualification plea filed against the former prime minister for not disclosing the details of his alleged daughter's nomination papers.

In his reply submitted through Salman Akram Raja, the PTI chief objected that the Islamabad High Court (IHC) while exercising constitutional jurisdiction could not examine any affidavit issued by him as he has already resigned as



a member of the National Assembly. Submitting preliminary objections over the writ petition Imran contended that IHC could not proceed in this matter as he has already ceased to be a member of the National Assembly. "Such examination requires the leading of evidence, examination and cross-examination of witnesses in the course of a trial before a competent forum. Reference is made in this regard to the judgment of the Honourable Supreme Court of Pakistan reported as Allah Dino Khan Bhoyo vs Election Commission of Pakistan & Others (PLD 2020 SC591)," Imran said in his reply wherein he has raised preliminary objections on the petition against his disqualification. The reply further stated that the same issue was raised in Abdul Wahab Baloch case wherein four IHC judges, including incumbent Chief Justice Aamer Farooq,

of witnesses in the course of a trial before a competent forum. Reference is made in this regard to the judgment of the Honourable Supreme Court of Pakistan reported as Allah Dino Khan Bhoyo vs Election Commission of Pakistan & Others (PLD 2020 SC591)," Imran said in his reply wherein he has raised preliminary objections on the petition against his disqualification. The reply further stated that the same issue was raised in Abdul Wahab Baloch case wherein four IHC judges, including incumbent Chief Justice Aamer Farooq,



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

Court orders release of PTI's Fawad Chaudhry



SEHRISH NAZ

RAWALPINDI: An additional sessions court on Wednesday granted bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Fawad Chaudhry in a sedition case lodged against him and ordered his release.

The bail was granted against a surety bond of Rs20,000. Additional Sessions Judge Faizan Haider Gilani presided over the hearing where the PTI leader's counsel, Babar Awan, appeared before the court. During the hearing, Judge Gilani remarked that he is granting bail on the condition that Fawad will not repeat the conversation again. Moreover, during the hearing, the ECP and the prosecution opposed Fawad's bail and pleaded for the rejection of the bail plea. Earlier this week, an Islamabad district and sessions court had ordered Fawad's medical report to be submitted amid fears of custodial torture. The police were granted a further two-day physical remand of the former minister last week, reversing the earlier decision of a judicial magistrate, who had rejected the police plea and sent him on judicial remand to Adiala jail.

Parvez Elahi vows: Legal action over Gujrat residence raid

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi on Wednesday claimed that his residence in Gujrat was raided at the behest of the caretaker government in the province, saying he would move courts against the illegal action.

The Gujrat police raided the house of the PM-Q leader early on Wednesday while Mr Elahi and his son Moonis Elahi were not present there as they are in Lahore. The police team left after search in the house.



Saying the sanctity of the house was violated in the action, he said police didn't inform him before hand about the raid. Blaming the interim Punjab government for such raids, he said the mandate of the caretaker set-up was to hold elections and not to involve in these activities.

"There is also caretaker government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but no one's house is being raided," he said, adding that the government should focus on arresting terrorists instead of targeting political opponents.

Vowing to hold the perpetrators of the raid accountable, Parvez Elahi said the interim set-up should remember that their power was temporary.

"We are compiling the record of their illegal activities," he said, adding raids were being conducted to bar him from taking part in elections.

Digital census to be completed in March, no general polls before October 2023: Amin

PERVAIZ MUGHAL

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology & Telecommunication Syed Amin-UI-Haque on Wednesday said that the digital census would continue till March, after which the Election Commission would need four months for de-limitations, that made it clear that General Elections in the country were not possible before October 2023. He stated this while addressing the internet

Governance and Internet Resources Share for Pakistan event organised by Number Resource Society (NRS) here, a news release said. The Federal Minister said that if the former prime minister Imran Khan crossed the red line for his political gains transcending the scope of the constitution and law then the country and the nation would suffer. Syed Amin-UI-Haque said that the political unrest was increasing with each passing day and this political

Countrywide party conventions meant to reorganize PML-N: Marriyum

PEAK POINT

BAHAWALPUR: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb Wednesday said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) convention at Bahawalpur was the first of such multiple meetings which would be spearheaded by Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer of the party Marryam Nawaz. Addressing participants of PML-N workers' convention, the minister said nationwide meetings were aimed at further



invigorating the party at grassroots level through its reorganization. She urged the party workers to show exemplary discipline and listen to the address of Marryam Nawaz who had important messages for its workers from PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif. The minister said

Marryam Nawaz had undergone throat surgery recently and the doctors had advised her to rest but upon her return, she initiated whirlwind tours for party reorganization.

She said that today's meeting was an organizational convention and special invitation cards were issued to the party leaders and workers.

Thousands of people were outside the compound waiting for entry, but the objective of convention was reorganization of the party, she added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin UI Haque in a group photo on the occasion of 'Awareness Event for Internet Governance & Internet Resources Share for Pakistan's'.



Pakistan won 15th West Asia Baseball cup



SAMRA ATHAR
Wednesday.
 Islamabad: Pakistan Baseball team won the 15th West Asia Baseball cup after thrashing their Palestinian counterpart in the final by a leading margin of 11-03 at Pakistan Sports Complex here on Wednesday.



Pakistan has also qualified for Asian Games and Asian Championship after lifting the title. Pakistani captain Faqir Hussain stood as the top scorer (03 runs) of the match, Arsalan Jamehid, Muhammad Hussain, and Fazil Khan scored 02 runs each, while Shahzad Ahmad and Muhammad Younas scored 01 runs each. The Palestine team only managed to get 03 runs and was declared the runner-up of the championship. Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Ehsan-ur-Rehman

Shaheen Afridi raring for comeback in HBL PSL 2023

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: It was at the start of April in 2018 when a lanky teenager by the name of Shaheen Shah Afridi received international cap from Pakistan legend Wasim Akram at Karachi's National Bank Cricket Arena. He had showed glimpses of brilliance in the last two months - during what was his maiden HBL Pakistan Super League season - that catapulted him to the national side. The highlight was his five-wicket haul at Dubai against Multan Sultans, which saw him become one of the only two bowlers that season to bag five wickets in an innings. Shaheen never looked back from that moment, establishing himself as an all-format bowler for Pakistan and, subsequently, the leader of the Pakistan bowling attack. Such was his utility for Pakistan that before the first Calcutta Test in which he injured his right knee by landing awkwardly while attempting a dive at the boundary in July last year, he had taken the



before a freak twist while completing that famous Harry Brook catch at Melbourne in the final sent him back to rehabilitation. While the sight of Shaheen limping off the field broke millions of Pakistani hearts, it was the beginning of a struggle for a bowler who since his Pakistan debut had done nothing but bowl in heaps. "There were times when I wanted to give up," Shaheen, who now has checked all the requisites for his return to competitive cricket, said on Wednesday. "I was working on only one muscle and it was not improving. Often during the rehabilitation sessions, I used to say to myself 'this is enough, I cannot do this anymore'." But then I used to watch my bowling on YouTube and see how well I had done and that motivated me and I told myself 'to push a little more'... It is frustrating for a fast bowler to miss cricket because of an injury.

most wickets (204) behind Australia's Pat Cummins' 209 across all three international formats. He was so lethal that his strike rate of 35.4 was the best in international cricket amongst the fast bowlers with at least a thousand overs. The fourth morning of that Test, however, put a halt on an ever-progressing career. Shaheen was back in Pakistan colours in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia last year and his bowling form grew proportionally with the matches he played,

Century 99 Punjab Polo Cup will get underway from February 6

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: The historic Century 99 Punjab Polo Cup 2023 will get underway from Monday (February 6) here at the Lahore Polo Club. Present Lahore Polo Club Umar Sadiq announced this along with Directors of Century Ventures Private Limited, Ayaz Lakhaani, Kamran Afzal, Wasim Mazhar and Nazia Wasim, Lahore Polo Club executive committee members Agha Murtaza Ali Khan and Agha Najeeb Raza during a crowded press conference held here on Wednesday at the club premises. On this occasion, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between Lahore Polo Club and Century Ventures while



the unveiling ceremony of Punjab Cup and National Open trophies was also held. For the first time in the history of Lahore Polo Club, Century Ventures has sponsored the historic Punjab Polo Cup and National Open Polo Championship for the Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup. President Lahore Polo Club Umar Sadiq said that the history of Punjab Polo Cup, the oldest event in Asia, is more than a cen-

Iranian female futsal player wants greater recognition of women in sport

PEAK POINT
TEHRAN: Iranian female futsal player and coach Mahbube Nimeti voiced her wish Tuesday that women in her country receive more recognition for the sport. Nimeti, 36, who plays for Mehr Azam in the Iranian Women's Futsal League, has been coaching for the last 10 years. She told Anadolu that she spent more time coaching the Novin Meshal team in the Tehran Super League. Street sport Nimeti said her inter-



couldn't get high because of society's prejudices but I found myself in this field. I noticed futsal when I was 16 and got into the country's high school team at the time," said Nimeti. "At the same time, I participated in the national team audition, but I couldn't make it because I didn't have a coach." Nimeti said her university's team was the reigning regional champion for three years. The Iranian athlete said she was considering studying abroad to fulfill her dream of being an excellent coach. But because of her financial situation, she will not be able to do it.

and my father is not interested in sports, however, I always wanted to chase after the ball whenever I saw the boys play in the street," she said. Nimeti said after some time, she started to catch the attention of children when she picked up the ball. "Maybe I

What numbers reveal about PSL

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: The eighth edition of Pakistan Super League (PSL) is not far and we have collected a few interesting facts and stats regarding Pakistan's most anticipated league. A total of 21 foreign internationals and 15 local players will make their debut in the eighth edition of the PSL, which will be held in four cities: Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi. The tournament will take place from Feb 13 to March 19. Five matches will be hosted in Multan, nine each in Karachi and Lahore and 11 in Rawalpindi. The international debutants include Adil



Rashid, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Jimmy Neesham, and Tom Curran, among others. The local players making their PSL debut include Aimal Khan, Irfan Khan Niazi, Mohammad 'Karnal' Zahid, and Saud Shakeel. Lahore Qalandars will aim to win back-to-back titles, while Islamabad United will look to become the first team to win three titles since the start of the PSL in 2016. In the seven years of PSL, Babar Azam is the leading run-scorer in PSL history with 2,413 runs in 68 matches, while wicket-keeper batter Kamran Akmal has the most centuries - three.

Islamabad won Inter-Divisional Basketball Championship

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Reds won the Quaid-e-Azam cup Inter-Divisional Basketball tournament after defeating Faisalabad Division in a nerve-wracking match by 52-49 points here at Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex. In the decisive finale, a tough competition between Islamabad Reds and Faisalabad Division until half-time, Faisalabad was in the lead with 25 points to 24. Islamabad Red players Yasir Abbas and Attique Khan took four consecutive points in the last minute of the final to turn the game for Islamabad. Yasir Abbas scored 22, Attique Khan 12 and Rizwan Khushroo scored 12 points for Islamabad. Six teams including Islamabad Reds, Gujranwala,



Mazari distributed prizes, trophies and medals among the players in the closing ceremony, he appreciated the efforts by the Pakistan Basketball Federation and Association for the promotion of basketball in the country. Earlier in the semi-final round, Faisalabad Division defeated Peshawar Division after a tough competition by 54 points against 50, while Islamabad Reds won against Islamabad Blues by 41-39 points. Commander North Rear Admiral Masood Khurshid, Acting Director General Pakistan Sports Board Mohammad Abrar, Secretary General of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBFF) Khalid Bashir, Secretary Organizing Committee Ouj-e-Zahor, President of Federal Basketball Association Ejaz Butt also witnessed the final match.

Peshawar, Hazara, Islamabad Blues and Faisalabad Division participated in the tournament based on pool round matches organised by the Federal Basketball Association (FIBA). Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Ehsan

Usman Khawaja misses flight to India after visa delay

PEAK POINT
MELBOURNE: Australia opener Usman Khawaja missed the team's flight to India on Wednesday for their four-test tour due to a visa delay, Cricket Australia (CA) said. A CA spokesman said the Pakistan-born batsman was the only player in Australia's squad not to board because his visa had not arrived in time. Khawaja posted a popular meme on social media of a man sitting on a garden chair staring into space, with the caption: "Me waiting for my Indian Visa like... #stranded #dontleave"



India host the first of four tests in Nagpur from Feb. 9. Khawaja, 36, claimed the Shane Warne award as Australia's men's test player of the year on Monday after a prolific 12 months during which he scored 1,020 runs at an average of 78.46.

IMF imposes stringent conditions on country: Ahsan Iqbal

Federal Minister



RAWALPINDI: A view of encroachments at Bara Bazaar, As needs to attention for concerns authority, in the city.

Strong public support crucial for survival of scientific enterprise in prevailing economic crisis: Speakers

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at the inaugural session of the three-day COMSTECH International Conference/Workshop on "Science Communication and Community Engagement" termed strong public support for science as crucially important for the survival of scientific enterprise during the prevailing economic crisis. The chief guest of the inaugural session was Acting Chief Justice of Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Dr. Syed Muhammad Anwar who in his address stated that acquiring knowledge and educating ourselves and our future generations is our religious duty being Muslims.

Communication, which is considered as the practice of informing, educating and raising awareness of science related topics in a community, is not only the need of the time but our religious duty too, he said. He said the holy Quran is not a book of science but guides to live in harmony with the nature. He said Quran teaches us to explore through scientific research the cosmological scientific principles and realities about ourselves, the climate and environment around us and the universe in general.

He said that the Quran invites us to pursue scientific research in order to explore the scientific principles of the universe. He said that Allah has

given us a direction to think over the coordinated working of the universe. Dr. Muhammad Anwar said that it is our religious duty to relentlessly and continuously pursue scientific knowledge which ultimately results in finding the scientific principles working therein.

He said that we Muslims generally are not fulfilling the responsibility bestowed upon us by Allah through Quran to acquire, possess and promote scientific education in our communities.

Speaking during the conference the Coordinator General of COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary informed that speakers from seven countries with long experience and notable con-

tributions in communication of science will address this conference. He informed that over 460 participants got registered to attend this conference with different backgrounds, from science, media, policy makers, social work, to arts and cultures, diplomacy and environment.

He mentioned that we often perceive science and society as two separate worlds, far away from each other, but these are not. They are two sides of the same coin and there is an organic relationship between the two. Society benefits from scientific discovery and scientific values whereas science needs social and political support. Without each other, none can flourish or sustain.

Admin holds 'Revenue Khuli Kutchery' to address citizens' complaints

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: On the special directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta, the Rawalpindi District Administration on Wednesday held a 'Revenue Khuli Kutchery' (open court) at Tehsil Office Raja Bazaar to resolve the problems of the people at the earliest. The 'Khuli Kutchery' was attended by a large number of citizens while on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi

Capt. (Retd.) Shoab Ali, Assistant Commissioner, City and Saddar, Sub-Registrar, Tehsil, Wazir Teshildar and revenue officials were also present. According to a Commissioner Office spokesperson, the citizens recorded over 124 complaints, including the issuance of domicile, 'Fard', registry, income certificate, execution of transfers, and other revenue matters. She informed that the commissioner had instructed

the authorities to make all-out efforts for addressing the complaints of the citizens. She said on the directives of the Punjab government, 'Revenue Khuli Kutcheries' were held on the first working day of every month in which from DC to revenue officials remained present to address the complaints of the citizens. The commissioner directed the officers to take solid steps for the redressal of issues of the people attending the open courts.

Five held for possessing illegal weapons

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested five illegal arms holders and recovered arms and ammunition from their possession during a crackdown here on Wednesday, informed a police spokesman.

Naseerabad police held Rafiq and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his

possession. Similarly, Wah Cantt police arrested Ihsam and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his custody.

While Dhymal police arrested Zain and recovered 01 rifle 23 bore from his possession.

Following the operation, Rawat police recovered 01 rifle 12 bore from Ibrahim.

Chontra police recovered 01 Kalashnikov from Ahsan. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was underway.

SSP Operations appreciated the performance of police teams, adding that strict action will be continued against those who possess illegal weapons.

CAP for traffic rules in academics to ensure road safety

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD :Chairman of Consumers Association of Pakistan (CAP), Kaukab Iqbal on Wednesday stressed to incorporate traffic rules and laws into the education curriculum to ensure the safety of road users.

Iqbal highlighted that the absence of proper

training was the reason behind the high rate of traffic law violations.

Iqbal proposed to make the purchase of helmets mandatory for all bike riders and emphasized the need for proper training schools, similar to those in developed countries.

The chairman praised

the efforts of police officers who perform their duties in harsh weather conditions and called for recognition and rewards for their hard work. He also mentioned that Consumers Association of Pakistan holds an annual road safety conference to raise awareness on the issue.

Opinion & Editorial

Arif Mehmood Khan
Arif Mehmood Khan
 Group Editor: 0333-5366814
 Contact us For Daily news, Advertisements
 Correspondent and News Agency
Samma athar Kakakhel
 Resident Editor
 Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
 www.peakpoint.pk

Road to perdition

ARECKONING is called for, a reckoning unlike that which this nation yet has seen. It must happen now — or, as surely as night follows day, more bestial acts of violence like that which took place in Peshawar on Monday will continue to claim the lives of innocent Pakistanis. And it must come from those who sowed the seeds of a disastrous polity that is once again reaping a harvest of blood. There is no strength to be gained in pointing the finger of blame at particular individuals, though some are indeed more culpable than others. The security establishment as a whole has since decades persisted with a myopic approach to militancy, one that could only lead to perdition. Its disregard, bordering on contempt, for any input from the civilian leadership — which had to face the public's wrath as the body count rose — kept it insulated from what might have been wiser counsel. Following the horrific APS attack in 2014, it seemed for a time that the state had seen the folly in its 'good Taliban, bad Taliban' strategy. The National Action Plan that was a response to that tragedy stipulated 20 steps towards eradicating extremism in society. But while the civilians faltered in taking the measures they were responsible for, the establishment's inconsistent policy towards militants remained in play and negated whatever steps the government did take. When the civilian leadership in 2016 warned that Pakistan risked international isolation unless it cracked down on militants of all stripes, it was ruthlessly — and very publicly — cut down to size, leaving no doubt as to who was calling the shots. Some action against the 'good Taliban' was only initiated when Pakistan was about to be placed on the FATF grey list. As a result, 'charitable entities' that had earned an international reputation as fronts for extremist propaganda and militancy were forced to suspend their activities.

The thing about truth

Hussain H Zaidi
 I 't tell-all' interviews and explosive statements, former prime minister Imran Khan, who has the knack of staying in the news, is heaping all sorts of allegations on all sorts of people — from politicians to institutions.

Is the popular leader calling a spade a spade now or was he doing so in the past? If he is speaking the truth now, his is — at best — a half truth. If, as he has been alleging since his ouster from power, political engineering is a reality, how will popular politicians like him react when it is done to their benefit? Don't they seek to maximize the pay-offs as long as the sun shines and luck smiles on them? Complete truth will entail admission of their own questionable role in the alleged political manipulations together with the benefits they drew. This 'they're shy of making.

This doesn't mean that speaking half-truths is exclusive to politicians or Pakistani society. It is a common human trait, which cuts across classes, occupations, and societies, whether it's the age of the pulpit, or the press or of 24/7 electronic media.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) is one example of a person who was a resounding success both as a man of the intellect and a man of the world. He was a lawyer, parliamentarian, statesman, philosopher, and a pioneer of scientific thought, who rose to hold the highest judicial office of England. At the same time, he was a treacherous character, who had the knack of throwing his friends and benefactors under the bus. His dubious character in the end brought about his fall.

Bacon's reputation as an author rests in the main on his short, pithy essays, which represent a unique blend of philosophical depth, worldly wisdom and literary brilliance. One of the finest of these essays is 'Of Truth'. Men, says Bacon, have a natural love of the lie and are inclined to lying for the sake of it. By and large, they have little regard for the truth. The reasons for short-shifting the truth are many. To begin with, it requires a lot of toil to ascertain the truth,

whereas lies can be manufactured at the blink of an eye. The truth binds people to a certain position and thus fails to impress a considerable section of society. On the other hand, a mixture of truths and lies — half-truths as we may call it — makes one's pitch or narrative interesting and thus easier to sell to a wider audience. The contemporary post-truth era embodies a definitive vindication of Bacon's thesis. The distinction between facts and values, knowledge and belief, and truth and opinion has largely been obliterated. Fake news has taken social media by storm and made verified information, which requires considerable toil to collect, look a sheer waste of time and energy. According to French historian Ran Halévy, the factors which have contributed to the rise of the post-truth era include discrediting of experts and political parties, mistrust of traditional media, which puts a high premium on credible information, rise of partisan media and social networks, and rising communitarianism.

However, if Francis Bacon were alive, he would instantly point out that people seldom care for the truth in its own right, and that the post truth era has only been midwifed — not given birth to — by the strides in information and communication technology. Coming back to Pakistan, in making use of social and electronic media, to construct narratives on the basis of at best half-truths, the PTI stands above its rivals head and shoulder. It all started with the party's anti-corruption narrative, whose pitch was that all, and only, politicians are corrupt every inch.

At the same time anyone from that corrupt breed was welcomed to the party's fold with open arms and would become Mr or Ms Clean overnight.

Corruption, no doubt, has run endemic in Pakistan, but the claim that the politicians are mired in corruption, or that every politician is corrupt, is at best half true, as graft cuts across classes and occupations. Understandably, most people subscribe to the graft narrative, but almost no one would admit that they themselves are in any way drawn towards corruption. The businesses believe that the public sector is corrupt to the bone; civil servants see politicians as the villain of the piece; politicians set down their failure to the machinations of powerful institutions, and the latter look down upon all others as incompetent to the core.

Not only that, the scale of corruption was grossly exaggerated on the basis of an off-the-cough remark of the then head of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), which put the graft figure in the country at Rs 37 billion a day. An organic kernel of the anti-graft narrative was the view that white-collar crooks stashed away huge foreign exchange, to the tune of \$200 billion, in bank overseas.

When corruption is seen as the root cause of problems afflicting the polity, other crucial factors that bear upon governance and economic growth are disregarded. That actually happened during the PTI's term in office when infatuation with the view that white-collar graft and the economy. Nor was the party able to honour its commitment to bring back the \$200 billion from foreign banks — which were simply non-existent — and break the begging bowl.

At the other end of the scale, the alleged relationship between democracy and development is dubious as well. Democracy may be the most legitimate and humanitarian form of government but there's no causal link between the two variables in question. Democracy may, as in the West, usher in development and economic prosperity. On the other hand, authoritarianism, as in the former USSR and at present in China and Singapore, may create an economic miracle as well.

Courtesy The News

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Courtesy The News

A treacherous deal

Zahid Hussain
TERROR has struck with renewed ferocity, reminding us yet again of the wages of appeasement. The suicide bombing that killed and wounded scores of worshippers inside a mosque in Peshawar raises questions about our flawed counterterrorism strategy.

The bombing that occurred inside a high-security zone demonstrates the rising capacity of the militants to carry out high-profile terrorist actions with deadly effects. An action of the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) with links to the so-called Islamic State's Khorasani chapter has claimed responsibility for the bombing. The emerging nexus of transnational militant groups has rendered the situation more alarming. Militant groups now seem to have regrouped and appear better equipped with the help of their patrons on the other side of the border. The return of Taliban rule in Afghanistan has certainly given a boost to violent militancy here.

It is the weakness of the Pakistani state and the absence of a clear policy direction that has allowed the militants to regain their space. Monday's Police Lines mosque attack in an area that houses the offices of various civilian law-enforcement agencies has exposed the failure of our entire security apparatus. Most alarming are the reports about the possible involvement of some insiders in the attack. It is apparent that such massive terrorist action requires a strong support network. There has been a marked escalation by the previous regime. "When the militants came, past several months following a reportedly dubious deal with the banned outfit that allowed the militants who had fled to Afghanistan to escape the military operation to return home.

According to some media reports, thousands of armed militants have crossed the border and re-established their bases in the region. The so-called peace negotiations were just used as a cover by the militants to gain time. Former prime minister Imran Khan, in a recent statement, revealed that his government had planned to resettle PTI fighters in Pakistan's tribal districts with the help of the Afghan Taliban. He has blamed the latest resurgence of terrorism in the country on the "unwillingness of the current government to abide by the commitments made by the previous regime." "When the militants came, they were not rehabilitated or given any proper attention, and no money was spent on them. We were afraid that if we did not pay attention to them, then terrorism would start in different places, which [is what] has happened," the former prime minister is reported to have said at a seminar recently. Khan's revelation gives credence to reports of a deal with the terrorist group that is responsible for the killing of thousands of Pakistani civilians and security personnel.

Courtesy Dawn

President emphasises Ulema's role in social reform, discouraging extremism

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday called upon the Ulema and Mashaikh of the country to play their role in bringing positive social change, discouraging extremism, terrorism, and sectarianism.

The president, talking to a delegation of the Ulema Mashaikh Yakjehti Council of Pakistan (UMYC), that called on him at Alwani-e-Sadr, urged their role for inculcating ethical and moral values in society, promoting the conservation of resources, national solidarity, religious tolerance, and inter-faith harmony and peace.

He urged Ulema to play their role to eliminate extremism, terrorism and sectarianism by highlighting the true teachings of Islam in the light of the Quran, Sunnah and

Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He said the challenges of terrorism and militancy in Pakistan required a comprehensive action plan, coupled with concerted efforts on the part of the Ulema in the areas of counter-extremism and counter-terrorism. President Alvi said that it was the responsibility of religious scholars to disseminate the true teachings of Islam among the people, especially youth, to bring in social reforms, and promote virtues, ethics, and morality in society. He said that Pakistan could achieve progress and its right place among the nations through discipline, persistence, moral righteousness, and promoting social justice. The president said that Ulema should make concerted efforts to remove divisions from society, and

should promote unity and solidarity within the country. He said that youth should be educated on tolerance, forgiveness, and peace as these were the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The president said that Islam emphasized the conservation of resources and avoiding wastage. The Ulema should also help promote moderate, responsible and sustainable consumption of resources, especially fuel and energy, through their Friday sermons in the mosques.

The delegation was led by Chairman UMYC, Qari Ishaqat Ullah Mirani, and consisted of Muhammad Younas Qureshi, Molana Gul Wali, Major Ehtasham Uddin Kiyani, Prof Abdul Ghafoor Shah Bukhari, Abdul Rahim Abbasi, Noor Elahi, Fahad Maqsood.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Ulema Mashaikh Yakjehti Council of Pakistan called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Alwani-e-Sadr.

PML-N admits receiving Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's resignation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif and Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz's representative Muhammad Zubair verified reports that Shahid Khaqan Abbasi had tendered his resignation from his position as the party's senior vice president.

Earlier this morning, media reports had surfaced of the senior party leader's decision to distance himself from the role after the recently appointed party Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz returned to the country.

Verifying the reports, Zubair told reporters that "Shahid Khaqan Abbasi is a senior leader and worker of the PML-N. I believe that by quitting his post as senior VP will not impact his stature at all." "He is a very big leader, he has been the prime minister and the party needs him very much."

Shying away from



bringing up intra-party politics in public," Zubair said that Miftah Ismail was a member of the party and that his replacement, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, has "a greater status".

With the Election Commission (EC) having given a deadline to the PML-N to conduct intra-party elections till March 14, local media has reported tensions are brewing within the party.

The disagreements seem to be particularly stark around Maryam's promotion, the finance minister's seat and economic policies.

In her first speech after her return, Maryam Nawaz had assured the nation that she and her father -

party supreme Nawaz Sharif - were fully cognizant of the inflationary storm while laying the blame for the crises at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's door.

In the meantime at a different event just a few prior to her speech, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi had called for an end to the politics of maligning each other and urged all political forces to put their heads together to bring the country out of the prevailing economic crisis.

"When politics turns into enmity, people's problems remain. It is unfortunate that the economic crisis and failure of politics has reached its peak," Abbasi had said stressing the need for governments to actually perform. Earlier in the day, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's spokesperson Hafiz Usman Abbasi dejected the "baseless rumours" of his resignation, saying Khaqan "is the Senior VP of the party".

Terror attack at Mianwali police station foiled

PEAK POINT

MIANWALI: The Punjab police foiled a terror attack at the Makarwal police station in Mianwali on Tuesday night, forcing terrorists to flee.

According to police officials, 20 to 25 armed assailants attacked the police station but were met with police personnel, the counter-terrorism department (CTD) and other forces who fought gallantly and forced the terror elements to immediately after the attack.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Mianwali Muhammad Naveed reached the police station with more personnel.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar contacted the Station House Officer (SHO) and congratulated him for their bravery and duty. The IGP Punjab said that the terrorist elements should be brought to justice and that the CTD, Elite Force and Special Branch should

provide full support to the Mianwali Police in this operation.

DPO Naveed stated that all the policemen were safe following the attack. He added that a few terrorists were injured after retaliatory firing by the police, but they contrived to flee towards the mountains taking the injured with them. After the attack, the police cordoned off the area and started a search operation to arrest the terrorists.

Meanwhile, IGP Anwar formed a four-member special team in view of the Mianwali attack, which included Additional ICS Training, a Special Branch, Operations and a Deputy Inspector General (IT). The committee along with RPO Sardogha will plan search and combing operations to pursue the terrorists. The IG Punjab also directly headed search operations in Mianwali, especially near the Makarwal police station and its adjoining areas.

Corruption major stumbling block in socio-economic development: NAB chairman

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Aftab Sultana on Wednesday stated that the menace of corruption was a major impediment in the socio-economic development of Pakistan.

Addressing the cheques distribution ceremony here at the NAB headquarters, he categorically stated that the anti-graft watchdog was determined to eradicate corruption from the country with an absolutely impartial approach.

He said NAB had no favourites nor it was against anybody as rooting out corruption with absolute professionalism was its national responsibility.



Speaking on the occasion, Director General NAB Rawalpindi Farmanullah said the Rawalpindi Bureau had recovered over Rs 40 billion since inception.

Later, the NAB chairman distributed the cheques of Rs 500 million among the affectees of various fraudulent schemes, including Gulshan-e-Rehman Housing Scheme, Mufti Ehsan's Modarba scam, Askaria Town, Sindh Tractor Subsidy Scheme, Khezari Sacht, Amir Zaman Shinwari and National House Building Roads Development Corporation.

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Imran hiding himself behind maintainability of plea in Tyrian case: Tarar

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Attaullah Tarar said on Wednesday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan was trying to escape in the Tyrian White case against him by saying that it was not maintainable on legal grounds. The PTI chief had submitted his statement in the court on Tuesday that since he was not a member of the National Assembly, it was not maintainable now and the case could not be proceeded against

him anymore. Tarar said that the case was simply about Article 62, 63 of the Constitution.

Talking to the media along with other Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders Tal Chaudhry and Abid Sher Ali, he said Imran Khan should contend on merit of the case rather than hiding behind technicalities. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified on just having an iqama, he said adding that Imran Khan should present himself before the courts in cases against him as nobody

was above the law.

Tal Chaudhry said the rule of law and the constitution was vital for strengthening institutions and democracy in the country.

He said that level playing field was a must to ensure free, fair and transparent elections in the country.

He said that Imran Khan contested two elections despite the fact that he was not qualified for hiding information about his alleged daughter. He said the law and the constitution was supreme and everyone

had to respect and obey it. He said that Nawaz Sharif always presented himself for accountability but Imran Khan had been avoiding to appear before the courts. Imran Khan had to be answerable in cases including foreign funding, Toshi Khana or Tyrian issue against him.

Tal Chaudhry said that the PTI had no respect for the institutions, as Imran Khan was habitual of using derogatory remarks against the institutions, which had created a polluted political environment.

Moonis claims family's Gujrat home raided by police

PEAK POINT

GUJRAT: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader and former Punjab chief minister's son Moonis Elahi has claimed that his family home in Gujrat was raided in the few hours of Wednesday.

In a tweet, Moonis Elahi said that police showed up at their door "without having a warrant, nor a case".

Implying that intelligence agencies were involved in the raid, he said "I can wrap my head around the 25 police vehicles, but why were there two black Vigos?". "Were they looking for Indian agents?" he said mockingly. The comments mark a significant shift in the leader's stance as the PML-Q is perceived to be a party that prefers to remain in the establishment's good books.

Even on the party's decision to join forces with the illegal police raid on Gujrat, Moonis had claimed that his party had only done so after it had been advised by former Army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa - with whom the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has had a falling out since Imran's ouster.

Former Punjab CM Chaudhry Parvez Elahi condemned the raid and slammed the government for engaging in "vengeful activities". "I condemn the illegal police raid on Gujrat. House Kunjsh Elahi," he said in a tweet claiming that "employees were harassed in the middle of the night".

Sh. Rashid moves IHC against police notice issued over allegation against Zardari

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed challenged a police notice issued to him in a case related to the former president Asif Ali Zardari in the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

A day earlier, the former interior minister was asked to appear in the Abbpara police station in the capital city on Wednesday for explanation after a complaint was filed against him for allegedly accusing PCC chairman of hatching a plot for the assassination of PTI Chairman Imran Khan. The capital police in a statement on Tuesday also claimed that Mr Ahmed had retracted



from his allegation against the former president. He also warned the senior politician of legal action for defying the summons.

In the latest development, the AML chief has filed a petition against the police notice in the high court through his counsel Sardar Razaq, Naeem Haider and intanzor Hussain. He pleaded the IHC to declare the notice null and void as it was issued illegally.

Taking to Twitter, Mr

Rashid endorsed Imran Khan's claim that Mr Zardari wanted to kill him, adding: "There are serious threats to the life of Imran Khan". He said the PDM wanted to minus the PTI chief from 16 ministries was scrutinised and the government had resorted to awkward tactics after failing to find anything against him. He claimed police were trying their best to arrest him. In a media talk show, the IHC, he also lashed out at the government for economic crisis in the country. He demanded that the conditions placed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the revival of the loan programme should be made public.

Death toll from Peshawar mosque bombing rises to 101 as police say 'major arrests' made

NEWS DESK



LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister Mr Atta Ullah Tarar talking to media.

PESHAWAR: The death toll from Monday's suicide attack on a mosque in Peshawar's Police Lines area rose to 101 on Wednesday as police claimed major arrests have been made in connection with the bombing. On Jan 30, a powerful explosion ripped through a mosque in Peshawar's Red Zone area where between 300 and 400 people - mostly police officers - had gathered for prayers. The suicide blast blew away the wall of the prayer hall and an inner roof. The outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had initially claimed responsibility for the attack. It later distanced itself from it but sources earlier indicated that it might have been the

handiwork of some local faction of the outlawed group. In a statement issued today, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department said that the death toll in the attack has increased to 101 after another injured person succumbed to his wounds. It stated that 59 injured people are receiving treatment at hospitals across the province, of which eight are in critical condition. Meanwhile, Lady Reading Hospital spokesperson Mohammad Asim told Dawn.com today that 101 bodies were brought to the medical facility. "At this moment, 49 people injured in the blast are being treated at the hospital. Seven of them have been admitted in the ICU," he said, adding that a

number of injured persons had been discharged as well. Separately, Peshawar police chief Ijaz Khan told Reuters on Wednesday that major arrests have been made in connection with the bombing. He said police are investigating how the suicide bomber entered the highly-secured police area, and could not rule out internal assistance to carry out the attack. A day earlier, the police had constituted two joint investigation teams (JITs) to probe the attack. KP police chief Moazzam Jah Ansari told journalists on Tuesday that the security lapse which resulted in this attack was being investigated by the city police chief, whereas a JIT, also including intelligence officials,

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